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A Stakeholders' Assessment of Local Band Control of Native Education: Community-Member Perceptions

by

Wilma de Waal

A thesis

submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Education

in

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Dr. F. Peters, Supervisor

Dr. K. Ward

Dr. P. Brook

Date: September 19, 1995

This work is dedicated to the memory of my maternal grandmother,

Maria van Wijerden-Vink

(January 28, 1895 - November 5, 1968).

When her parents died, Oma postponed her own marriage to raise her younger brothers and sisters. She then raised 10 children of her own. Through war and poverty she showed strength, generosity of spirit, perseverance, hope, love, and, most of all, faith. Her legacy to her children, her grandchildren, and the generations after them is one of strength received through her faith in God. I know that "I can do all things through God, who strengthens me." *Hartelijk dank, Oma.*

Abstract

The legacy of non-Native intervention in Native education in Canada has been the forced assimilation of Native people into the dominant non-Native culture. In the past twenty-five years, Native leaders have attempted to address the resulting cultural genocide by encouraging Indian people to take control of Indian education through local band-controlled schools. In this study 20 members of a northern Alberta reserve community shared their perceptions of the transformation to Indian control of Indian education.

In the literature review the historical context for Native education in Canada is introduced; the resulting issues and proposed solutions identified by Native leaders are discussed; and, finally, the experiences of Native communities with Indian control of Indian education are described. The research has indicated a continued need to explore alternatives for the successful transition to and implementation of local band-controlled education.

A qualitative naturalistic inquiry has been chosen to gauge community-member perceptions. This format allowed the participants to determine and identify the issues that they felt needed to be addressed.

The participants shared their frustrations with past education practices, identified the issues that needed to be addressed, and assessed their own experiences with the transition to and implementation of band control. Finally, the respondents described their vision and goals for the future of education in their community.

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Many people encouraged, helped, and supported me through the completion of this study. I would like to acknowledge them and express my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude.

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Finally, I would like to thank my parents. They have always encouraged their children to follow their dreams. I thank them for helping me to follow mine. Your faith, Mom and Dad, has provided me with an example to follow. I thank you for the sacrifices you have made and for the example you have provided for your children and grandchildren.

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CHAPTER 1

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Introduction

The Circle of Knowledge

> In the knowledge of my people, the Elders and the children act as one in the Circle of Life. The Circle represents the unity of the earth, moon, sun, and stars, the four cycles of the seasons, and life as we are born, as we age and die, to be reborn. The Elders are the holders of knowledge, the teachers of our culture, songs, heritage and survival and are held in high esteem and respect. The children, our future, represent the carriers of this knowledge that never grows old. The Eagle represents the strength, truth, wisdom and freedom of the First Nations of this Turtle Island, called North America. The Eagle represents many virtues to the First Nations people. . . . The soaring flight of the Eagle allows it to communicate with the Creator and pass on the Creator's messages to the First Nations. Its flight also confers the gift of foresight on the Eagle since, from its great height, the Eagle can detect imminent danger and warn the First Nations of coming perils. The Eagle represents the collective strength, truth, wisdom, and freedom of the First Nations of North America. It exemplifies the solidarity of Nations, when unity is required. All of these qualities will be necessary if the First Nations are to pass on to their children the wisdom of yesterday, together with the technology of today. (National Indian Brotherhood, 1988b, n.p.)

In 1986 I had the opportunity to work in a First Nation community on an Indian reserve. It was not my first experience with another culture, but it was my initiation into Native education. I arrived full of enthusiasm and high expectations. I had been told in my job interview that local control of education would be implemented for the first time in this community. With my strong Calvinistic background, I was already converted to the belief that parents have the right to determine the world and life view and value systems underlying the school

culture. I looked forward to an orientation into the culture of this community.

I was warmly welcomed. Children gathered to help me unload my worldly goods. In the next three years I joined the local Catholic church; attended feasts, tea-dances, community dances, and bingos; and drank endless cups of tea in visits to and from community members. Local construction workers helped me out when my car would not start. I cannot begin to thank the people of the community for their gifts of kindness and generosity of spirit. The memories of this time will always remain in my heart.

The next three years were also fraught with confusion and frustration. It was difficult to understand why local control did not bring with it such expected results as increases in attendance, parental involvement, or academic achievement. In discussions with both community members and education practitioners in this and other Native communities, I found that others shared my questions.

In the spring of my third year in the community, I decided to enroll in a Master of Education program. I had already decided that I wanted to study Native education to help me to understand my own experiences with local control of education. I left the community at the end of my third year. Two years later, when I began research for my thesis, I approached several educational leaders in the community to gauge their responses to having a study made of their community education experiences. On receiving positive feedback, I proceeded to present a formal request to the Chief and Council.

I was concerned with the potential for researcher bias. I have taken a number of measures to minimize this bias. These measures

are outlined in the description of the study. The advantage to conducting interviews with participants with whom I had already developed a trust relationship seemed to overshadow the potential disadvantage of researcher bias.

In this study I have attempted to gauge and record participant perceptions of local band control of education. I hope that the insights presented will help both Native and non-Native readers to increase their understanding of the experience.

Statement of the Problem

The history of non-Native intervention in Native education has been fraught with discord. Between 1867 and 1880 the signing of the western treaties took place; education was a promised provision in these agreements. In Treaty No. 6, for example the promise was as follows: "Her Majesty agrees to maintain schools for instruction in such reserves hereby made as to Her Government of Her Dominion of Canada may seem advisable whenever the Indians of the reserve shall desire it" (Duhamel, 1964, p. 3). When Indian leaders signed treaty agreements with non-Indian representatives of Her Majesty the Queen of England, could they foresee centuries of attempted genocide? It would seem not. Had the non-Indian participants in the agreements intended to fulfil their obligations? Perhaps they did. In fact, however, a prevailing non-Indian philosophy that stressed the importance of civilizing Indian people colored the practices and policies that were developed in the years following the signing of these treaty agreements. Pauls (1984) concluded: "The price of forced assimilation [has been] paid with the lives of our people in jails, on

welfare, and in suicides" (p. 40). Between 1981 and 1986 the suicide rate for status Indians ranged from 43 to 34 per 100,000, compared to a rate of 13 to 15 per 100,000 for the total Canadian population (Hagey, Larocque, & McBride, 1989b, p. 7). In these same years the rate of violent deaths among status Indians was almost three times that of the total Canadian average (p. 8). In addition, the percentage of on-reserve Indians who received social assistance in 1981 and 1987 was approximately two-and-a-half times greater than the Canadian average for those years (p. 16). Although these figures do not point to a direct connection between education and social problems, Pauls' statement may have some merit.

In 1972 the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) attempted to address concerns for appropriate education practices for Native students in Canada. Its premise was that Indian control of Indian education would contribute to a cultural healing process.

The NIB (1972) presented a policy paper to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development titled *Indian Control of Indian Education,* which encouraged Native parents to take control of their children's future out of the hands of the federal government and to create a system of education to meet the unique needs of the Native child:

> We want education to provide the setting in which our children can develop the fundamental attitudes and values which have an honored place in Indian tradition and culture. . . . We believe that if an Indian child is fully aware of the important Indian values he will have reason to be proud of our race and of himself as an Indian. (p. 2)
>
> If we are to avoid the conflict of values which in the past has led to withdrawal and failure, Indian parents must have control of education with the responsibility of setting goals. (p. 3)

> Those educators who have had authority in all that pertained to Indian Education have, over the years, tried various ways of providing education for Indian people. The answer to providing a successful educational experience has not been found. There is one alternative which has not been tried before: In the future, let Indian people control Indian Education. (p. 28)

Many Indian communities in Canada had witnessed the values and culture of their grandparents fade and their young people struggle with low self-esteem; they looked on as school dropout rates for Native students increased and school-attendance rates decreased. Members of these communities thought the NIB solution a plausible one: In the following years they responded by initiating local control of education. Between 1975 and 1982 the number of band-operated schools in Canada increased from 53 to 159, more than a threefold increase (Canada. Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development [DIAND], 1989, p. 41).

These early efforts, however, did not meet with unmitigated success. In a 1982 study DIAND found that federally operated and band-controlled systems were "generally less supportive of student learning than provincial school systems" and that these schools "adhere only nominally to provincial standards" (pp. 17, 23). DIAND saw the need to "establish guiding principles and develop operational guidelines" (p. 15). It was hoped that this effort would help Indian communities to succeed in their goals for local control of education. As both Native communities and DIAND continued to attempt to address these issues, the number of band-operated schools in Canada continued to increase. By 1990 they had increased to 300, a fivefold increase since 1975 (Canada. DIAND, 1990, p. 41; see Appendix D). The proportion of on-reserve children attending band-controlled schools

increased from 3.96% in 1975 to 39.33% in 1990 (p. 43; see Appendix D).

Many researchers and practitioners have written on the need for changes in on-reserve education systems. The need for distinctive education systems which reflect the unique cultural and value structures has been presented in various position papers (Bryde, 1969; Koens, 1989; Longboat, 1987; Pauls, 1984; Starblanket, 1980; Urion, 1975; Yuzdepski, 1983). These writers advocated Indian control of Indian education as a solution to perceived weaknesses in the delivery of education services on Indian reserves. A number of studies have focussed on the process of devolution of power to local educational leaders (Bashford & Heinzerling, 1987; Gardner, 1986; Hurlburt, Henjum, & Eide, 1983; McInness, 1987; Tessier, 1991; United Indians of All Tribes Foundation, 1975). Few studies, however, have concentrated on the perceptions, concerns, and goals of the stakeholders in the process of devolution. Therefore, it seems worthwhile to evaluate local control of education by examining the views of those personally involved in decision making and/or those affected by the outcome of the changes effected by the leadership in their community.

In 1987 Eagle Feather community (a pseudonym) decided to take control of the education of its children by instituting a band-controlled school. This community in northern Alberta has a population of approximately 1,000 people. Until recently, there was no road connecting it to other communities, and this physical isolation has affected the attitudes and lifestyle of community members. Few Elders speak English; and although most adults are conversant in the

English language, their Native language is their first language. Many children begin kindergarten with minimal English language skills. Although traditionally migrant, the people have settled into a community. Traditional hunting and trapping have continued to provide income for some families; however, because the prices for furs and skins has dropped, few are able to sustain their families on the income generated from these efforts. Increasing rates of unemployment, alcoholism, and criminal activity have become serious social problems in this community (personal communication, January to April 1992).

The views and responses of members of Eagle Feather community are examined in this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess the program at Eagle Feather Community School in terms of its initial and ongoing objectives. The following research questions guided the development of the study and the data analysis:

1. What do the Elders, band leaders (Chief and Council or board members), Native teaching staff, parents, and students consider to have been the initial intents and goals of the school?

2. What are the observations and perceptions of the stakeholders as to the specific steps taken to meet those goals?

3. What is the assessment by the stakeholders of the progress made in achieving the expressed goals or mandate?

Justification for the Study

In 1981, at a time when many Native communities were seeking alternatives to their current education practices, approximately 15% of Natives over 15 who were not attending school full time had less than a Grade 5 education (Canada. Ministry of Supply and Services, 1984). It would seem that education services in the past have not met the needs of Native Canadians. In a study completed on behalf of DIAND, Hagey et al. (1989a) utilized Statistics Canada and DIAND customized census data to compare Native and Canadian demographic trends. It was determined that in 1981 about 40% of on-reserve Canadian Natives were 14 years of age or younger. By the year 2001, this number is expected to decrease to 34%, but it will still be considerably higher than the projected Canadian average of 19% (p. 11). Similar trends were found in off-reserve Native populations. In their analysis of the data, Hagey et al. discussed the implications for future planning. They concluded:

> While the Canadian population is aging into the retirement-aged groups, the registered Indian population is aging into the working-aged groups. As a result, . . . the Indian population will need labour market oriented services, such as post-secondary education, training, employment opportunities and assistance for public development. (1989b, p. 17)

If these young people are to be prepared to meet the demands of the labor market, measures must be taken to provide adequate and appropriate education services.

Has the education system met the needs of Native students in the past? It would seem not. What are the implications for the future? With a large school-aged population that continues to grow, Native parents, community leaders, and educators have this challenge:

Create an education structure that meets the unique needs of the Native student. Many bands have attempted to meet these needs through local control. A look at the experiences of some of these communities illustrates both the diversity of experiences and the commonality of needs.

The insights that can be gathered from one community's efforts to meet student and community goals through local control of education can benefit the participants; the results of these efforts should also provide other locally controlled Native schools with a basis for assessing and/or improving their program. In addition, non-Native education practitioners are given the opportunity to gain a Native perspective on Indian education. In this study the experiences and views of stakeholders in one community that has taken steps to local control are shared.

Assumptions

It is assumed that

- the respondents have been honest when they have shared their ideas, views, and assessments;
- the respondents have shared their honest ideas, views, and assessments with the researcher and, having been promised anonymity, have done so without fear of reprisal;
- the respondents have accurately recalled the information asked of them; and
- the translator has accurately translated interviews done in the First Nation language.

Delimitations

The study is delimited to the population of one Northern Alberta Native community and to the period between 1986 and 1993. No attempt is made to generalize the findings. Transferability is limited to the context of this study.

Limitations

The study is limited to the recollections of the respondents and the ability of the researcher to elicit honest and accurate assessment from the respondents.

The study is further limited to the ability of the researcher to recall and interpret nuances based on a review of transcripts and field notes with a two-year time lapse between data gathering and completion of data analysis.

Definition of Terms

NATIVE - aboriginal people of Canada
- First Nations people of Indian, Inuit, or Métis ancestry.

INDIAN - an individual who is designated as a status or Treaty Indian as identified by the Canadian government in the Indian Act or other government documentation.

LOCAL CONTROL - self-determination. The definition provided by Urion (1975) will be used in this study: "where what goes on in schools is decided by representatives of the band, or where a level of

government contracts with a band or native jurisdiction for the operation of a school" (n.p.).

RESERVE - a land tract designated by the Canadian federal government as the tribal homeland of a specific band or tribe.

Summary and Organization of the Thesis

In this chapter the research problem was introduced, the objectives outlined, the rationale expressed, and the research questions listed. Furthermore, the justification for the study was defined; and the assumptions, delimitations, and limitations were outlined.

Chapter 2 contains a literature review which provides the historical context of Native education in Canada, a description of the catalysts which brought about change to past practices, and a description of problems resulting from historical ineptitude. Finally, a discussion follows which describes the strategies and experiences of Canadian Native communities that have attempted devolution of power to local control of education in an effort to address the perceived deficiencies of past practice.

The methodology is explained in Chapter 3. This consists of a description of the research design and the techniques used in data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 contains the content analysis of the data relating to the research questions. In Chapter 5 the themes that emerged from the data analysis are discussed. Finally, Chapter 6 consists of a description of the major findings of this study, personal reflections, and the implications of these findings for practice and future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

A search of the literature revealed many factors contributing to current assessments of local band-controlled education. Related literature is presented in four main sections: (a) the historical context for Native education in Canada, (b) the factors which motivated Native communities to explore alternatives, (c) the experiences of Native communities that had attempted local control of education, and (d) assessments and implications for future practice.

Stories of early contact with non-Native efforts to transform First Nation citizens into replicas of western Europeans, the resulting cultural genocide, and First Nations' responses to government initiatives to change schooling practices for on-reserve Natives form the framework for Natives' current attitudes to education. It is in gaining insight into these influences that one can begin to understand the context of current practices, and future goals and visions for Native education. To this end, the history of Native Education in Canada is briefly outlined. Practitioners, participants, and researchers identified concerns with Native education practices. In attempting to address these issues, many communities looked to local control of education for solutions. The factors which led to change are discussed; intents are compared to actual practices to explore the reasons for success or failure in meeting goals. Finally, the implications and visions for future practice in band or local control of education are addressed.

Much has been written on the issues relating to Native education. The researcher has chosen to limit discussion to Native education in Canada, with several brief allusions to Native American education as it relates to the Canadian Native experience. The review is further limited in its scope to literature related specifically to the factors influencing local control of education. The intent is to review relevant literature with sufficient breadth to provide a framework for understanding the Eagle Feather experience, while placing limitations to prevent shrouding the relevant issues.

This research study is guided by the framework formed by the literature review.

Historical Context

Early Views and Efforts: A Legacy of Assimilation

Both in the United States and Canada, the purpose of Native education was to *Christianize* and *civilize* the Indian people. Sir George Peckham of Virginia (1583; cited in Daniels, 1973) wrote of the goals of education for Indian people. Peckham stated that education would bring

> the savages . . . from falsehood to truth, from darkness to light, from the highway of death to the path of life, from superstitious idolatry to sincere Christianity, from the devil to Christ, from hell to heaven. . . . Beside the knowledge how to till and dress their ground, they should be reduced from unseemly customs to honest manners, from disordered, riotous routs and companies to a well-governed commonwealth and with all shall be taught mechanical occupations, arts and liberal sciences. (p. 145)

This belief that education should Christianize and provide a mechanical and liberal foundation for Indian people "dominated much of the thinking about education for Indians over the next 400 years" (p. 146).

Canadian government officials in the 1800s maintained this attitude. Sir James Kempt (Administrator of Lower Canada, 1828-1830) and Major General Darling (Chief Superintendent of Indian Affairs, 1828-1830) felt that Indians should be Christianized and civilized through an educational system provided by the Indian Department of the Canadian government (Daniels, 1973, p. 147). Reverend E. Wilson, who was charged with the responsibility to educate Native students in 19th-century Ontario, wrote a letter to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs in which he explained his views on Native education. Wilson (1877; cited in Wilson, 1986) stated:

> I believe that there is through Canada a kindly feeling towards the Indian race, that it is only their dirty habits, their undisciplined behaviour and their speaking another language, that prevents their intermingling with the white people. I believe also that there is in the Indian a perfect capability of adapting himself to the customs of the white people, . . . but he wants the advantages given him while young, and he requires to be drilled into the use of those advantages. (p. 75)

Woodward (1989) described the early schools: "The [Indian] children were prohibited from speaking their own language and were seldom allowed to go home to participate in the cultural events of the community" (p. 342). The purpose of these schools, it would seem, was to assimilate Natives to the dominant Western culture.

Early Indian people were skeptical of the advantages offered by white educators. Daniels (1973) quoted from Franklin's *Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America, 1784:* "In 1744, the Chief of the Six Nations Indians was offered the 'gift' of having six of their sons educated at Williamsburg" (p. 148). The following is the chief's reply to the invitation:

> We are convinced . . . that you mean to do us good by your proposal and thank you heartily. But you, who are wise, must know that different nations have different conceptions of things; and you will not therefore take it amiss if our ideas of this kind of education happened not to be the same with yours. We have had some experience of it; several of our young people were formerly brought up at the colleges of the northern provinces; they were instructed in all your sciences; but, when they came back to us, they were bad runners, ignorant of every means of living in the woods, unable to bear either cold or hunger, knew neither how to build a cabin, take a deer, nor kill an enemy, spoke our language imperfectly, were therefore neither fit for hunters, warriors nor counsellors; they were totally good for nothing. (p. 148)

The chief issued an invitation in return. He offered education to the sons of the "gentlemen of Virginia." An Indian education, he said, would "make men of them" (p. 148). These misconceptions have created a legacy of misunderstanding. Hampton (1993), a Native researcher and educator, explained this legacy of assimilation with a profound metaphor:

> The coming of western civilization (meaning western Europe) with its western forms of education to this continent was the autumn of traditional Indian education.
>
> In the fall, the wild grass dies. The Europeans took our land, our lives, and our children as the winter snow takes the grass. The loss is painful but the seed lives in spite of the snow. The fall of the year, the grass dies and drops its seed to lie hidden under the snow. Perhaps the snow thinks the seed has vanished but it lives on, hidden or blowing in the wind, or clinging to the pants leg of progress.
>
> How does the acorn unfold into an oak? Deep inside itself it knows—and we are no different. We know deep inside ourselves the pattern of life. The source of our traditions is present. (p. 295)

The effort to civilize and assimilate, as perpetuated by early church- and mission-run schools, had serious detrimental results in Indian communities. Goddard (1993) commented on this: "The social fabric of the First Nations was being destroyed and many of the problems facing contemporary Indians has their germination in this

[1800s, early 1900s] period" (p. 163). This impetus for integration continued between 1947 and 1969.

In recent years Native leaders have attempted to rectify this by encouraging bands to take control of their own education.

The Right to Education: Treaties and the BNA Act

Treaty rights. Between 1867 and 1880 Native peoples of Canada signed treaties that guaranteed people the right to education. Treaties Nos. 6, 7, and 8 were made with ancestors of today's Alberta Indians. (There is some overlap with other western provinces.)

In Treaty No. 6 the agreement pertaining to education is stated as follows: "Her Majesty agrees to maintain schools for instruction in such reserves hereby made as to Her Government of the Dominion of Canada may seem advisable, whenever the Indians of the reserve shall desire it" (Duhamel, 1964, p. 3). In Treaty No. 7 reference is made to the provision of funds for teachers: "Her Majesty agrees to pay the salary of such teachers to instruct the children of said Indians as to Her Government of Canada may seem advisable, when said Indians are settled on their Reserves and shall desire teachers" (Duhamel, 1966a, p. 5). Treaty No. 8 also makes reference to teacher salaries: "Her Majesty agrees to pay the salaries of such teachers to instruct the children of said Indians as to Her Majesty's Government of Canada may seem advisable" (Duhamel, 1966b, p. 13). In 1899 the Honorable Clifford Sifton, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, wrote a Report of Commissioners for Treaty No. 8. In this report he commented on the Indians' concern about education: "They [the Indians at Vermilion, Chipewyan, and Smith's Landing] seemed

desirous of securing educational advantages for their children, but stipulated that in the matter of schools there should be no interference with their religious beliefs" (p. 5). Sifton explained that assurances were made to alleviate those concerns:

> As to education, the Indians were assured that there was no need of any special stipulation, as it was the policy of the Government to provide in every part of the country, as far as circumstances would permit, for the education of Indian children, and that the law, which was as strong as a treaty, provided for non-interference with the religion of the Indians in schools maintained or assisted by the Government. (p. 6)

BNA (1867). In the following years (1880-1947) these commitments were followed through with residential schools, Indian day schools run by the church or government, or provincial schools with federal agreements to buy the provincial education services (Pauls, 1984, p. 32). "With the passing of the British North America Act, the Federal government became 'minimally and reluctantly' involved in Indian education" (Connelly, Chalmers, & Clark, 1965; cited in Gue, 1974, p. 10). Section 91(24) of the B.N.A. Act assigns "Indians, and the lands reserved for Indians" to "the exclusive legislative authority of the Parliament of Canada" (p. 10). Following this designation, in 1868 the parliament of Canada passed "an Act Providing for the Organization of the Department of the Secretary of State and for the Management of Indian and Ordinance Lands" (p. 10). This legislation provided that moneys collected from the sale of Indian lands could be used for "contributions to schools frequented by such Indians" (p. 10).

Education had been promised as a treaty right; assurances were given that there would be no interference in schools with Indian

religion. Native people today have gone back to these agreements and promises to fight for their rights.

The White Paper, 1969

In 1969 the Canadian Department of Indian and Northern Affairs published a policy paper which addressed Native issues. Often referred to as The White Paper (Canada, DIAND, 1969), it reflected the attitudes of the Canadian government of the time toward Indian people. It reflected an understanding of the unique culture and values of the Indian people and the need to maintain those distinctive qualities:

> To be an Indian is to be a man, with all a man's needs and abilities. To be an Indian is also to be different. It is to speak different languages, draw different pictures, tell different tales and to rely on a set of values developed in a different world. (p. 3)

The White Paper (Canada, DIAND, 1969) recognized the atrocities of the past. "Without recognition by others, it is not easy to be proud. The legitimate pride of the Indian people has been crushed too many times by too many of their fellow Canadians" (p. 8). It recognized the right of Indian people to take personal responsibility for the preservation of their own culture. "The Indian culture can be preserved, perpetuated and developed only by the Indian people themselves" (p. 9). "The principle of equality and all that goes with it demands that all of us recognize each other's cultural heritage as a source of personal strength" (p. 8). However, in an effort to recognize a distinct Indian culture and at the same time reflect a liberal attitude of equality, DIAND attempted to renege on federal rights for Indians. DIAND attempted to justify this:

> But to be a Canadian Indian today is to be someone different in another way. It is to be someone apart—apart in law, apart in the provision of government services and, too often, apart in social contacts. To be an Indian must be to be free—free to develop Indian cultures in an environment of legal, social and economic equality with other Canadians. (p. 3)

DIAND (Canada, 1969) concluded that "all shall be treated fairly and that no one shall be shut out of Canadian life, and especially that no one shall be shut out because of his race" (p. 6). A policy was developed based on that belief.

Historically, the federal government had taken responsibility for Indian matters. This had "inhibited the development of a proper relationship between the provinces and the Indian people" (Canada, DIAND, 1969, p. 7). This practice created a legacy of separateness and poverty.

> With the technological change of the twentieth century, society became increasingly industrial and complex, and the separateness of the Indian people became more evident. Most Canadians moved to the growing cities, but the Indians remained largely a rural people, lacking both education and opportunity. The land was being developed rapidly, but many reserves were located in places where little development was possible. Reserves were usually excluded from development and many began to stand out as islands of poverty. (pp. 7-8)

Finally, "the role of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in serving the Indian people would be phased out as arrangements with the provinces were completed" (p. 13). A policy was developed based on that belief.

The Native Response

In June 1970 the Indian Chiefs of Alberta responded to the initiatives of the White Paper: "We have studied carefully the contents of the Government White Paper on Indians and we have concluded

that it offers despair instead of hope" (p. 1). The Indian Chiefs of Alberta complained that the federal Minister of Indian Affairs had an erroneous concept of consultation:

> The Minister said, "This review was a response to things said by Indian people at the consultation meetings." . . . Yet, . . . what Indians asked that the Canadian Constitution be changed to remove any reference to Indians or Indian lands? What Indians asked that Treaties be brought to an end? What group of Indians asked that aboriginal rights not be recognized? . . . The answer is no Treaty Indians asked for any of these things and yet through his concept of "consultation," the Minister said that his White Paper was in response to things said by Indians. (p. 1)

Further comments were made on the concepts of equality and justice. The Indian Chiefs of Alberta (1970) rejected the policy statement that "'the legislative and constitutional bases of discrimination should be removed': We say that the recognition of Indian status is essential for justice. . . . Justice requires that the special history, rights and circumstances of Indian People be recognized" (p. 4).

The chiefs concluded:

> The White Paper Policy said "that there should be positive recognition by everyone of the unique contribution of Indian culture to Canadian life."
>
> We say that these are nice sounding words which are intended to mislead everybody. The only way to maintain our culture is for us to remain as Indians. To preserve our culture it is necessary to preserve our status, rights, lands and traditions. Our treaties are the bases of our rights.
>
> The White Paper Policy says "that services should come through the same channels and from the same government agencies for all Canadians."
>
> We say that the Federal Government is bound by the British North America Act, Section 9k, Head 24, to accept legislative responsibility for "Indians and Indian lands." Moreover in exchange for the lands which the Indian people surrendered to the Crown the treaties ensure [certain benefits]: The provision of education of all types and levels to all Indian people at the expense of the Federal government. (Indian Chiefs of Alberta, 1970, p. 4)

The Indian Chiefs of Alberta rejected the DIAND proposal. The NIB (1972) also responded to the proposed policy. The NIB stressed: "The Federal Government has legal responsibility for Indian education as defined by the treaties and the Indian Act" (p. 5).

The NIB (1972) presented a policy paper to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development titled *Indian Control of Indian Education,* which encouraged Native parents to take control of their children's future out of the hands of the federal government and to create a system of education to meet the unique needs of the Native child:

> We want education to give our children the knowledge to understand and be proud of themselves and the knowledge to understand the world around them. (p. 1)
>
> We must have the freedom to choose among many options and alternatives. Decisions on specific issues can be made only in the context of local control of education. We uphold the right of the Indian Bands to make these specific decisions and to exercise their full responsibility in providing the best possible education for our children. (p. 4)
>
> The need for good schools in Indian communities is becoming more urgent. These schools should have two goals: (a) providing adequate and appropriate educational opportunity, where skills to cope effectively with the challenge of modern life can be acquired; and (b) creating the environment where Indian identity and culture will flourish. (p. 22)

The NIB (1972) concluded that "the native languages are being lost; that the younger generations can no longer speak or understand their mother tongue. If the Indian identity is to be preserved, steps must be taken to reverse this trend" (p. 13).

The White Paper became "the impetus behind native mobilization toward Indian control" of Indian education (Yuzdepski, 1983, p. 37). Panting and Gibbons (1980; cited in Yuzdepski) commented on the

proposed White Paper policy: "Under the guise of equality, [it] would abrogate its legal obligation and lead to the first Canadians becoming merely 'an ethnic group like others'" (p. 37).

Native people were not involved in the policy development. In the effort to right historical wrongs, the Canadian government repeated its mistake. It did not ask the Indian people themselves what was best for them. The federal government attempted to renege on its promises. The aim of the [White Paper] policy was to remove "the specific references to Indians from the Constitution" (Canada, DIAND, 1969, p. 8). Further, the policy stated that, "in the short term, repeal of the Indian Act and the enactment of traditional legislation . . . would do much to mitigate the problem [of distinct treatment of Indian people]" (p. 8). This would eliminate all rights granted to Indians in the Indian Act. Indian leaders responded adamantly. They would not accept this attempt to abrogate their rights.

The Need for Change: The Issues

The legacy of cultural genocide and the inadequacy of educational services provided to on-reserve students by federally and provincially controlled schools led many First Nations communities to explore alternatives. Many issues were identified as critical to the emergence of healthy communities and student achievement.

Poverty and Native Education

Socioeconomic factors, it is suggested, affect learning. Hull (1990), of the Working Margins Consulting Group, conducted research to illustrate the connection between socioeconomic factors and the

success of Native children in schools. The data source for his article came from a study commissioned by DIAND which looked at registered Indian socioeconomic conditions. Hull concluded the following:

- As the parents' SES [socioeconomic status] increases, the proportion of children who have left school prior to grade 11 decreases.
- Registered Indian children whose parents have a high SES are more than twice as likely to have completed high school than Indian children who have a low SES (70% compared to 30%).
- Indian students and adults are well behind other Canadians in educational success and attainment. This educational gap is related to such factors as family status and income, parents' educational levels, use of Indian language in the home, and geographic location. (pp. 3, 11)

Hull (1990) recommended that Indian parents receive assistance to improve their "income, training, and employment," which would result in "improved educational success for their children" (p. 11). He stated that "Indian students are the victims of social and economic inequities" and challenged schools to redress their failure to "properly address the specific needs of low-income, culturally distinct student populations" (p. 12).

Those who are involved in the decision-making process must be informed. DIAND (1990) published a report on the social conditions of aboriginal people of Canada. It looked at current conditions and projections for future conditions. At the present time aboriginal families are larger, on average, than Canadian families and have a higher percentage of lone parents. Improvement in housing for aboriginal families was reported, but it was still found that "a higher proportion of status Indians and Inuit live in crowded dwellings and in dwellings without central heating systems than do non-native Canadians" (p. 1). The number of aboriginal families who rely on

social assistance for income is increasing. These increases are larger in proportion to the Canadian population (p. 1).

Ross and Shillington (1989) found that 52% of the incomes of Natives with incomes fall below the low-income ($10,000) level. Compared to the Canadian average of 39.1%, this is a high percentage.

Social and economic conditions in Native communities should be addressed in any discussion of Native education.

Spirituality: The Circle of Life

Native spirituality cannot be ignored in the education of Native children. In a discussion of Native spirituality, two Native researchers have been quoted extensively. Hampton (1993) is a Chickasaw Native from Oklahoma. With a Native father and a White mother, he was raised and educated in two cultures. He is a graduate of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where he is presently employed as the Director of the American Indian Program (AIP). His conclusions are based on his own experiences as well as on research that he conducted. Hampton interviewed 10 Native graduate students enrolled in the AIP at Harvard. Each participant had both professional and personal experience in Indian education. Although the research was executed in the United States, the findings can be applied to the Canadian experience. Akan (1992) is a Saulteaux Indian from Saskatchewan. She interviewed an Elder from the Muskcowekwun Band in Southern Saskatchewan. She asked the Elder: "What do you think Native students and educators ought to know about Native education?" (p. 119). The Elder was described as "a respected Elder"

who "attends band council, regional and sometimes provincial political and educational meetings and conferences, [and who] plays an important spiritual and advisory role in the community."

Hampton (1993) commented on the importance of considering spirituality in any discourse on Native education: "The first standard of Indian education is spirituality; at its centre is a respect for the spiritual relationships that exist between all things" (p. 283). Akan (1992) explained that when spiritual needs are ignored, children suffer. She quoted the Elder's comments on this:

> The Elder speaks of the integral role that spirituality plays in education. "There is more for them to learn and know," he says, implying that the spiritual and emotional aspects of personal development must not be neglected or forgotten. Walking and talking in Saulteaux traditionalist discourse involves learning how to think and act in a morally acceptable way, and to act in accordance with the old ways within a modern context that is balanced in nature. (pp. 135-136)

In the Circle of Life, all things are connected. When that circle was broken by non-Native education practices, the result was complete erosion of the fabric of Native community life.

> Physical, mental and spiritual—it is all one thing to the Indian. Physical effects of the conquest on Indian education include otitis media, fetal alcohol syndrome, material poverty, poor housing, poor nutrition. Treaty provisions were not met, schools were not built, teachers were not sent. The mental effects include the erosion of our self-concept, denial of worth, the outlawing of languages. The spiritual effects include the outlawing of our worship, the imposition of Christian denominationalism, the destruction of Indian families. (Hampton, 1993, p. 296)

The circle must be mended.

Value Conflicts

The role of Elders. Students who are taught one set of values at home and another at school experience great inner conflict. For example, if a child is taught at home to value group needs over individual needs, but is enrolled in a school "which not only exalts Anglo values, but sets the individual in opposition to the group, [he] will feel the conflict between being Indian and being educated" (Hampton, 1993, p. 286).

These conflicts can only be resolved when the leadership and direction of the Elders is respected and followed in the schools. An Elder is regarded as an authority. As such, he is likely to be respected by students. As a spiritual leader, the Elder can give guidance by providing both visionary goals for the school and direction for students in their daily walk. Akan (1992) spoke of the Elders' authority:

> An Elder is regarded as someone who knows what is important in life and applies that knowledge to his or her life. The authority of an Elder comes from the recognition of this knowledge by others, and the reliability of the Elder's discourse can be tested in the context of time, when it lasts: values and attitudes that outlast conflict and contradictions are reflective of a peace-oriented paradigm that pervades the essence of "good talks." (p. 120)

"Our traditions define and preserve us," Hampton (1993) proclaimed (p. 293). He used the metaphor of the circle to illustrate this view.

> Walking the circle of Indian education, facing the East it is traditional to pray for our children. It is an American Indian tradition—it is [a] deeply human tradition—to pray for future generations. Those traditions—those prayers, hopes, and dreams of our old ones—mark us as much as, perhaps more than, their defeats, their fears, and their errors. To educate ourselves and our children, we must start with who we are, with the traditions, the values, and the ways of life that we absorbed as children of the people. An elder told me, "I am just one day old." This day connects our past and future, the

> child within to the elder we hope to become. The identity of Indian people is that which links our history and our future to this day, now. (pp. 286-287)

It is in recognizing those traditions and in following the leadership of the Elders that Native educational leaders can begin to organize effective schools. Non-Native schools did not address these factors and failed to meet the needs of Native students.

Curriculum development. The literature identified the need for culturally relevant curriculum (Hampton, 1993; Koens, 1989; NIB, 1972; UIATF, 1975). The National Indian Brotherhood (1972) had identified curriculum as a major area of concern:

> The present school system is culturally alien to native students. Where the Indian contribution is not entirely ignored, it is often cast in an unfavorable light. . . . Using curriculum as a means to achieve their educational goals, Indian parents want to develop a program which will maintain balance and relevancy between academic/skill subjects and Indian cultural subjects. (p. 9)

Education must reflect the culture of the people it serves. The National Indian Brotherhood (1972) stressed that goal:

> The time has come for a radical change in Indian education. Our aim is to make education relevant to the philosophy and needs of the Indian people. We want education to give our children a strong sense of identity, with confidence in their personal worth and ability. (p. 3)

To reflect the cultural values, the curriculum must do more than insert "a measure of 'Indianness' . . . through a somewhat romanticized and limited notion of the concept of the actual culture" (Koens, 1989, p. 37). Koens suggested that this results in "a proliferation of school activities which develop expertise in such exotic minutiae as beadwork, carving and Indian dancing" and that these developments are expected to reduce educational problems such as high student absenteeism. He concluded, however, that only by

developing a curriculum that is truly "grounded in the operant culture of the community" could greater success be achieved (p. 37). Koens suggested a process for successful transmission of knowledge through the curriculum. He explained that the "basis of the sociology of knowledge" is "anthropological in nature" (p. 40). In a traditional Indian community, knowledge is usually transmitted through an elder, "who provides insight into a validated reality [which] may range from pragmatic bushlore to the experiencing of the supernatural" (p. 41). To be effective, the process of knowledge transmission in the classroom must reflect the traditional methods. Koens concluded: "This process is a precondition to a successful on-reserve, in-school experience. The community must have a publicly validated value system which, while being external to the school, is recognized and reinforced through the school" (p. 41).

The United Indians of All Tribes Foundation (UIATF; 1975) stressed curriculum development as imperative to the successful accomplishment of the goals of Native education.

> The curriculum of the Native American educational system are the songs, dances and oral traditions of our elders, the wisdom of the natural environment, the Beauty Way, the good Red Road of our forefathers. Even from the womb of the mother, parents prayed and began to educate the child to the sacred ways of the tribe and community. Each phase of curriculum in the child's life was planned and coordinated between the parents and the extended family, until finally the child became a fully functioning part of the body of the tribe and community. To the degree that we can again return the control and direction of education and its curriculum to the hands of parents, tribes and the Native American community, will be the degree that we will be able to prosper and grow. To do this, we must clarify those values that are important to our community and then develop a curriculum and a way to teach this curriculum to our children and ourselves. (p. 2)

The UIATF has developed a step process for educators to follow in meeting those goals. This process reflects the holistic approach to learning that UIATF identified as the learning style of Native students.

Whyte (1986) recommended that educational programs be developed to capitalize on the strengths of Indian students. To do this the program must reflect the culture and experiences of the Indian student. Whyte concluded that creating and implementing such a curriculum is not only achievable, but that the result would be increased student achievement and parental involvement.

> If schools are to do justice to Indian and Metis students they cannot continue to represent a culture that ignores and oppresses and denigrates the indigenous culture. Courses and materials which reflect the positive impact of Indian and Metis people have and can be further developed and used. The traditions, heritage, and folklore by one's group can be material for the school today. The spiritual heritage of the community can become part of the school experience. A curriculum infused with content of an Indian and Metis cultural heritage will go a long way in helping generate interest and motivation among Indian and Metis youth. But this alone will not alleviate the alienation and rejection of the school. First, Indian parents must feel the school is their school and not of an alien culture unwilling to listen to their concerns. (p. 15)

A locally or band-controlled school could, it was hoped, achieve these goals.

Learning styles. In developing curriculum that reflects the values and history of a culture, educators also need to consider teaching strategies as they relate to learning styles. The literature revealed a need to address issues of learning styles (Akan, 1992; Browne, 1990; Chrisjohn & Peters, 1986; Hampton, 1993; Larose, 1991; Leroy, 1990; Pepper & Henry, 1986; Rosin, 1993). Do Native students have a particular learning style? Research indicates that cultural background can influence "hemispheric preference." Browne (1990) tested this

hypothesis. She concluded: "My results support the conclusions of students of culture, such as Ross [1982] and Catley [1980], that the Native American culture encourages the development of a right hemisphere dominant learning style" (p. 29). Browne suggested that both the parenting style the child had experienced and the child's early experiences in a culture that emphasized the use of "right hemisphere cognitive processes" could have an impact on his/her learning style (p. 28). She concluded: "To attempt to determine the source of children's hemispheric preference is not as important as determining how to create an educational environment where they can use these hemispheric strengths to develop the skills that schools are designed to teach" (p. 29). She noted that intelligence and learning style are not connected; however, there is "a definite connection between learning style and level of achievement in school" (p. 30). Browne also suggested that the relationship resulted from school curriculum that is "influenced predominantly by left hemisphere dominant thinking" (p. 30). Students whose learning style had not been accurately assessed and addressed achieved at lower academic levels. The curriculum, then, must be developed to meet the needs of both right- and left-hemisphere-dominant learners. Browne stressed the importance of creating a curriculum that meets the needs of both right- and left-hemisphere-dominant learners (p. 31).

Hampton (1993) and Akan (1992) both commented on Native thought patterns:

> Indian cultures have ways of thought, learning, teaching, and communicating that are different than, but of equal validity to, those of white cultures. These thought-ways stand at the

> beginning of Indian time and are the foundations of our children's lives. Their full flower is in the [sic] what it means to be one of the people. (Hampton, p. 292)
>
> If one were to try to give a metaphorical description of some of the features of First Nations thought, one might say that they go to school in their dreams, write in iconographic imagery, travel in Trickster's vehicle, talk in metaphor, and always walk around. (Akan, p. 139)

Those who are involved in developing curriculum for Native students should be aware of the right-hemisphere-dominant learning style theory and distinctive thought-pattern descriptions and make appropriate adjustments to curriculum plans.

Expectations. Implicit in the planning of an effective program must be an attitude of high expectation. The National Indian Brotherhood (1988) shared the importance of high expectations:

> High quality education and high academic expectations of First Nations students are expressed by First Nations communities, parents, Elders, and teachers. High quality education and academic achievement is supported by the various First Nations cultures. . . . The present and future quality of life in First Nations communities is dependent upon available and effective quality education services for all members of the community. . . .
>
> Appropriate teaching techniques ensure that students receive effective instruction in a quality curriculum. (p. 16)

Those appropriate teaching techniques must be identified by conducting research with First Nations people. First Nations people should also be involved in curriculum development so that it will reflect Native values.

Self-esteem. Wall and Madak (1991) studied Indian students' academic self-concept and their perceptions of teacher and parent aspirations for them. Students in both band-controlled and provincial schools were interviewed. The study results showed that there were no significant differences between the self-concepts of students

attending these two types of schools, but that students attending a band-controlled school "perceived that their parents and favorite teacher held significantly higher levels of aspirations for them" than did public school attenders (p. 43). Since research has demonstrated the importance of "high teacher and parental expectations on attrition and educational achievement levels," the study results are significant for educational planners (p. 49).

Parent/Community Expectations

The NIB (1988b) conducted a community survey to elicit the views of First Nations parents towards educational philosophy. The findings were as follows:

- The majority of respondents supported a First Nations philosophy of education which incorporates cultural values and appropriate academic learning.
- All groups unanimously and strongly agreed that pride in Native heritage should be taught in school. All groups supported the teaching of traditional skills in school. But educators expressed a concern for equal emphasis on academic skills.
- 90% agreed that it is important for schools to prepare students to take part in the process towards First Nation self-government.
- The respondents strongly supported the idea that schools should prepare First Nations students to live in both aboriginal and non-aboriginal societies and prepare students for future academic and vocational success. (p. 8)

The NIB (1988b) believed that the quality of education could be improved if parents, Elders, local political leaders, educators, and other concerned community members became actively involved in the process of providing educational services (p. 13). In addition, the NIB stressed the importance of incorporating First Nations values and beliefs "as a matter of course in the curriculum of federal, provincial and territorial schools" (p. 13).

In their summary of recommendations, the NIB (1988b) stressed the need for the development of curriculum materials that "eliminate stereotypes about First Nations and teach pride in our [Native] heritage, provide cultural content and promote feelings of self-worth" (p. 33). It was also felt that absenteeism, the need for suspensions, and high dropout rates should be addressed by "increasing parental and community involvement; hiring more counsellors, providing a culturally relevant curriculum, requiring cross-cultural training of teachers of First Nations students; and analyzing and refining policies related to corporal punishment, suspension and other infractions" (p. 35).

Indian Control of Indian Education

A First Attempt in Canada: Blue Quills, Alberta

In 1970 the community of Blue Quills, Alberta, opened the first Indian-administered school in Canada (Bashford & Heinzerling, 1987). Goals for the school were identified: The school would provide "an academic education equal to that available at any high school in the province, with Indian language and culture included in the curriculum." In addition, "the atmosphere of the school was to reflect the high

Indian value placed on good human relations, sharing and family-like feeling among students, teachers and administrators" (p. 129).

Bashford and Heinzerling (1987) described the school as a success. Although no figures were cited, the respondents felt that a high graduation rate and sustained parental involvement demonstrated the success of the school. Although the school faced challenges in its first few years of operation, the respondents felt that their school reflected a unified community perspective on curriculum. Blue Quills is an example of courage and perseverance that other communities can follow.

Theory Into Practice: A Look at Varied Experiences

After 1970, following the Blue Quills example, many Canadian Indian communities initiated local control of education. Although the impetus for change varied, they shared common goals and strategies to achieve those goals.

The NIB (1988a) reviewed band-controlled schools across Canada. In an analysis of six school or school divisions discussed in this study, a number of common themes emerged. Although the impetus for change varied, these communities shared common goals and strategies to achieve those goals. The schools or school divisions discussed here are as follows: Mi'kmawey School, Chopel Island, Nova Scotia; Kahnawake Survival School, Kahnawake, Quebec; Lakeview School, West Bay, Ontario; Kipohtakaw Education Center, Alexander Reserve, Alberta; Seabird Island Community School, British Columbia; James Bay Cree School Board, Quebec. These schools served from 28 to 2,763 students.

The respondents cited in the NIB (1988a) study gave a number of reasons for initiating change in their communities (see Appendix D). The need to address concerns for dropouts and to increase academic achievement were expressed. A number of reasons given related to culture and language retention: The children must retain their Native language, cultural differences must be addressed in the curriculum, and teaching strategies must reflect the learning styles of Native students. Finally, it was felt that parents must be involved in and have control of the education of their children. Strategies initiated to achieve stated goals were also discussed (see Appendix D). Native teachers were hired to help achieve the goals for quality locally controlled education, students were given Native-language classes or immersion in Native language for primary-care courses, and Native spirituality was encouraged. In addition, various curriculum and instruction provisions were based on local learning styles and cultural experiences: The curriculum was adapted to meet the unique needs of students. Finally, Elders and parents were encouraged to participate in school programs; and, through school/community activities and communications networks, community members were encouraged to become involved in the schools. The respondents felt that some positive changes had resulted from these efforts (see Appendix D). Student self-esteem and cultural pride had improved, community spirit towards education had been revitalized, and parent involvement in the school had increased. In addition, it was felt that the communities had also reaped the benefits of local control of education: There was an increase in training or employment opportunities for community members, and the

school/community education programs in nutrition and drug-abuse prevention had been initiated (NIB, 1988a).

Assessment for Future Practice

Has band control of education addressed the issues identified by Native leaders and community members? Have the community problems been resolved through success in community education? Hampton (1993) was quite optimistic. He saw local control as a long-term learning and growing process rather than an immediate and total change. He commented on the need to look forward:

> The current situation in Indian education is cold and dark, with just the hint of light that makes it possible to hope for spring. The horrors that Native people are going through are not as bad as those the previous generations faced, and the fact that we have survived and are in some ways stronger bodes well for our future. It is important, therefore, to understand both the statistics of pain and the rays of hope. (p. 296)

> Statistics show the inroads of winter. Just as counting dead plants is an inadequate measure of the life of the seeds, so counting the deaths, the alcoholism rates, the suicides, the murders, and the dropouts is inadequate to measure the vitality of Native life. The horrors and the indescribable pain of Native existence after the European conquest cannot be minimized. Neither can the validity of Native resistance and resurgence. (p. 299)

Hampton described some of the positive steps taken on the road to success:

> Encouraging trends can be seen in Native-controlled schools. The self-determination goals of Native education are being served in Indian-controlled schools . . . ; school-community relations have impr[illegible]d; Native curriculum has and is being developed in most Native communities; funding is available even though it is usually through the vagaries of proposal writing; the number of Native educators have increased dramatically; the values of Native cultures and languages are being actively promoted; and there is a perception of the need for Native approaches to the methods and structures of education. (p. 270)

Many communities, however, have been pushed into local-control agreements before they were ready. Band control was pushed on Native communities by DIAND in an effort to cut costs (Hall, 1992). In the past, real control was maintained by the federal government, and bands were given the power to implement government policy (Goddard, 1992; Hall, 1992). This lack of control and lack of community input have adversely affected goals for community change through education (Calliou, 1992; Taylor, Craig, & McAlpine, 1993).

Taylor et al. (1993) suggested that devolution of control was the beginning. The challenge to communities is ownership and change.

> Most educators and politicians see empowerment as the end of an important process designed to allow aboriginal peoples control over their educational destiny. Our point is that empowerment is only the beginning of the process. Empowerment does not arise in a vacuum. It is implemented in the context of a long history of subjugation of Aboriginal peoples, and hence sudden empowerment generates a whole series of dilemmas for Aboriginal communities. Recognizing these realities will, we believe, avoid placing unrealistic expectations on the empowerment process and convince both mainstream and Aboriginal educators that empowerment is but the beginning of a fundamental societal challenge. (p. 182)

The purpose of past practices in Indian education has been the attempted assimilation of aboriginal culture and language into the majority non-Indian culture. First Nations people have worked to change the policies and practices of the past. The NIB (1988c) stressed the importance of an appropriate education to begin the healing process in Native communities: "First Nations education focuses on the well-being of the students. It is a holistic approach that prepares First Nations students for total living" (p. 6). In addition, it was contended that "First Nations students need to be taught pride in First Nation heritage, provided cultural content, and supported in the

development of their feelings of self-worth" (p. 15). First Nations people claim the rights to determine their own future through education.

The goal of Native education is to provide the children with the skills "that will allow them to function effectively in both their own cultural setting and in the greater Canadian society" (Gardner, 1986, p. 19). Education should develop in students "a strong cultural identity" and should "promote, perpetuate and enhance" the Native culture, language, and way of life (p. 19). During this process, it is expected that academic achievement and the number of high school graduates will increase. In addition, student self-esteem will increase, and absenteeism will decrease. The entire community will reap the benefits in language and culture retention, increased training and job opportunities, and a sense of community pride.

"Meeting the challenge of Indian control of Indian education is a long-term process" (Barman, Hebert, & McCaskill, 1987, p. 16). Barman et al. discussed this process:

> Educational change happens in stages. The most effective changes start at the community level. The positive role of parents as initiators in demanding change is crucial to Indian education. Along with the parents, the local education co-ordinator and education committees can be of vital assistance in guiding efforts for change. Beyond these levels lies a political stage, widely visible in Indian education. The involvement of Indian leaders working in tandem with members of the local community is essential in pressing for educational change. But none of these stages will maintain educational change without the co-operation and involvement of classroom teachers and educational administrators. This highlights the great need to continue to train Indians and non-Indians alike to provide culturally and linguistically relevant quality education to Indian students.
>
> Assessment of the significance of the past decade and a half in Indian education is only now beginning, participants having for the most part been too busy to give way to

> contemplation or reflection. However, it is through the lives of individuals now being educated that Indian control will bear its fruits. (pp. 16-17)

Educational leaders, parents, and teachers in band-controlled schools are attempting to take steps to rectify the mistakes of the past. We have begun to see the "fruits of this labor."

The legacy of cultural annihilation has been thwarted by the First Nations thrust for locally controlled culturally relevant education. It is hoped that continued efforts will bring continued cultural renewal and healing.

Summary

In this chapter the literature relating to local control of Native education has been reviewed. A search of the literature revealed the need to examine local control of Indian education to explore alternatives to present practice. A discussion of the historical context of Native education in Canada provided the background needed to understand the impetus for change in this area. The need for change, the strategies suggested to address the identified issues, and the experiences of other communities with attempts to implement suggested changes provided a framework within which to examine the perceptions of stakeholders within one particular community.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this study the perceptions and assessments of stakeholders in one community's band-controlled school have been researched. The methodology has been chosen to fulfil that purpose best.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first contains a description of the overall research design. Next, the pilot study used to develop the second stage of the study is outlined. Following is a report of the data-collection process and methods, and the procedures used for data analysis. Finally, the ethical considerations and strategies used to ensure trustworthiness are detailed.

Research Design

In this study an attempt was made to present stakeholders' perceptions of their band-controlled school by presenting views and insights within the context of the respondents' experiences. A qualitative method was chosen as the most appropriate approach because it is "adaptive to dealing with multiple realities" and is "sensitive and adaptable to the many mutually shaping influences and value patterns that may be encountered" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 40). A naturalistic approach allowed the design to emerge as the study proceeded. As recommended by Guba (1978), the design for data collection was used as a guideline so that neither the researcher nor the respondents would be constrained; emerging themes could then be explored. Wolf and Tymitz (1976, 1977; cited in Guba, 1978)

described naturalistic inquiry as an attempt to "present 'slice of life' episodes documented through natural language and representing as closely as possible how people feel, what they know, how they know it, and what their concerns, beliefs, perceptions, and understandings are" (p. 3). In this study an attempt was made to present "slice-of-life episodes" in an effort to explain stakeholder assessments of education in their community. To this end, observations and interviews were completed.

Data Collection

Data were collected to determine the initial intents and goals of the band-controlled education program in Eagle Feather Community School, the processes or steps taken to meet those goals, and the progress made in achieving those goals. As suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), the human instrument was the primary data-gathering instrument because a nonhuman instrument would not have "sufficient adaptability to encompass and adjust to the variety of realities that will be encountered" and because instruments would be intrusive and would "intervene in the mutual shaping of other elements and that shaping can be appreciated and evaluated only by a human" (pp. 39-40).

Basis for Data Collection

Data were gathered to fulfil the following objectives:

1. to seek the opinions/evaluations of the Elders, educational leaders (Council and board members), parents, students, and Native school-staff members with respect to their understanding of the

mandate or goals, the steps taken to fulfil that mandate, and their assessment of the progress made to meet those goals;

2. to seek the opinions/evaluations of the stakeholders with respect to the implementation of the perceived goals, the implementation of organizational structures and programs presently in use, and their recommendations to improve the structures and programs;

3. to conduct a document and literature search to develop criteria for judgement; and

4. to conduct a document and literature search to identify alternatives.

The Stake model (Worthen & Sanders, 1987, p. 131; see Figure 1) was used as a framework for gathering data. The three cells in the left-hand column of the left-hand matrix represent information gathered about the "intents" and goals of the band-controlled program before it was implemented. The three cells in the right-hand column represent observations of what has actually been done since the program of band-controlled education was introduced. The top row of cells represents what was intended before the program was introduced. The second row represents the actual transactions which make up the program, and the bottom row represents the intended and observed outcomes of the program.

Data Identification

The data required to achieve the stated objectives were identified and collected. Merriam (1988) suggested that multiple methods of data collection be employed so that investigators "can achieve the

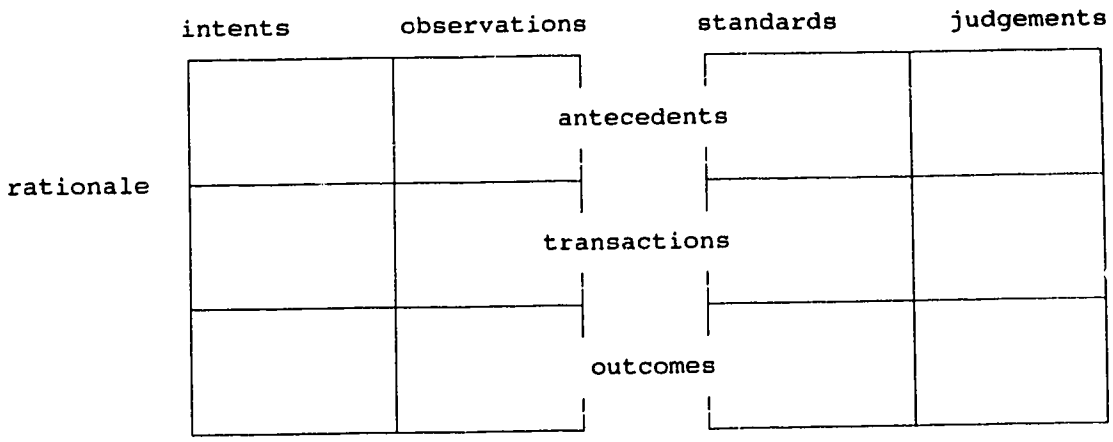

Figure 1. Stake model (Worthen & Sanders, 1987, p. 131).

best of each [method], while overcoming their unique deficiencies" (p. 69). To this end, data were collected through in-depth interviews with participants. The respondents were selected from the community members and staff of the community school. Five initial categories were identified: Native school-staff members, band leaders (Council or board members), students, Elders, and parents. Open-ended interviews were completed with one representative of each group to identify categories for further study. A somewhat unstructured mode for interviews was used at this initial stage. As suggested by Merriam, this less-structured format, in combination with observation, allowed "fresh insights and new information" to emerge as a basis for formulating questions for the second phase of the study (p. 74). After these data were collected, three additional respondents from each group were interviewed. To aid the researcher's understanding of the background to devolution in this particular community, a representative of DIAND and of the Public School Division were interviewed. Interagency representatives were also interviewed, because many

participants commented on the goal of interagency collaboration and on the symbiotic relationship between those agencies and the school. To this end, representatives from the following community agencies and services were interviewed: RCMP, Medical Services, Social Services, and Youth Counselling Services. Finally, formal interviews and informal discussions were held with several members of the teaching and/or administrative staff. For the purposes of this study, three primary means of data collection were used: (a) interviews, (b) observations, and (c) literature search.

Data Sources

The sample for the study was selected from the community members and staff of the community school. Purposive sampling, "based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most" (Merriam, 1988, p. 48), was used to choose participants. They were chosen on the basis of the following criteria: willingness to give informed consent, availability, and experience with or knowledge of the school operation. Participants were chosen by two methods recommended by Merriam for use in a qualitative study, by "reputational case selection," where a key person identifies those who fulfil the criteria; and through "network selection," where "each successive participant is named by a preceding individual" (pp. 50, 52). Although effort was made to schedule interviews, at times it was expedient to "seize the moment," as illustrated in the following excerpt from field notes:

> I spent the morning listening to and making notes on the interviews I had completed. It was so cold outside today that I was glad of the excuse to spend the morning inside. An Elder had indicated, through his daughter, that he wanted to speak to me and had asked that I go to his house after lunch. After checking my map of the c(munity, I noted that it would be about a 45-minute walk. Since I didn't have a vehicle, I put on as many layers as possible without hampering my balance and began the trek. After about 10 minutes, I thought about turning back. The wind had penetrated the many layers of protective clothing, and I was sure my bone marrow was solidly frozen. At that point a young man, driving by, stopped and asked if I needed a ride. I gratefully accepted and answered his questions as to the purpose of my visit to the community. I had him drop me off several houses away from my destination and proceeded to the Elder's house. On arrival, I was told that the Elder was resting and that I should come back another time. I was so disappointed! As I trudged rather dispiritedly in the direction of my home base, the same young man drove by again. He told me that he had two young children in the school and asked if he could share his ideas with me. He offered me tea, bummed a few cigarettes, and proceeded to talk. I didn't have a chance to cover the research questions he missed, because he concluded with, "That's all I have to say," which in my experience meant, "The interview is over." He dropped me off at the house. (Field Notes, February 1992)

Because this parent had been suggested as a possible contributor, his interview has been included in the data analysis.

Three people from each group were interviewed. The groups are (a) Native school-staff members, (b) band leaders (Council and board members), (c) students, (d) Elders, and (e) parents. Documentation and observations were used to provide contextual clues for greater insight.

Data Analysis

Transcripts were made of the taped interviews. The researcher reviewed the tapes and transcripts to ensure accuracy. Punctuation was added, then analyzed, to reflect as accurately as possible the tone

and intent of the responses. Akan (1992) stressed the importance of maintaining the integrity of language in transcribing oral interviews when doing First Nation research. Haig-Brown (1992) commented on this in her study: "For people whose traditional cultures are oral, I feel it is most important to include their words verbatim in order to preserve that aspect of their speech" (p. 98). In recognition of the value of maintaining data integrity, minor changes only were made to the wording of interview responses. These changes were made as needed for clarification purposes.

The respondents reviewed their transcripts. They were given the opportunity to confirm the accuracy of the transcriptions and invited to make changes or respond further, according to their wishes. Several respondents asked for and were given the opportunity to add to their statements in a second interview. The procedures for transcription and review as described above were followed with these additional interviews.

The researcher listened to the tapes of the interviews and noted general impressions. Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggested: "While coding an incident for a category, compare it with the previous incidents in the same and different groups coded in the same category" (p. 106). Following this advice, the researcher analyzed the transcripts, made notes of the categories as they began to emerge, then compared transcripts to see if similar patterns emerged. Glaser and Strauss commented further on the constant comparison method of analysis:

> After coding for a category perhaps three or four times, the analyst will find conflicts in the emphasis of his thinking. He will be musing over theoretical notions and, at the same time,

> trying to concentrate on his study of the next incident, to determine the alternate ways by which it should be coded and compared. At this point . . . stop coding and record a memo on your ideas. This rule is designed to tap the initial freshness of the analyst's theoretical notions and to relieve the conflict in his thoughts. In doing so, the analyst should take as much time as necessary to reflect and carry his thinking to its most logical (grounded in the data, not speculative) conclusions. (p. 107)

Following this advice, the researcher stopped to note emerging patterns and to reflect on these notes to be sure that the ideas were grounded in the data and did not reflect preconceived notions of the analyst.

The data were then sorted into categories by cutting the notes into pieces so that each slip of paper contained one statement or idea. These notes were then placed into envelopes according to their classification. Careful consideration was given to placing each notation into the appropriate category.

Criteria for Making Judgements

The criteria for making judgements were discussed with the respondents. Judgements were made with respect to the adequacy of the mandate or goals and the structure created to implement those goals. Judgements and recommendations were based on assessments made by the stakeholders.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, the investigator took several steps as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985, pp. 281-284). First, field notes were taken during the investigation to note day-to-day activities, personal reflection, questions to be followed up, and steps

taken to mount safeguards against distortions. Second, as categories began to emerge or information was assessed, steps were taken to confirm each against another source; for example, through observation or another interview. The researcher developed and maintained an audit trail. Finally, member checking and peer debriefing were done to ensure trustworthiness.

Interviews were transcribed by an outsider first, then reviewed by the interviewer, and finally reviewed by the respondents. These steps were taken to minimize researcher bias. In addition, although the researcher was recognized by most community members as a former teacher, they were assured that their responses would not be discussed with friends in the community. Also, participants were not chosen based on any previous relationship to the researcher, but rather by the guidelines outlined in the description of data sources.

Interviews took place in a relaxed context, to aid in ensuring honest and open responses. The respondents were able to choose a time and place of their own designation, and interviews were usually prefaced with informal discussions of such things as sports and television shows; and usually, because it had been an inordinately cold winter, the weather featured prominently in any conversation. Over cups of hot tea, anecdotes of family were shared; and when the respondent felt ready, talk naturally turned to the school and the researcher's purpose for visiting the community. The following excerpt from the researcher's field notes illustrates this accommodating climate:

> I had some apprehensions about doing field research. I thought community members might be distrustful, hesitant to participate, or even hostile to the idea of a non-Native

> outsider doing research in their community. I have experienced a little of that response, but for the most part people have been friendly and open. Today, as I awkwardly waddled (due to many layers of clothes) back to home base with a cigarette dangling precariously in one mittened hand and a bag of groceries biting into the other, tears from the wind freezing on my face, I was stopped by a passer-by who asked to bum a cigarette. We walked together for a while, and when we got to his home, he asked me in to warm up. Extended-family members were sitting at the kitchen table. They all grew quiet and stared at me. Then, without a word, one held out a chair for me. I smiled my acceptance of the invitation and began to peel off outer layers of clothes. Everyone laughed at the thin-blooded white woman who couldn't take the cold. This broke the ice, and we had a wonderful visit. Does the fact that I carry cigarettes provide an opening for conversation? Does my unprofessional appearance (it's impossible to dress in a suit, stockings, and pumps and to carry a briefcase when walking distances in frigid winter temperatures) make me more approachable? I don't know. As I sat at that kitchen table listening to the stories and sipping strong, sweet black tea, I enjoyed sharing in the flavor of the community and appreciated the welcome I received. (Field Notes, February 1992)

The context for interviews as well as for informal visits and observations aided in ensuring the trustworthiness of the data collected.

Ethical Considerations

Through initial telephone contact, the researcher spoke with the band manager and Education Councillor to explain the purpose of the study and to seek an opportunity to meet with the Chief and Council to present a formal request. The Chief and Council were unable to set up a personal meeting but agreed, upon receipt of a letter containing a formal request, to discuss this at their next meeting. The letter was sent on December 9, 1991. In January the researcher was informed that permission to proceed had been granted.

In subsequent visits to the community, those who were interviewed were told the purpose of the study and the steps that would be taken to ensure anonymity. The respondents were given the opportunity to decline participation. After the interviews were transcribed, the respondents were asked to review the transcripts and delete or make changes as they deemed appropriate.

Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology chosen to fulfil the purpose of the study. In the first section the research design, which followed a theory for naturalistic inquiry, is described. Following was the format used for the pilot study. Open-ended interviews were conducted with one member of each identified group, and a modified semi-structured interview schedule was then developed for the second stage of the study. In the third section data-collection procedures were discussed. Data were gathered to fulfil the study objectives; the Stake model (Worthen & Sanders, 1987, p. 131) was used as a framework for data gathering. A total of four respondents in each identified category were interviewed: Native school-staff members, band leaders, students, Elders, and parents. Representatives from various community services were also interviewed. These responses aided in providing a broader understanding of the issues. Observations and a literature search completed the data collection. Participants were chosen through *purposive sampling* and *reputational case selection.* Participant responses were transcribed from taped interviews, and coding and analyzing were completed as an ongoing process. In the final section of this chapter, the criteria for making judgements and the steps taken

to ensure the trustworthiness of the data have been presented. Finally, presented are the steps taken to ensure that ethical considerations as prescribed by the University of Alberta guidelines have been followed.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEW DATA

Introduction

Presented in this chapter is an analysis of the interview data which was collected from the 20 participants in the study. The analysis is divided into four parts to address the research questions: initial intents, an analysis of initial changes, an evaluation of local control as it is presently perceived, and the suggestions and vision for the future. Within this framework, issues which arose from the interview data are introduced.

In this chapter the reader is furnished with a descriptive and interpretive analysis of the participants' responses to the research questions with their perceptions of local control of education in their community.

Initial Intents

This section will address the reasons that local control was introduced in this community, the goals for, and the steps taken to implement local control.

Why Local Control?

The respondents described early thrusts towards local control of education for their community. Although some were unaware of these discussions and initiatives, those who were aware were frustrated by the lack of successful implementation. The respondents were equally frustrated by the push by DIAND to make a decision in 1986. They

felt that the time frame for planning and implementing local control prevented leaders from defining goals, setting a clear mandate, adequately informing the community members of planned changes, or involving them in the planning process.

Early Initiatives

In 1980-1981 the first initiatives towards local control were explored. Dissatisfaction with the Public School Division (PSD) provision of education services led to discussions regarding alternatives. Many Native schools were choosing local control, and band leaders felt that this might be an option for them. At that time one-and-one-half years' notice was required to break the tripartite agreement between DIAND, the PSD, and the band. Talks broke down:

> We were in a kind of crisis-management sort of thing, and there was a lot of politicking. The young people and the older people weren't seeing eye to eye. The young people wanted change right away, and the older people said, "We can't have change right away. You might mess it up for us, and we don't want that."

One educational leader concluded: "Nothing ever got off the ground because we always tended to believe that they're right and us Indians are wrong to help themselves."

There were major concerns with the services provided by the PSD. "They [the PSD] had minimum standards. A Grade Nine student was at Grade Five level. That doesn't show any effort on their part." Another respondent expanded on these concerns: "The dropout rates were high, staff turnover was even higher, and the curriculum contents

were not in line with what people really wanted." One response exemplified the feeling of community members:

> We wanted to control our own education. We needed to have our children taught the way we needed them to be taught the way we wanted it, and we wanted them to be on the same level as any other school, and it wasn't like that before.

The PSD continued to offer educational services; however, the seeds of dissatisfaction had been sown, and the idea of local control of education began to germinate.

The Impetus for Change

In 1986 the band was forced to make a decision. The PSD, contracted by DIAND to provide education, informed the band that it would no longer be able to provide these services. The situation was explained:

> [The PSD] Board contacted us and said that they would no longer be in a position to sign an agreement with INA to come [here] to provide education. This was in response to several incidents that had occurred. At that time we had two options: Go to a federal system or a band-controlled school.
>
> We did not think that a federal system could meet our needs, so we decided to go with a community-controlled school. We had meetings with INA. Alberta standards would be met with both systems. INA pushed for transfer of control. Chief and Council decided: community control.

The goal then became to complete the administrative tasks required to provide day school for the children of the community.

Mandate

Most respondents were unclear as to the mandate or goals for local education. They identified priorities for themselves but were unclear as to the plan set out by their leaders at the outset. One

community member commented on the lack of involvement by the general band membership:

> I didn't really give it any thought then. Before they talked about it, but I thought everything they talk about, they don't put it into action, so I just thought maybe it's not going to go ahead. But it did, but I wasn't aware of the exact date that it happened. *All I know is that the band's taken over the school; just like it comes to you by somebody else, that's how I got it.* (my emphasis)

He also shared the doubts he had about the ability of the band leaders to provide quality education for the community children:

> Every time the band tries to do something and it gets started, it doesn't go ahead; it doesn't work out, so they just let it go. So I [wondered] if they're doing the right thing, and I was scared because they might misuse the money and not get our kids educated and all these things. That's a doubt I had in the first place.

Another respondent spoke of the lack of communication of goals to the general community: "When they [the band leaders] first took over the school I really wasn't aware of that, and I'm not sure if I understood it."

The leaders spoke of the impetus for change. Pressure from DIAND to make a decision, a lack of planning time, and a lack of confidence within the community leadership all contributed to an abrupt transfer of power without expressed goals or a vision statement.

The Process

In the spring of 1987 the band members began to take the steps needed to devolve power to the local band. They hired a Director of Education to write proposed policy, interview and hire teachers, and set up teacher orientation. The Director was fired before the new staff

arrived. The policy that he wrote was never ratified. The teacher orientation was cancelled. The principal who had been hired declined to honor his contract. Several teachers changed their minds, also did not honor their contracts, and needed to be replaced. The Chief and Council asked a retired educator to take on a temporary contract as principal. They also rushed to fill teaching vacancies before September. During the months preceding school commencement, contractors were engaged to improve the outer appearance of the school building, and local workers cleaned and prepared teacherages for occupation.

A respondent explained the first steps. His response portrayed the feelings of isolation shared by community members. A sense of impotence is revealed in his comments:

> What really happened was, . . . I remember in 1987 . . . [the Director of Education] worked to have the level of [our kids'] reading and writing skills increased and to have the parents have a full support for the education of their children in their school, which was coming up and was dealt with in that [teacher] orientation that [we] were talking about. [The incident that precipitated the firing of the Director of Education], that was the one that put [him] down, and nobody got to get to what was going to happen in the near future, which was orientation and all that. That was all dismissed while the Education Board was coming along working in it. Where [a community member] was involved in it, they were still working on it, and we had a by-election, and the [School] Board itself was dismissed at the same time too, . . . and that's where everything just went down. We had to ruin it for our children because our people ruined what happened with the teachers.

He expressed his outrage and frustration with the unilateral way in which the Chief and Council made these administrative decisions:

> What the Chief and Council did was put it in a way that really hurt the teachers and our kids. That was a stupid thing. That's how I look at it, because I'm a parent, and I was very, very mad at what happened. . . . The teachers were here before they [the School Board] were let go, and I give them

> [the School Board] a lot of credit for working hard to get nice teachers, beautiful, good workers like that, but it turned around that it was our fault again, that we ruined it for our kids. There goes our education down again, and now it's going up again, but we don't know how long.

The respondents were frustrated by their lack of involvement in this process. A participant concluded: "The Council thought that only educators should be involved in education. I was frustrated. The whole purpose was the right to be able to contribute positively to the education of our kids, their personal and cultural development."

Another respondent shared his frustrations with the initial changes. He addressed the response of the leaders: They felt ill-prepared to cope with the responsibilities thrust upon them:

> The school started from the wrong direction. It was sort of thrown on our lap, and it sort of scared us because any thing about what the school's supposed to do for you as people, you're talking about a big responsibility, all of a sudden being responsible to administer a program that would, in essence, affect your children.

This respondent shared his view on the role of the community leaders. He felt that, as stakeholders in the school, the leaders had the necessary background to make decisions affecting the school:

> After about a year and a half of frustration, I started to realize that, as parents, what our concerns are are mostly common concerns, that what we feel is right, in most cases, is right with everybody else. I really stressed the point a couple of years later when we were faced with major problems at our school that *we don't need a Master's degree in Education to be involved in our educational programming. All we need to do is have an interest, have the commitment, and be able to support the school* [my emphasis]. We have people who are being bought and paid for to provide the technical support programming; the teachers, hire the teachers for the three Rs; then we say we're working to the standards. But I said, in other areas we have the bull by the horns; we can do as we please. It won't really matter what the teachers feel. Their job is to teach the three Rs; it's our job to teach what we feel is right for our kids besides the educational standards, meeting the educational standards. It never happened.

One respondent explained: "They [Council] decided that [they] weren't experienced, that Indian Affairs had to get involved so that they could work with the School Committee, and the old bureaucracy mentality got back into play." He commented on the legacy of past practice in Native education. The leaders were afraid to initiate their own standards for Native education because they had never had the opportunity to do this before:

> The Council are brainwashed that the Alberta school standard is the only good one and that we shouldn't . . . [attempt to bring in] new program initiatives, so it never got off in the right track. It's too bad, because then they would start to show now, but our people, even at a local-government level, lack confidence and, most likely, the motivation to do the job.

As a result of this lack of confidence and experience, the leaders did not make program initiatives.

In September 1987 the children arrived at school to begin the first year under local control. Many school supplies had not yet arrived, and the noise of contractors attempting to finish last-minute repairs was deafening. There was little evidence of the expected transformation that local control was to bring.

Conclusion

In conclusion, some participants who were aware of the issues surrounding local control of education supported the concept, but they felt that the process should have involved the entire community. The respondents did not approve of the impetus for change and were frustrated by the lack of clearly defined goals. Most participants, however, were unaware of the political climate within which the decision for local control was made and felt frustrated that they had

not been involved in the decision-making process. They felt frustrated by the lack of information that they received regarding the proposed changeover.

An Analysis of Early Changes

A number of concerns were expressed regarding the early days of local control. The respondents were disappointed by the lack of change. They did not approve of the changes that did take place; they did not have a sense of ownership. The respondents felt that these factors prevented a successful transition and that the lack of a mission statement prevented a clear basis for transformation or evaluation.

Issues That Needed to Be Addressed: Retention, Achievement, Organization

The respondents expected retention to increase. Instead, it seemed to have decreased. The following response exemplifies the dissatisfaction with the initial changeover:

> I think when Indian Affairs [and] the school division were running the school, I think it was just good, but after the band took over I think there were more dropouts. Now there are kids who are just not going to school.

A respondent complained that the policy for nonattenders had not been enforced. Another complained that the alternate program for dropouts was not effective, that it caused problems for the younger students.

The respondents were frustrated that student attendance rates did not immediately increase.

Students were also still achieving below grade level. This was expected to change with local control. The respondents did not see any changes set in place to increase academic levels.

The respondents were also frustrated by the lack of organization. Responsibilities were poorly defined, and some administrative tasks did not get done. A typical response was,

> The [PSD] organized things to get done around here. The school yard is messy. Also, the band claims that there is not enough money for such things as school equipment, supplies, painting the gym walls. Also, things are not getting fixed.

Organizational tasks were not satisfactorily completed. The respondents expressed frustration over these issues. Expected improvements in the areas of retention and academic achievement did not transpire.

Mission Statement

The time frame had not allowed for the development of a mission statement and goals. Without a stated mandate there was nothing on which to base an evaluation. A respondent expressed this frustration:

> There was never a firm philosophy laid out for our school program, our educational program. It's missing, it's missing, and I think that it needs to be done, and to do that we have to get the community to identify their philosophy that would form a base to develop an educational foundation plan.

The respondent outlined the questions that he felt needed to be addressed:

> "How far do you want to take this education program? Why do we need these kinds of programs? Why do we need a philosophy? Why does an organization need a mission statement?" It's just like saying, "What good is an organization without a purpose?" And for that purpose to be identified, there has to be a mission statement, and all

> activities have to come from in some way the mission statement so that there is an achievement or results or something to evaluate, which our school is missing.

He questioned the validity of evaluating education primarily on the basis of teacher performance. He also questioned the appropriateness of teacher evaluation:

> What's the point of evaluating our teachers, then giving them annual increases and increments, when we know there's no foundation to look at the overall picture? [When we are evaluating on] just the performance, then how do we know they are performing, because we're not educators ourselves? All we can tell is that they've never missed days, maybe one, a couple of sick days a year, but what does that provide us? And we can't really tell how the overall performance of our school is unless we look at a five-, ten-, fifteen-year history, and then, in most cases, how many people stick it out that long that we can recognize and acknowledge them as contributors for these improvements? We have retention problems with our educators. They stay a couple of years, some of them four years, so how can we evaluate the school in general? What we can evaluate is the teachers for their salary increases, but what good does that do for our children?

He concluded that it would continue to be difficult to evaluate progress until specific goals and a mandate were identified as the basis for evaluation.

Ownership

Another concern which the respondents shared was the lack of ownership. Again, the time factor prevented community involvement in the decision-making process. This lack of involvement was seen as detrimental to the successful devolution of power to local control. One respondent explained why community members had not become involved in the school: "I don't think our communities still look at their school as a hundred percent their own school."

Another respondent explained how the process of devolution had hindered development of a sense of ownership:

> I guess that in all that time it wasn't really a community idea to take the school out; it was something that was forced upon the community, because in that sense they were all affected because their kids were being affected. Maybe that's one of the reasons why the school, the way it was taken over never went in the right, solid direction because it was sort of dumped on us, and it was up to local government to make a decision if we could have it or not.

He explained Native leaders' attitudes:

> There were a lot of things that happened also that really did a lot of damage on the confidence of the local government. They were being told that our band never had any experience in local control, they've never thought about local control, they've never planned to take over a school for local control, so we had to do all these things in eighteen months because the school board signed contracts on an eighteen-month cycle.

He concluded:

> So it was never a community decision to take the school out. That's where it all started, and it's too bad, because maybe it would have been different; maybe the community would have supported a local-administered school if it was *their* idea, you know what I mean, the sense of ownership? But maybe it was just an awful load on themselves.

Without that feeling of ownership, the expected support for local control did not materialize.

Conclusion

All problems were to be eliminated when the band took over control of the school. The respondents were disappointed when this did not happen. They began to feel that perhaps it was a mistake to rush into local management of education. Not only did change occur too slowly, but also those initiatives that had been put into place were not satisfactory.

Community members were not involved in the takeover. The leaders did not verbalize their vision in the form of a mission statement or statement of goals. The respondents were dissatisfied with both the lack of real improvement and the policy changes that did take place. The early stages of devolution were painful, and the stakeholders were dissatisfied with the transition to local control.

Five Years Later: Community Perceptions

The stakeholders were asked to evaluate the education system as they presently perceived it. This evaluation was based on stakeholder assessments five years after the initial changeover. The respondents commented on their own changing perceptions, on the improvements they witnessed, and on the areas of deficiency. Although areas of dissatisfaction continued to be present, the overall view was somewhat more optimistic: When the band first took over the school,

> we were depressed and all that. We thought it wouldn't work too good, but the first year it was kind of going in and out like that, and now it got better. It's working okay. The kids are behaving and all that.

Another respondent concluded that the changes have been good:

> Hiring a Director of Education, the attendance has improved greatly, and there are more cultural and traditional values that were introduced actually in the classrooms. I think we've managed to maintain some of our present staff, and there was less turnover.

The respondents were pleased to comment on areas of growth and improvement and expressed concern for those areas requiring continued reform.

Attendance

The stakeholders felt that attendance had improved. With a number of school registers missing and a lack of consistent record-keeping procedures, it was difficult to document the improvements statistically. Stakeholder perception, however, was that improvement in attendance rates had taken place. The respondents gave a number of reasons for this improvement: The student counsellor visited parents and worked with the students. This encouraged parents to send their children to school. In addition, the community worker visited parents. "She gives a lot of support to the parents to encourage their children to come to school, and that's working."

Various school-based initiatives also encouraged students to stay in school. A concession at the school allowed students to buy their snacks at school without leaving the school property. A breakfast and lunch program also encouraged students to come to school and prevented them from going to the store and getting sidetracked by friends, the pool table, or the arcade games. Also, a reading program was introduced. By encouraging success, this program built skills and self-esteem and kept students in school.

A policy to deal with tardiness and skipping classes was put into place. Students who were late would have to stay in after school and write lines. At first the detention room was very crowded every day, but eventually students became used to the rule, and most students were on time.

Overall, the respondents were pleased with the progress in this area but hoped for continued improvement.

Native Culture and Language Content

The inclusion in the curriculum of Native studies and language classes was seen as a boost to student morale. A student commented: "We're taking a class in Native studies, and we're learning to write our way, in [our language]." He was pleased to have this opportunity.

A parent was equally excited about this change: "One day students go to his [the Native-language teacher's] class, come back, they say they learned that, and they really like it. They have drums and everything in there."

Another comment on the cultural content expressed satisfaction:

> And also what we are doing in terms of culture is, we have field trips in the community to watch how they tan those hides and that sort of thing, and then we have Elders coming in sometimes once a week to talk to the children about stories, talk to them about values, norms, things that are taboo, hunting, fishing, history, even drumming. And then we're also teaching them how to play the hand games, and they enjoy it.

Others felt that Native culture and language should be an integral part of the curriculum. The following excerpt expresses that view:

> Who cares what happened in 1492? I want to know what happened to Indians in 1492. Curriculum at the early stages was important. . . .
>
> We have the control now; we can look at things, look at areas that we could implement that we never had the opportunity to do when the school division was running the school. Actually, it's up to us to ask for the money and that. We don't need to have a social program that just teaches our kids about other cultures, other heritages; I said we can teach our own now. We can find the money to get the research done and put it in writing, even put it in our own language our program. They told me, "Why would they want to learn [our Native language]? It's not going to be a tool for them. They need to learn a White man's language." I said, "Heck, I had no problem. When I was seven years old, in school, I didn't even understand one word, and I learned it. It's not hard for kids to learn. It's hard for us to learn when

> we're grown up. For kids, they could handle maybe three languages at the same time and still be able to learn to speak it and write it." That's how proficient their minds are.

Although the cultural component was approved, not all respondents were enthusiastic about Native-language content. Some felt that the focus should be on English language and reading:

> I liked it better when [the PSD] was running it, . . . because now they're teaching the [indigenous] language; everybody knows it, and the kids here, they brought their report cards, their English is very low, nine percent, one of them has twenty-seven. And if they had this [PSD], it might be better. It was better then.

Another stated that students learn about their culture at home. They also learn their language at home, and the school should focus on teaching English. A third explained that teacher aides (TAs) also speak the Native language at school. This respondent felt that TAs should speak only English at school.

Most respondents wanted to see continued focus on Native culture but expressed varying views on the language issue.

Staff Turnover

When the band took over control of the school there was a complete turnover of staff. The next five years saw many changes, including five principals, five vice-principals, and a high turnover of teachers. In fact, five years after the takeover the teacher with the greatest length of service in the school had been there four-and-one-half years (including a maternity leave). The next greatest length of service was two years.

The stakeholders identified this as an area of grave concern. A community member told of expressing this concern to a councillor:

> It is very frustrating for the staff here, because in the past teachers never stayed for a long period of time. I don't speak for them, but I just feel that it's frustrating for them too, and they don't get a lot of support from the parents and they just leave, and every couple of years new teachers come in.

It was felt that students miss out when there is a high turnover of staff. The teachers and students adjust to one another, but then the teachers leave, and the adjustment begins again. The analogy of a sports trainer was used to explain the necessity for continuity of relationships:

> And if you have a trainer, like, for instance, a boxer that's heavyweight champion that has a good promoter like Dundee or King, you know where they end up: being champion for a long time. . . . The same thing like that. [If] you have new teachers come in and new professionals every year, our kid's not going to get anywhere, because I had the same teacher and the same sisters right from Grade One all the way down to Grade Eight, and I got somewhere.

In the last two years some staff had been staying. A respondent concluded: "It's good to know that you can be able to retain the staff; they get to know the students, the community, the people." This was seen as an area that needed continued attention.

Teacher Orientation

Teacher orientation seems to be a factor in improved teacher-community relationships. Teachers come in 10 days early, "they're given the ropes, . . . the tea dance, and the shop talks and tours. But it has to be ongoing. That little area [pointing at school and teacherages] has to either join or be made to join the community." This respondent concluded: "You can't isolate the White Alley [the school and teacherages] from the community at large; it can't work."

Some teachers were beginning to get to know the community,

> but it's a slow process, and I think it's more our fault that we do not take the time to get to know our teachers; we do not seem to find the time to knock on their doors and say, "Hello, we're just here for a short visit." We just stay at home and hope that a teacher might drive up and say, "Knock, knock." So we all wait.

The language teacher planned to give a course in the history of the local people, specifically for the teachers. This, it was hoped, would help to bridge the cultural gap. The stakeholders saw the need for continued improvement in this area.

Student Achievement

A parent expressed his concern for his children's lack of academic achievement:

> But what about our kids that can't read and write? They're suffering right now. There [are many] that can't read and write properly, and when they come up to Grade Ten or Grade Nine, . . . they just give up; they give up going to school. They say to us, "Oh, I'm not smart. I don't have to be in school. I can't get ahead. It's too hard for me." The attitude is bad. That's how I see it as a parent.

Another respondent shared his view. He felt as though his contributions were not recognized. Although he and other parents expressed their concern, he felt that nothing had been done to address these concerns:

> We have education meetings where we talk about the problems that arise with our kids in reading and writing, that we should be supporting the teachers, the school, because it's *our* school, and they are *our* children in there. But it seems everyone says that "We're working on it, we'll work on it." Yes, going seven years now they're still working on it.

He felt as though he was excluded from the decision-making process. He described the pain he felt because his children were not reading and writing at their grade levels:

> Maybe I don't know what's happening, and it's frustrating. And having a [teenaged] son who can barely read and write, how does a parent feel in that area? How does my son feel? It hurts him; it hurts me. Why have the band school when there's something like that happening? Why not give him support? I can give support to my son, but what about the other two hundred fifty kids?

The respondents felt that under the PSD students had difficulty learning and fell behind in their studies. This was still happening, and this issue needed to be addressed.

High School

Most respondents commented on the current format for providing high school. Students are sent away to complete their high school program in city schools. Because of the distance involved, students see their families only during major school breaks. Most students drop out before the program has been completed. The respondents explained the difficulties faced by high school students who attended school away from home. Many students became homesick and could not adjust to their new and alien environment. A respondent commented on this:

> A fifteen-year-old, let's say he's got the brains. He has to go to Grade Eleven away from home. Not only does he have to look at the change in the environment, most times probably he's never been away from home more than five days. . . . He'll be homesick, and then, to boot, a fifteen-year-old moving into a totally alien family environment, all of a sudden they're faced with a family that they've never known in their life, all of a sudden they're plopped into a new house, and these two are going to be your parents for the next ten months, and these three kids are going to be your brothers and sisters for the next ten months. Now, that's a shock in itself.

In addition to the new home and family with which students needed to cope, they also had to adapt to a city environment:

> And then the environment, city life or a major service-center environment is completely different than [our local] community environment. Here you can go to any house, and you can visit. You go to a city, they've got thousands of houses, and there's not even one place you're confident you're going to get help.

A respondent concluded: "I think most times it's not because they're [senior high students] stupid that they're quitting school; it's the other problems that they have to deal with."

The participants were concerned that young people could not cope with the different environment and that few young people were able to complete high school. They felt that changes were needed in this area so that the success rate for high school completion would increase.

Others felt that the focus should change. Money and time should be spent on improving the Grades K to 9 program so that younger students would have a firm foundation in basic skills. Respondents expressed this view:

> I would like to see a change in the school where we focus more on K to Nine, where I have, as a parent, two sons that are in Grade ____ and Grade ____ that barely read and write, and those are the young people that we should be aiming at, work hard at, because it's not going to help them going out for high school, because they will never, they won't make it because of their reading and writing skills. It's hard. . . .
>
> We have problems with our young people that go out from [our community] that have a problem in schools where they have to either drop out or get tutors to work with them in order to get on with their programs that they're taking at school.

He concluded:

> I think we should look at K to Nine rather than having a senior program on the reserve, because if we have senior programs, it always does fail. We end up with no teacher or no students at the end of the year.

He explained that many high school students dropped out of school because their basic skill levels were so low. These students could not cope academically with a regular high school program. He challenged the leaders to focus on raising skill levels for younger students so that these young people would be academically prepared for high school:

> But what about our kids that can't read and write? They're suffering right now. There's close to three hundred, two hundred, or a hundred and fifty young people like my two boys that can't read and write properly, and when they come up to Grade Ten or Grade Nine and Grade Ten, they just give up; they give up going to school. They say to us, "Oh, I'm not smart. I don't have to be in school. I can't get ahead. It's too hard for me." The attitude is bad. That's how I see it.

The respondent felt that by attempting to help younger students to increase their skill levels, the Council would be addressing the issue of low self-esteem which seemed to be a component in high school student dropout rates.

The best way to increase skill levels while providing opportunities for older students to complete high school continued to be a divisive issue.

Discipline

The parents were not satisfied with the discipline under the PSD. They felt that local control did not solve the discipline problems. "Discipline should be stricter. Students are wandering the hallways. Students should be forced to do their work. . . . They are not working at grade level"; "My grandson went to school, he took off all the time. He got in trouble. Lots of kids are like that. I don't know why."

The respondents were not satisfied with changes to discipline policy. They felt that poor discipline continued to affect academic achievement and student morale.

Elder Guidance

The respondents expressed concern for the lack of Elder influence and involvement in the school. One commented:

> People are always wondering, how come the school is not going too well? It seems all these changes are happening, but parents, the people in general, are all having the wrong direction, and they don't want to listen to the Elders. They don't try to find ways to improve their life.

Elders do visit the classes and talk about the old days. The respondents appreciated this contribution. A participant described his observations: "One old guy was teaching the kids to pray, in [their own language] too, and I was really surprised, and it was in the classroom too, and the kids all sat with big eyes. They really like that, I think."

The respondents felt, however, that Elders were not treated with the respect they deserved. The following comment expressed this perception:

> A long time ago people listened to the Elders when the Elders were foreseeing how the future was going to turn out. People listened to them, and things weren't as bad as the Elders were saying. If they didn't listen to the Elders, then things would have been bad, but people really listened to the Elders back then. Now everything is just lost, and the Elders are not even respected at times, and people talk back to them too.

The respondents felt that both students and parents should listen to the Elders. They felt that the advice of Elders should be sought and

respected. This was an area that had not been adequately addressed in the changeover.

Communication

Various concerns were expressed about the area of communication. It was felt that meetings were not well attended or organized. One complaint was that when there were meetings at the school, children ran around, and this was distracting. Many complained that very few parents attended parent/teacher meetings.

Another concern with communication concerned Council involvement in the school:

> Some of the Councillors don't speak English and some do. They tell the teachers how to run the school. They don't have the high school or something. They just run up to Grades Seven or Eight there. They just tell them what to do. It was better when the school division had been in control. Whenever we needed the Councillors to come, we would go over [to the Band Office], and they would not be there. They are not there for us to talk to.

Parents and Councillors were expected to visit the school to improve communication: "How can parents and Councillors understand what is happening at the school if they don't visit and observe?" Another respondent concluded: "We have to invite the parents more often to the school. The teachers should go out with the parents, get to know them. You have to bridge the communication gap somewhere."

The radio station and the PTA were seen as positive forces in encouraging school-community communication. The PTA and the radio station both encouraged parent-teacher and school-community communication. The radio was used for school announcements, and

parents seemed to be responding. Students contributed to radio programs. School activities were announced on the radio. Also, students participated by writing items and sometimes even taping them for the radio. One respondent explained the positive effect of these efforts to involve parents:

> They started a PTA meeting, and some parents are really interested in what's going on. They have a lot of suggestions. . . . They have a radio station. They want to write for them. To support the people on this reserve, they type out or write a poem about it so they can read it over the radio, and I think a lot of people are really enjoying that, the way I heard them talk about it. There's a lot of parents that were drinking, and they just kind of quit. They haven't drunk for a while. That's the best part.

The school and community had begun to work together for the benefit of the whole community.

Involving students in community issues also strengthened the bond. One participant gave this example: For National Addiction Week, the school held a Sober Walk. "A lot of students wrote to their parents. I read one that the kids wrote, and it was really good, and somehow that parent quit drinking."

In addition, the liaison and school worker encouraged communication between home and school.

The respondents were pleased with the use of the local radio station as a tool to encourage communication and were enthusiastic about community-school activities, but they felt that attendance at school meetings, and parent and Council involvement in the school, required continued effort and improvement.

Parent Involvement

The respondents were adamant in their concern for parent involvement in the school and in their children's daily lives. It was felt that parents must take the initiative to send their children to school and must encourage their children to behave, complete homework assignments, and make academic progress. A respondent explained: "Some parents are not sending their kids to the school, and they are not supporting the school." It was felt that parents must take responsibility for encouraging their children to attend school:

> I wish all the parents in the community . . . would try their best to send their kids to school, to push them and make something of themselves when they get out of school. It's up to the parents to push the students and tell them to go to school every day.

A respondent shard the view that parents were the cause of problems at school. He felt that parents were not meeting their responsibilities:

> They [parents] don't support the children, they turn to alcohol, and it's not our fault as the Elders or the school, because it's the parents that don't send their kids to bed at the right time and get them up in the morning and just do things that they should be doing.

Another respondent shared this view. He said: "Most of the parents neglect their children by not forcing them to go to school." He felt that this lack of parent participation caused further difficulty for school staff and education leaders. He also felt that parents should talk to their children about the importance of education. The respondent expressed his view:

> I think the parents should talk to their own children about the future, because nowadays things change. They have to have education to have a job. If they don't finish their education, they will have a difficult time getting a job, and I think the parents should actually talk to their own children about that.

These and other comments illustrate respondents' views that parent involvement had not improved, that parents should come to the school. It was felt that the attendance of those children whose parents came to PTA meetings had improved. Also, those parents who visited the school were supportive: "Sometimes some of the parents, they drop by, and most of them support our school, the band school."

Parent participation, although it had seen some improvement, was still seen as an area that continued to cause concern.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the respondents expressed varying degrees of satisfaction with the changes that had taken place five years after local control of education had been introduced to the community. Attendance had improved, Native language and culture content had been added to the curriculum, the teaching staff were beginning to get to know the community members, teacher orientation had been introduced, and, through the use of the radio station and PTA meetings, school-home communication had improved. The respondents also expressed varying degrees of dissatisfaction with local control of education. Students continued to achieve below grade level in academic areas, few students were completing high school, parents and Council were neither sufficiently supportive nor adequately involved in the school, and student-discipline policies were not satisfactory. In addition, it was felt that Elders should both provide advice and be actively involved in the classroom experience. Improvement had taken place, but much more still needed to be done.

The Future: Solutions and a Vision

Presented in this section are respondents' comments on the need for continued growth and development in community provision of education, their suggested solutions to address areas of concern, and their vision for the future.

Attendance

Effort had been made to encourage school attendance, but these efforts had not met with complete success. Children, it was felt, should attend regularly and miss only when they are sick. The parents gave various reasons for not sending their children to school. Some felt that their children were being picked on or that their children did not want to go to school. A respondent who spoke to parents about sending their children to school outlined the reasons given: "Some say they don't have enough groceries, but the kids get fed in school. And for the other two [parents with whom I had spoken], I think the kids have more control over their parents." Many respondents felt that the solution would be to cut off social assistance to parents who did not send their children to school.

Native Language and Culture

Although concern continued for Native culture and language content in the curriculum, many respondents felt that the emphasis should be on academics, that students needed to learn to read and write English first because many students were performing below grade level in English language.

In addition, not all participants felt that Native culture should be a separate course. This respondent felt that the flavor of the entire school should be influenced by the Native culture. He felt that it could not be separated into a specific course; it was a part of all aspects of life. He explained this view:

> I know quite a bit about my cultural background. I really don't have to wear a feather and breechcloth to know that I'm an Indian. Most times your culture teachings are abstract. Every time you get into a cultural program, you don't have to go to the washroom and change into a breechcloth and feathers so that you can be taught your culture. It's all abstract, and if it's abstract, everybody can listen. It's not something that you can mould to your liking and then put in your pocket, and whenever you feel like being an Indian, take it out. It's all in your mind. . . . We don't really have to put a big teepee in front of our school to say that this is an Indian school. It's just an ordinary-looking building, but what goes on inside? Could be a lot of things, short of getting the kids to change environments into breechcloth and feathers. It's not something as such a culture. I think there's a big misunderstanding of what cultural teachings are all about. You talk to an Elder or you talk to a mom.

The respondent cited a conversation that he had had with his mother regarding the issue of Native language and culture. In this conversation he described the social values that he hoped would be passed on to students:

> Mom one time asked me, "Why are they teaching our language in school? A school is to teach English and teach them to be more or less the White people." I said, "That's not why we have the school here. Our intent to have our school is so that kids can make something of themselves when they grow up. There's other things that a school teaches besides learning, knowledge. It teaches them how to get up to go to work every day of their lives till they turn sixty-five." It's just like going to work; start early and go to school when you're seven years. Are you going to continue to do that after you're finished school, anyway? You're going to have to get out of bed, take a shower, eat your breakfast, go to work; it's just an early start. And then they basically teach you responsibility; then you have to continue to do till you die. So there's a lot of other things besides learning the White ways now that a school can offer. It's

> just meeting a bus in minus thirty-six. That's determination; that's discipline. That's another form of education, that you're teaching your kids that you're not going to give them a ride. Freezing out there will have a lot to do with how determined they are to go to school, and if we do our job right, they *would* be willing to freeze their butts for about fifteen minutes to get on the bus. That's teaching our kids how to discipline themselves. [The respondent concluded:] So there's a lot of other things besides what the teachers can offer the kids that's going on in school. Most of these things we take for granted.

The respondent felt that culture and values should be an integral part of the school.

Another respondent shared the view that Native culture and language ought to be a priority for the school:

> But I always feel that now we have the chance. I don't care what people say, I think that we should continue to let the kids know that our language is important to them; our culture is important, and them being [from our culture] is important, because we don't want to be DPs in society, displaced people. And it's good for their emotional needs too, and their mental needs, to know where you're from, where you're coming from.

The school, others felt, should focus both on academic levels and on culture. Students needed to be allowed to complete Grade 12, regardless of their age, but they should also learn about their culture, "and I think that is the most important part so that they don't lose their identity."

The respondents commented that students should also go on field trips and visit other communities so that they have a chance to see how others live, and they should learn more about their culture, perhaps by going out into the bush and taking a survival course.

Some respondents felt that there should be a balance so that both academic achievement and cultural identity could be emphasized; others felt that only Native culture and language should be stressed.

Still others expressed the concern that academic levels should be the first priority.

Teacher Involvement

> The only times that parents see the teachers is when the parents go to the school and they have a meeting, but they don't really get involved in it. It would be nice if the teachers would get to know the parents more.

This comment portrays the feeling of many respondents. They felt that effort should be made to increase communication between parents and teachers. One solution would be to m - her and get to know one another.

> If they [teachers] have a problem with the school, it's good to sit with the parents and to know where they come from, from in the school, and talk with the parents. I think that would be a good idea. . . . And they would know where the children come from, and they would probably get more information of their background. I think they [teachers] should go to visit, get to know them [parents] first. [The respondent concluded:] And I think more parents should get involved in any sports that are going on in the school or out there.

Another respondent shared the conclusion: "They had a play here at the school ye -v, and they should have more things like that for parents to com. ney had parents' night before, and a lot of parents showed up. hey liked it."

The proposed solution for improved communication between parents and teachers was to plan for more activities that would bring parents to the school, and for teachers to become more involved in community activities.

Academic Achievement

In the area of academic achievement, solutions to increasing student-skill levels were not presented. Theories, however, to explain the lack of progress were suggested. There seem to be [illegible] factors that have contributed to low academic levels at school. One theory looks to the home for the root of the problem:

> Probably lack of encouragement at home; maybe they don't have running water and all the conveniences of home like other people have; maybe they've got a poor home environment; their parents could be drinking and misusing their money; overcrowding; they don't have desks at home; maybe poor lighting; they don't bring their homework home; and a lot of parents are illiterate themselves, and they can't help them [their children]. . . . I think another factor, too, is that English is a second language in our community, and English is sort of foreign to them [the parents].

Another theory looks to the cultural difference between students and teachers. Children do not want to admit it when they do not understand. They are afraid to ask for help.

> They have a lot of respect, and it's disrespectful for a lot of students saying, "Hey, teacher, I don't know this. Help me out. . . ." It's hard for them to say it. They're scared to say it. And we're ashamed to say that too. So they hide everything, mostly. And if they hide it like that, they'll either fiddle around with something or [do something] other than listening. . . . I guess it's just our way around here, but when they need help they are kind of afraid or just nervous or embarrassed, whatever, I don't know, to ask for help; and when the help is given to them, they are too nervous to concentrate.

The solution to counteract this problem was suggested: "So I really think that these students need a person who can help them when they have a lot of difficulty so that they can get instructions in our language and English."

A third possibility that was suggested was low attendance rates: "Perhaps one reason students are not at level is because they miss so much school."

Another felt that change and high teacher turnover had affected student learning:

> I wasn't really aware of what's happening at the school at that time [when the band first took over], but in the past years we have teachers that come and go, new teachers coming, they're gone another year, same students over and over, new teachers coming, they [students] started learning, learning, and they [teachers] have to go, and they've [students] got to really start again, go over again. When they [teachers] go, they have to really start again and over. There was a slight change that happened about six, five years ago, where we had teachers that stayed for a while longer, and it started working out really good, really good. They started coming up, and with our own people, our own band kind of ruined it for them again, so we had to have a new batch of teachers again, and we started over again. By the time we had those new teachers start over again, my son's in Grade Eight; he lost out on Grade Five, Grade Six, Grade Seven down; he lost out, because he was getting somewhere in between those years, and when he got to Grade Eight there was another change again. So he had to go back the same route again, and he won't be ready for Grade Nine. He won't be ready for Grade Six. He's ready for Grade Four or Five, because that's the level he probably is right now in reading skills and writing skills, and he's fifteen years old. If nothing's done about it, he's going to give up, and I don't want my kids to give up education.

One respondent explained: "A lot of students need individualized instruction. We need programs like learning strategies to have the students learn how to learn and that sort of thing, so we need a lot more funding."

The respondents were not in agreement as to the reasons for low academic achievement in the school, but they were in agreement in their hope for the future. They wanted the students to achieve at grade level.

High School

Various solutions were proposed for providing students with a high school education. Some felt that the focus should be on providing quality programs in kindergarten through Grade 9:

> Money is spent in the wrong place, where they should be spending it on their kids, their learning and writing skills. That's more important, to prepare a Grade Nine that can be in Grade Nine, ready for Grade Ten. . . . That's what I want. If we don't, Grade Eight, Grade Nine's the furthest our kids will go, . . . and we'll have more young people walking the streets.

Another respondent concluded: "I think we should look at K to Nine rather than having a senior program on the reserve, because if we have a senior program, it always fails."

Although many participants were in agreement that students should be sent away to high school, most were concerned that students be provided with support systems. It was also felt that if students were sent away to complete high school, they should be sent to the nearest community that offered a high school program. There were too many problems, and it was too difficult to give them the support they needed. In future, the solution would be to have students sent to the nearest community so that they could come home on weekends and/or have visits in their boarding homes. It was felt that this strategy would save money and increase the rate of success for high school completion.

Others, however, felt that success rates for senior high students would increase if senior high were offered on the reserve because of the difficulties faced by students who attempted to complete high school outside their own community.

Still others felt that students should have a choice. Students should be able to take Grades 11 and 12 either in their own community or elsewhere. "If they can make a go of it, they can come back here, they can share that with the rest of the Grade Elevens and Twelves. . . . It's also our responsibility to ensure that the opportunities are provided."

Several alternatives were presented to deal with high dropout rates at the senior high level. One solution offered was to increase spending for senior high programs, talk to students before they went out, set up support programs for them once they left home, try to set up weekly visits in the first few months, and then perhaps continue with ongoing counselling:

> I think that at some point we have to be willing to spend more money to be able to communicate with our kids when they're being sent out, to put all our efforts in supporting program development to ensure that they continue to stay in school. If we have to, we should visit them on a weekly basis the first couple of months and then continue to have one-on-one counselling with them. Not only counselling, but just to have a familiar face around once in a while, knowing that that person's going to be coming.

Another suggestion was to offer some local options for further education for those who could not cope with the city, or simply to allow a transition time so that students would not have to leave home at 17 but could start their program at home and leave when they were a little older and perhaps ready for the changed environment. One parent said that when her child was ready to go away to high school, she hoped to go with him because it was too hard for a young person to be so far away from home and alone.

There is currently an alternate program for older students, but they seem to drop out. "Maybe it's the embarrassment about not

knowing that much about what's going on at the school." One woman did not take senior high courses this year because there were not enough students this year to run the program and babysitting was a problem. She felt that more older students should be encouraged to continue with the high school program to become role models for the younger students. She also proposed that a daycare be set up to take care of the problem of finding babysitting services during classes.

These solutions were presented to deal with the concern over the high rate of high school dropouts.

Discipline

The respondents continued to be concerned about discipline in the school. One respondent felt that, rather than blame the parents for discipline problems, the school should set a proactive discipline policy in place:

> I'd say that they have to start looking into the little kid, an individual youngster, like I say, as a problem child. That's what they should look into, a problem child. See, what they do is that they turn around with a problem child and they blame this little individual against the parents. They say it's the parents' fault. That's the reason why this youngster is acting this way, and no way, man!

Most respondents felt that the teachers should be stricter and should get the children to listen to them and that the school should have a stricter discipline policy. This should not, however, involve suspending the students as a form of punishment because "it's too hard on them."

A respondent expressed the need for stricter discipline in the school. He compared the current practice to his own resident-school experiences. He felt that there should be a strict education, because "I

was told to kneel down in church, I was told to pray, and I was told to sing *O Canada,* and I was forced to do that. And I wouldn't mind going back into that style of education."

The respondents agreed that a discipline policy should be put into place that would encourage students to behave, but few specifics were offered as to what that discipline policy should entail.

The Role of Elders

There is currently very little in the way of Native culture included in the curriculum. The respondents felt that Elder involvement in the school was imperative, that the Elders must work with the school staff to teach the "cultural, traditional values." The Elders should come into the school and talk to the students, help the students to understand the changes, who they are, and where their roots are. Elders, it was felt, should be responsible for the cultural program at the school. A respondent explained this view: "I think that if the Elders are invited maybe once a month or I'm not sure—it would be up to them how often they would like to meet—I think they would really like that." He felt that students should be given the opportunity to ask Elders questions

> about religion, how the Natives used to pray a long time ago, and what do they feel about this, and different ways [of praying], like the Catholics, what do they think of that, and just different things like that, and how they've learned to accept that.

Another respondent proposed that six or seven Elders, men and women, should be hired to run a cultural program at the school. These Elders could

> show the girls how to do beadwork, tan hides; that's part of culture. And industrial arts, the men could teach how to make drums and snowshoes and teach them about animal habitats, what to look for, how to look for tracks, what to eat, how you can tell when the moose is on the track.

There were, in fact, plans to increase Elder involvement in the school. Plans were in place to introduce Elders on a video, which would be kept in the library for future use. A respondent explained the critical need to expedite this goal: "We don't have very many Elders. When an Elder dies, so does the language and the culture with him."

Another respondent also spoke to this issue:

> I think the main thing for the Native people here is that we have to understand that we are losing our Native culture, and we should really be talking to the Elders to see what they think and what their feelings are about all these changes and how they've learned to deal with these changes. Maybe with that they can help us to be able to feel comfortable with who we are, so that we would not be really trying to be burdened or stressed that we really have to measure up to be like other non-Natives or educated, and feeling stressful over that.

Although the respondents agreed that Elder influence in the school was critical, many were also concerned that cultural aspects of education not supersede the emphasis on academic achievement: "[We need] more cultural areas into the programs. . . . But at the same time they still have their academics. We might work at this."

Elders were to be invited to visit the school and classes to encourage students to continue to attend regularly and to encourage students to take pride in and increase their understanding of their own traditional culture. This should be done, it was felt, without taking away from academic emphasis in the school. Elders were also to be invited to take part in discussions regarding their vision for the future of the school and community. Taking these steps would, the

respondents suggested, lead to an improved educational program. A comment made by a participant reflects this conclusion:

> An Elder doesn't read or write, but that Elder has the answer. I could be a university graduate coming back from university and be a big shot, have a suit, a briefcase, tell my people what to do. But if I don't have the guidance for it, what does a university graduate mean to me? They [the Elders] know it all. They've been there. That is the guidance that you have to work with. Those are the people that will help our teacher, but without them we will not get anywhere.

The Role of Parents

Change, the respondents agreed, was needed in the area of parent involvement. They felt that parents needed to take more responsibility for their children and the success of the school. One comment was that some children get on the bus in the morning, hang around the store or nursing station all day and do not attend school, then go home on the bus at 3:30. Parents do not support the school. The respondent suggested: "There should be control over that. I don't know, [perhaps] the band should set out some policies, some kind of control over the kids that hang around at the store, that they should be sent to school or any place." He suggested that the responsibility for school children should be in the hands of all community members, not just school staff.

In another comment, a respondent looked specifically to parents as the root of the problems with student discipline and attendance. He felt that students would perform better in school if parents took their responsibilities seriously. He expressed this view:

> That's the biggest problem that our kids have, is reading and writing and a lack of nutrition, where we have kids that are tired because of the parents. They have to do something. They can't have their kids watching video games until three,

> four o'clock in the morning, go to sleep and go to school. That affects them in school too, where we have been through that how many years you've been here. You've got kids half sleeping when they're in classrooms, kids just tired, they can't even do anything, kids coming in ten, twelve o'clock in the mornings, just coming into school, still half dead tired. Those are the things that should be implemented, and [there should] be a policy or bylaws [for] parents.

He concluded that parents' responsibilities should not be taken over by the school. The respondent felt that the school should not do his job for him:

> Me, I'm spoiled already. You know why? I don't have to cook in the morning; breakfast is already there. I don't have to cook for my kids. "Get up and go to school." You're leaving with that attitude I have which, as a parent, I'm not responsible for my responsibilities, because it's already been taken care of out there, and I don't have to worry about breakfast. That's one thing that's not right for me. We should be responsible for our kids to get educated.

One suggestion to deal with this issue was that if parents did not send their children to school, "their [the parents'] social assistance should be cut off. . . . It might help." Another suggestion was that the Chief and Council should pass a bylaw requiring parents to get their children to bed on time because the children were coming to school late or half asleep. However, the solution that most respondents suggested was that parents become more involved in their children's lives and take responsibility for the children. The following comment expresses the frustration with parents and suggests a common solution:

> A lot of parents don't have the time with their children, and that's what children need, is love and attention. That's why there's kids that just get out of hand and can't be controlled; it's because their parents don't take the time and sit with their kids and maybe listen to them, to what they're saying; and if they're talking to their parents about their school work, parents should take time and listen to their children and maybe help them to read and help them in their homework.

The respondents felt that students would perform better in school if parents took responsibility for their children. For example, one respondent said: "I don't like the breakfast program. It should be the parents' responsibility."

The respondents suggested that parents should volunteer and get involved in the school. They also maintained that PTA meetings should be held more often so that the parents could be kept informed. Parents should not, however, visit the classes. That would be too embarrassing for their children. Parents, it was concluded, needed to support the school; they needed to encourage their children to do homework and should try to help them with it.

Although specific solutions were not always presented, the general consensus was that parents needed to increase their involvement in the school and take greater responsibility for the discipline of their children.

The Role of the Leaders

The respondents felt that the quality of education would improve if the community leaders became more involved in the school. One suggestion was for the Councillor with the Education portfolio to become a role model for the students through his interest and involvement in the school:

> Maybe a portfolio holder should come once a month and talk to students and then talk about some of what he's doing, so then the kids will know that their Councillor in that department is supporting them and that he's interested in the children's learning enough that he tells the teacher, "That's what I want," and stuff like that is done.

Greater Council involvement, it was contended, would also improve school-band communication. The respondents expressed this view as follows:

> I wish the Councillors would come [into the school] once in a while and just walk around and see what's going on, instead of coming in here and barging in and telling the teachers they don't know what's going on, . . . because the teachers are doing their best to run the classrooms. I hope they don't do that in the future.

This respondent suggested an alternative: "If they [Council] want something they should just get together and talk about it in the open, instead of listening to the community, parents, Council members."

The respondents felt that the leaders should participate more in school functions. They felt that the education portfolio holder, in particular, should be seen at the school, participate in activities, and talk one-on-one with students and teachers. Councillors, it was felt, should also "come into the classroom and look at the children, at how they learn," because then "they might know what's happening with their school."

A respondent expressed the need for the band leaders to act as cultural leaders, through their involvement in the school. He challenged leaders to set aside political agendas and personal feelings for the good of the community and the school:

> I think it's good that the band controls it [the school]. They [the leaders] should understand what's happening too, to really understand it as in a professional way, not trying to really get defensive, because they've gone through a lot of experience dealing with so many people that I guess that's how they think at times, but to get them back on the track and to see what's happening, that personal feelings have nothing to do with it, but to operate the school the way it should be. And if they know that, then they can teach the parents too and invite them and do all these things to invite them, and to explain to parents in a way that the school really is like that. Just the school itself; it has nothing to do

> with people against staff or whatever, but as a community, and that way they can improve the school if they want to control our school.

He challenged them, too, to help students to regain their cultural identity so that "students feel that it's still a part of them and that they shouldn't feel like they've forgotten it and that it's not really important now, but to make them understand their roots and to talk to them, who they are." This could be done, he felt, by "inviting the Elders just to talk over things about the way they see things and how the Elders have come to accept [changes] and what were their feelings when all these things were happening." Community attitudes, it was felt, provided a stumbling block for initiatives on the part of community leaders:

> There's a couple of businessmen that people talk about every day. They're getting rich on the band, and where are they getting all the money for these brand new trucks and skidoos and trips to Edmonton, trips to High Level every day? They don't look at them as examples, as role models for their kids, that they could be, these people. What they're being taught is how to envy, how to be jealous, all of the ingredients that come with the Bronx environment or the 97 Street environment or the Queen Street in Calgary. It's because our people are spoiled; our band still perpetuates that kind of treatment. We don't charge user fees, we don't charge rent, we don't charge anything, and then we turn around and say that our people are no damned good, they're lazy, they're good for nothing, they don't want to work for themselves, they don't want to take the responsibility into their hands. How can they, because we're perpetuating this same bloody problem that department man did? We're still enhancing these things, providing free service, then we bitch how they're not willing to go get some water. The organization is that when the bigger culprits are promoting this kind of mentality, then your whole organization is being governed by councillors here or being governed by these spoiled people.

These attitudes would have to be changed before community leaders would be empowered to initiate effective changes.

A respondent suggested that, by becoming involved in the school and aware of the issues facing students, parents, and staff, the leaders could help bridge communication gaps. They could also then invite parents to become more involved in the school and explain to them what was happening.

Some respondents expressed concern over the lack of communication between the Band Council and parents. Parents, it was felt, should be informed of Band Council decisions regarding education:

> I think there should be one [a meeting with parents] because of things that are going on at the Band Office, when they have meetings like that, they go to places. They don't come back and tell the community and discuss what they were out for, what they did about the school or if they were talking about different programs or things like that. People don't know [about these decisions]. What goes on at the band? I think it's just among the Band Council members.

Others expressed concern for the difficulties faced by those in leadership positions:

> The local government, I pity these poor people. I know how it is. You're just an ordinary Joe Blow; all of a sudden you're slapped with a title, and you're expected to solve everything. They can't do it on their own. They were just normal people before they became Council through election; they were just ordinary Joe Blows with everyday problems just like everybody else, and then all of a sudden, everybody expects them to do miracles and solve everybody's problems, but after election, probably they'll go back and live with the same problems. For some reason the expectations are unreal. They're put in the limelight. I think that they're not able to continue to be okay. But I think it's a mentality. Our people, too, lack confidence in one vision. They lack confidence so much that they don't want to isolate themselves; like in the community, they say, "This is wrong. This is what we need to do." They're scared to do that; that's not being normal.

One respondent concluded: "The leadership are beginning to realize that education is of value because some of the leaders who are educated are doing a lot for themselves." Continued and increased

involvement in the school by the leaders would, it was felt, improve the school.

Community-Wide Involvement

The respondents suggested that all services should work together, "the whole community and the leaders and the teachers." A participant explained this view:

> I think it's more like, not people from the outside, but the people that are living in the community, like resource people should get involved, I think. I know the priest that was here before, . . . he used to go into the school and teach Catechism, . . . and nothing's been done since then. . . . And the RCMP should get involved, go into the school and make a workshop and teach the kids about crime and the law and things like that. It used to be like that before; the RCMP used to get involved in the school, but there's nothing like that. And then the children will get to understand what crime is. The Elders are already involved. There's Elders there, and the nursing staff get involved. . . . They teach about health and other programs.

The priest should then become involved by teaching Catechism in the school, and sex education should be taught in the school. The nursing station should be involved in that.

Another respondent similarly concluded:

> What we should do for our people, . . . get more involved with the community as a whole, not put the teachers, the agencies over here, the people over here, the leadership over here. . . . They have to work together, the whole community, not saying, "Teachers are over there; they're not part of us." No RCMP, no, no. We have to work together.

The following metaphor described the need for a unified effort to improve community education:

> Let's say, Edmonton. They were Stanley Cup Champs. They worked together as a city to beat that next city. They want to be the best. They're the best. They were. But the time comes when older ones have to go better money, better money and go outward. Our kids should be like that. If I can be a role model, my son will give his role model to somebody

> else; it's passed down. And there's messages passed down too. You teach my kids; they will teach the other kids, they will be teaching something. But if we don't work that way as a team, it never works. You know when you hitch up a horse and one pulls and the other one doesn't, what happens? It goes back and forth. That's where we are right now.

By working together as a community and as community workers, the respondents maintained, the school would meet the needs of students and parents and contribute to the benefit of the entire community.

A Vision for the Future

Many respondents did not speak to changes that had occurred, nor to solutions to problems that were encountered. They spoke of a vision for the future. The respondents shared their hopes and dreams for their future, the community's future, and their children's future. Following are statements that express these aspirations:

> I want my kids to come back to the reserve, operating a computer or whatever. That's the wish I have for my kids. I might not be there, I might be dead, but it doesn't make any difference if I'm not there. If they know what they're doing, they'll help the young generations.

> We earned our living by sweating, tired, hard work. We want our children to make their living just by a typewriter or by not having to lift a hundred pounds, like I used to do.

> I think that it should be a system to ensure that opportunities are provided for our children's future, that they become positive contributors to society; not only to society, but to themselves.

Education was seen as the force to change these dreams to reality:

> If kids have an education, they can do anything. [My son] wants to be a lawyer.

> Our intent to have our school is so that kids can make something of themselves when they grow up.

> I'd like students from the elementary, high school to graduate and have a future of their own, get a good job, and settle down.

To that end, students should be pushed to go to school.

The goal was to ensure that children obtained the training and education so that as young people they could go back to the reserve with their skills. "What we want is, we want to get our own people to be a good leader, to be a good teacher. Instead of money going out from the reserve, we should keep it here, use it, stay home." A problem with having outsiders as nurses, for example, is the language discrepancy in translation. This could cause serious problems with diagnosis if translation is not accurate. The children need to complete their education and go back to the community to become nurses, RCMP, teachers, and community leaders.

> What I was meaning is, if we had our own nurse, they'll know our own people, how they are, they know their language, they could ask them a question directly, and they'll have more information by themselves between them. And because a lot of English, harder words, there's no such a word in [our Native language], but it's got to be something else that just sounds like it. That's the main thing that a lot of people don't understand. . . . So for things like that, we need education for our people. And even in teaching, even administration, whatever, the people are qualified to train their own programs, to run their own affairs, only with their only band. [That would be] a lot easier, [that would be] a lot easier.

It was also felt that local people should be trained to take on these jobs so that the money spent on salaries would benefit the local community members:

> Our people here on the reserve need their people to do their job, what other people are doing for us now, like a councillor or director or manager, store manager, or nurses or mechanics, etc., anything that our people could have done it. Other bands they wanted to be able to run their own college, university, right on the reserve. That's what we're trying to do. . . . What we want is, we want to get our own people to

> be a good leader, to be a good teacher. Instead of the money going out from the reserve, we should keep it here, use it, stay home. Right now there's about ninety-five percent [of the budget for salaries]; all the teachers' fees, teachers' salaries, it's all going out. Just five percent stays, and that means that the TAs and the staff we have, just TAs so far, that's the highest percentage. There's one person that teaches language study.

The respondents also wanted students to have a better life and more opportunities than their parents had: "I'm out of work, so we get social assistance. I feel guilty. Some people are used to it." He continued: "I want them [my kids] to finish Grade Twelve, and I want the school to teach them so that they'll be able to achieve that."

A respondent shared this challenge for the children:

> And now they have everything right there. It's up to the children and the students to take advantage of what is there for them. Everything's right there, and they should take advantage of it now. There's a lot of dropouts, and a lot of people that have been dropouts in the past regret that they should have furthered their education. I hear a lot of people [say] that they regret that they dropped out, that they should have furthered their education while they had the opportunity. That was their choice, that they could have finished.

Children are challenged to take advantage of the educational opportunities that are available to them, to avoid the mistakes and regrets of their parents. Community members are challenged to work together to help the children achieve their goals. A respondent shared his dream:

> Let's work together and better our education for our young people. That's the main priority for [the band]. Let's work together. Not me and you as a principal; me and you, parent, and the whole community. We will have Elders together. Let's focus on our learning and writing skills. . . . We have to get back to community meetings with education, where we explain to our people [how] to get involved in the school, involved in the school. . . . Today, now, parents are interested in seeing or hearing what their kid's up to, what's happening with their kid, and that brings them up a little, and that helps them up. We need more of that; we need more

> education meetings with the community in order for the parents to say, "Hey, they care, we care. Let's do something about it." That's what we need.

He concluded:

> If I don't do it for my children, who's going to do it for me? I have to do it for my children. This is what I want for them. That's how I look at it. Not only for my children; for my people, my people. My people I say is not only the band members; my people like teachers. They're my people. They're in the community. They're part of the family. They're my people till they leave. That's how I look at it. That's what I want to see, and I'm going to see it happen. That day when it happens, I guarantee you'll be back. You'll be back to see it, not on this chair, but elsewhere. That's how I see it, and it's going to happen. I'm not crossing my fingers, because I know it's going to happen. . . . That's what I want for my children, my people. This is what we need in that school, learning, reading, and writing skills.

The hopes and dreams for the future are vested in the children.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the respondents did not always provide a definitive solution for the concerns that were expressed. They did, however, offer suggestions to explain the issues or to begin to address the areas requiring improvement.

Parents, Elders, and community leaders should become more involved in the school. A discipline policy should be introduced to address discipline concerns more effectively, and teaching strategies to address individual student learning styles should be explored. Teachers should be encouraged to become familiar with the local culture, visit parents, and become involved in community activities. Finally, alternatives should be explored to increase high school attendance and completion. By working together with all agencies and stakeholders in education, local control of education could lead to

community ownership of and participation in an improved education system.

The vision for the future included a better life and greater opportunities for the children. The children, it was hoped, would have choices that their parents did not have and would train to become the community workers and leaders of the future.

Summary

In 1986, when the band was forced to make a decision regarding the type of educational control that they wanted for their community, they chose local control. The community was not, however, ready to make the transition. The time element made it difficult for goals to be set into place, and community members were neither informed nor involved in the decision-making process. Many participants were not aware of the impetus for change and felt frustrated by their lack of involvement in the process.

The respondents had expected local control of education to solve many of the areas of concern in the education of their children. They found, instead, that the school was poorly organized, academic achievement and retention did not increase, and they were still not invited to participate in the process. They did not feel that it was their school; there was no sense of ownership. In addition, many expressed frustration with the lack of a clearly defined mandate or mission statement and felt that it was difficult to evaluate the initial stages of local control without clearly defined parameters for judgment.

In assessing the changes to the school five years after local control had been introduced, the respondents found both areas that

had improved and areas that needed continued growth. Attendance rates had increased, Native language and culture had been included in the curriculum, and staff involvement in the community had improved. Continued growth and development in each of these areas were still required. Student achievement had not significantly increased. The respondents shared theories to explain the low academic levels of their students. Division regarding the most appropriate high school program continued. Elders, parents, and community leaders needed to become more involved in the education of the youth.

The participants made suggestions to address the areas of concern. They concluded that what was needed was long-term staff retention, more local people with training to teach, and better attendance. They also felt that to improve the school, parents needed to be educated "to make them understand the growth of students and how they need to be pushed." One respondent concluded:

> If the present teachers, the quality of teachers that we have now, if that is maintained and if the administrator . . . will maintain some grip on the administration and will maximize our education dollars, and as long as the leadership at the community level maintain some control, . . . I don't see why we can't improve our educational standards.

He also felt that it would help if people talked to students and told them how important school is to their future. He felt that a counsellor was needed who could help those students who had problems at home.

The respondents shared their frustrations with community education, their hopes, and their fears. They felt that the children were their hope for the future, and they wanted a better life for the children of the community.

CHAPTER 5

THEMES WITHIN THE INTERVIEW DATA

Introduction

During the analysis process, the researcher identified underlying issues and themes related to local control of education in the community participating in this study. In this chapter, themes emerging from the interview data will be outlined. Three themes emerged: the way in which past experiences have affected the local concept of and attitudes towards education, the interconnection between community and school, and the search for cultural identity in a changing world. Each of these areas affected the way in which stakeholders assessed local control of education and their goals for future practice in their own community. These themes will be discussed in relation to participant comments.

The Legacy of the Past

The Residential-School Experience

The term of reference for most respondents in evaluating the school was their own experiences in residential schools. Many felt that the present system lacked the discipline and academic rigor of the residential schools. Others felt that the present social problems, reflected in student progress and discipline problems, were caused by the residential-school experience.

Family relationships. Many respondents spent most of their childhood years in residential schools. They saw their families only during the summer. As a result, they did not have a chance to learn

parenting skills from their parents' model, nor did they develop close family relationships. In this way residential-school experiences affected present-day family relationships. A respondent described the effect of his school experience on his relationship with his mother. He explained:

> I could never talk to my mother like my kids talk to me, because I was taken out at an early age, dumped back into their home environment when I was older, so the communication sort of broke down. [I was] in a mission, nine years, and then in high school and a couple of years after.

He had been away at school for the majority of his childhood. He never had a chance to develop a close relationship with his mother. As an adult, he found it difficult to communicate with her. The respondent commented on this:

> We have nothing to talk about. My interest was totally alien to her interest, which is local gossip, and I hate local gossip, and I don't like her telling me local gossip, so I just say "Hi, Mom," and she says, "Hello." I sit there, she sits over there; we've got nothing to talk about, nothing in common. You know that closeness, the family is missing too. I just don't go up to my mom and hug her, "Hi, Mom." I can't do that. That's from my residential school, I guess. That closeness isn't there. It's almost like an informal relationship. She knows I'm the son, I know she's the mother; that's it.

Attitudes to high school. Some respondents did not want to send their children away to high school because they had gone away to school and found the experience excruciatingly painful. A respondent explained:

> I grew up in a residential school here. We had to be there every day. I was the first one to leave the community here and go off to school. I found it very difficult. There were no roads at that time to the south.

The cultural and physical distance combined to make this a difficult time for those who went away to school. They wanted to protect their children from similar hurt.

Respondents who found their own residential-school experience difficult were opposed to sending their children away to high school. These respondents felt that a high school program should be offered in their home community. Until such a program was offered locally, they would not let their children attend high school.

A comparison of academic levels. The residential schools had provided a high level of academic rigor.

Some respondents felt disappointed that the rigor of the academic program in the residential schools had not been duplicated with local education. A respondent shared this view:

> I never regretted going to the residential school here, but going through the experience, the process is different. The contents are the same, but these schools fail a lot of our people. I look around and I think the only people that are holding good jobs are the people that went to a residential school. . . . There's a difference there somewhere, when it should be the same.

He felt that students who went to the day school ought to have had the same level of education; he found that local control of education had still not met the needs of young people. The respondents evaluated the present system in terms of their residential-school experience.

Leadership Patterns

In the past, Native communities were treated in a paternalistic fashion by DIAND officials. Community leaders were given very little real power to make decisions for their people. The respondents

commented on the effects of these learned patterns of leadership. They felt that community members and leaders perpetuated the model followed by DIAND. A respondent explained this view:

> Our band still perpetuates that kind of treatment [paternalism], and then we turn around and say that our people are no damned good, they're lazy, they're good for nothing, they don't want to work for themselves, they don't want to take the responsibility into their hands. How can they, because we're perpetuating this same bloody problem that department man did?

The pattern, he felt, needed to be broken.

Another respondent explained that "there were a lot of things that happened also that did a lot of damage on the confidence of the local government." Community leaders were reminded that they had no experience in managing their own school. As a result, they were afraid to take the initiative and change the school program to reflect local needs.

A respondent concluded that "the old bureaucracy mentality got into play. . . . Our people, even at the local-government level, lack confidence . . . to do the job."

It was difficult to break the old patterns; the legacy of paternalistic leadership styles was a lack of confidence in community leaders to take initiatives.

The Interrelationship of the Community and the School

The school and community are closely linked. Problems in the school are caused by problems in the home and in the community in general. The school is a reflection of the community. Many respondents commented on the school issues as a reflection of

community issues. Each reflected the strength and weakness of the other. Each acted as a model for the other.

The Family Unit

The family unit is at the heart of education. The relationship between the community and the school begins in the home. A respondent expressed this view:

> I guess, as you know, education in itself starts to work from the family unit, the family unit and then more so from the community environment and the school itself, because basically the school for X number of hours per day has got its own little environment, and that environment gets influenced from the family and the community in general.

The respondent explained how the family affects the school: "If you've got a retention problem, then the problem probably stems from the family unit, because if kids are irresponsible, then maybe that stems from their family too. That's why there's really actually no improvement per se."

The family-community environment provided a block to student success outside the community. A respondent described the way in which family attitudes towards education affect children. He shared his impression of the family life and expectations in the homes of non-Native acquaintances:

> I've got a lot of non-Native friends, and in their growing-up years they moved maybe about two or three times, always started over somewhere else where the economy took the family, and it was always expected of them to complete their school. Like this [friend] that I talked to, I got to know him the last couple of years. They [his family] never questioned education; all they knew was that they expected to go to university. That's what's been put into their minds while they were growing up—university. You can't expect anything less than university. So they lived with that idea, and they grew up on that idea, and, sure enough, they got their university.

The respondent concluded that "the success rate in that kind of environment—to complete your education—is higher than, let's say, from a Native environment where the family never moved anywhere."

The modelling provided by immediate and extended family members also affects the attitudes and values of young people. A respondent explained this issue:

> Where a young child growing up never saw the old man leave at seven o'clock and never come back until six o'clock, either with more bandages or more grease on his hands or more blisters or a fatter briefcase, like a role model. They look to their extended family. The same thing exists there: They have people sitting there, no money, no food, a lot of partying whenever the money came in from the Welfare. So the kids look at that, and that's the normal; that's what they look at as normal. They don't look at the man of the family getting up first thing in the morning with the kids and the mother getting up, washing the kids, and the father getting ready to work; that's missing.

He concluded that social change was required but cautioned, "I always thought that was the hardest thing to do." The challenge, he felt, was to begin with the individual, then the family, then the community. The school would change as the community changed. One individual must have the courage to begin the social revolution: "You might start with one individual, and the ripple effect [will be felt throughout the community], but that guy has to be like the pope!"

The Community as a Unit

The school reflects the community. A respondent explained this connection:

> I think it's just like saying that if there's a good school, there's a healthy community environment. If you've got a [poor] school, then you've got a problem at the community level. It's just common sense. . . . What happens in the school probably will have the same effect on the community. . . . It might not have the same kind of effect the community

> will have on the school, but it still will have, to a certain degree. That's why the community school will carry the image of the community in how well it does its job, its purpose.

Another respondent explained the connection between the school and the community. He felt that each should be judged on the basis of how the other was functioning: "You can't have a good community school and say the community is bad, because it's one; you can't separate a school and leave it isolated, because the school is the community, and what affects the community affects the school."

The respondents identified the challenge for individual members of the community: "If we want to improve our school, we have to improve ourselves and our community environment, because they're all married together; they're all tied together."

The relationships between aspects of the community were identified:

> Health has a lot to do with the school; housing has a lot to do with the school; roads have a lot to do with the school; water and sewer, the conveniences, have a lot to the with the school; and alcohol has a lot to do with the school, how it affects the community and the members. [This respondent concluded:] If you want a school that's serving its purpose, then we've got to cure all the other problems, too, that are tied to our school, because the kids are tied to the home, the home is tied to the community, and the community is tied to the school.

Still another respondent commented on the interrelationship of all aspects of the community: "I feel bad when our people say, 'Our kids are not learning. It's the school's fault.'" He concluded that the children need good role models and that they do not have them. He felt that the attitudes and lifestyles in the community were damaging the children. His comments also spoke to past experiences with DIAND and the way in which social patterns, begun in response to

DIAND policies, are still perpetuated. He shared this view: "Sometimes I think that our people tend to have tunnel vision; they don't have an expanded vision." He explained the cause for this tunnel vision:

> They [people in the community] never had to work too hard; you could spend all your life on welfare and never have to pay for a house, never have to pay for the maintenance, and don't really have to go pick up a pail and go to the creek for water; it's always been provided. There's a lot of things that we continue to do to perpetuate this kind of mentality. We bend over backwards to ensure that the freebies continue, so we're probably perpetuating the harm that's been done, and that in essence hurts our school, because we're talking about kids, we're talking about role modeling, we're talking about examples, we're talking about aspirations, dreams, we're talking about conquering the world.

The respondent concluded: "We can do it if we change, [if] these things are changed.

Community Health Issues

A number of community health issues, in particular alcoholism, have had a detrimental effect on the school as an institution and on individual children. Many respondents spoke of their feelings of guilt and grief for the way in which the children had been hurt by the social disease of alcoholism. A respondent shared his feelings on this issue:

> For a normal person the guilt that's involved in how we're damaging our kids should be unforgivable. It should be an ongoing load right to our deathbed, because that's what we're doing: We're damaging our kids. It's not fair to them. They don't really have a choice; they've never had a choice to be brought into this world, and they're supposed to be molded so that they become positive contributors to society. But we're not doing it, we're not doing our job, because there are a whole bunch of problems that stem before us and before our parents and before our grandfathers.

The respondent concluded that "a Napoleon" was required to instigate social change:

> Then we might have a school that would do what we want it to do, to carry out the things that would support and enhance, perpetuate our visions, our aspirations, our determination; the right to have a place in society.

Education, he concluded, was the tool to carry out these aspirations.

When the social pain in the community subsided, it was postulated, the school would become more stable. One respondent explained how the social problems in the community had affected the children. He shared this view: "We block Elders, we block the children. They don't have a way of going over; they don't have a way of going around; they don't have a way of going under." The respondent explained how parents blocked the communication of values from the Elders to the children; he explained how the actions of the parents hurt the children:

> We don't discipline our kids; we don't parent enough. We're parents, but we do it a different way [by] being spoiled by social assistance, alcohol, family violence, not going to churches, not going to Elders, not listening to your children, spoiling them with arcades and dollar signs.

He felt that values should be passed from the Elders to the parents to the young people and the children. Parents, he explained, blocked the communication between the generations so that Elders could not reach the children and the children could not reach the Elders. He said that the children were blamed for their lack of values and for their inappropriate behavior, but that it really was the fault of the parents: "We blame our kids for being like that. It's not the young people's fault; it's us as parents, it's our fault. We've put them in that situation." This respondent described the result of the break between the generations: "They [the children] suffer, our Elders suffer, young kids suffer. We suffer too as parents where we have problems,

alcohol and all that. What happens? Our kids take their lives; our Elders just die."

A parent described his personal struggle with alcoholism. He explained how his alcoholism had affected his own children:

> I used to drink, and I didn't care about sending the kids to school or anything like that. I wasn't paying any attention to how they were taught in school, and, like I said, I wasn't interested in what they did in school either. . . . After I stopped drinking, then I came to the full realization of what my grandmother was trying to tell me, so that's when I went back to school and all that, and now ever since then, the first day I sobered up, and my kids haven't missed one day of school yet.

Personal victories affected the whole community, as was illustrated in the following comment:

> A lot of people have quit [drinking] through treatment, and people working for the band are now beginning to be stable, are beginning to realize that, hey, this is life and you don't need alcohol. So those people who are sober and have education are getting employed and are sort of role models for the community. That's good.

The children are the focus of future dreams as well. Many participants spoke of their hopes for one day attaining self-government. The role of the school is to prepare the children to be the fulfilment of those dreams. One respondent explained this as follows: "The road towards self-government is long, and there's a lot of work that needs to be done, and that's where education comes in. Those little kids in kindergarten are going to be the future leaders of the youth."

Cultural Identity: Value Clarification

Many respondents felt that their own confusion regarding a personal identity affected their attitudes and conception of education. It was difficult to adapt to a rapidly changing society and, as a result, difficult to maintain a cultural identity. The following comment expressed this view:

> But it's very confusing, and I feel that even for myself it has a lot to do with all the changes that are happening to our culture and losing it, and it's very confusing, just this lost feeling that we all have to follow up on, but it's really hard. . . . Even now the Elders are not really heard. . . . And now lately that's taking over, I guess, and we can't live the way we did before.

When you cannot live in the past, and the present makes no sense to you, how do you plan for the future? Many respondents expressed this frustration. A respondent explained how past experiences affected present views.

> It has a lot to do with our heritage and our lifestyle. Indians for a community in the past hundred years lost that transient lifestyle that they've inherited and they've been corralled, they've been restricted, they've been fed; everything's been done. We're not transients, so some kid might start to wake up: "Uh huh!" You know? But then what choice does he have when he finishes school? It's very likely that with all his education, he has a stumbling block in life somewhere. He's going to pack and make a beeline for [our community], because it has a lot to do with their roots.

Parents who could not come to terms with the changes themselves found it difficult to understand what was happening at the school. A comment reflected this view:

> I don't know what they feel, but since all these changes are happening they haven't really come to terms with accepting it, so maybe like the experience that they're going through with their family, they feel that their needs are not being met, so when another person from outside comes and tells them about their child, they feel that they are being pushed back.

Without a strong sense of personal identity, parents could not cope with school communication regarding their children. Any comment that spoke to their children's need for improvement or growth was seen as a personal affront. A strong personal sense of cultural identity would, it was felt, perhaps have prevented the feelings of personal attack.

A respondent explained why many young people struggled with a personal sense of cultural identity:

> A lot of our young people don't understand their cultural background mainly because of some of the social problems that we encounter from day to day, like lack of parental guidance, problem with alcohol, problem with lack of clothing. All of these things will impact on the children's future.

People of all ages spoke of the journey that they were taking to understand their cultural identity. A story that one respondent told of a real and a metaphoric trip illustrates this journey of discovery:

> Last Saturday I gave this man a ride from town, and he was talking to me about—before his talk I never really came to think about all the things that he said about our background, the way we are and who we are, and I never really paid much attention because I was confused, I didn't understand. It is important to me, a spiritual life, but I didn't understand, so I just took things, trying to accept things in a non-Native way, and still I wasn't aware of some of these things. And when that man started talking about things that are happening today, he was saying that young people are turning to non-Native ways. He said, "I don't mean you," he told me; "I just mean in general," and then that we are leaving things behind us and just forgetting it, and we are turning to alcohol. "That's wrong," he said. He himself admitted he's drinking and what he's doing then. When he said that, what came to my mind was that even himself he got confused, I guess, by all these changes, and he explained a lot of things.
>
> By the way, he grew up very poorly and trapping and hunting around. His family and people didn't get social assistance then; they had to get money by trapping and hunting, getting food, so by what he was saying, it seemed that it was very important to him, his background. And now that he admitted he's drinking, it seems that he never really

> dealt with learning to accept the change, like seeing who he is and then learning slowly to accept all these changes that are happening. Then after I dropped him off I was thinking, I think he was just making conversation on the way back, but it really meant a lot to me, and I thanked him and encouraged him that we really need more of those talks because a lot of young people you see around here are just lost, and they really need these talks to really see who they are and not try to run away from the problem, because to me it's very important because I thought about a lot of things that I've never really realized how myself before. But I'm Native, and I can't just forget it because my background is important, and I have to learn to grow with it and see who I am before I can really feel comfortable with these changes.

Many respondents spoke of similar explorations and discoveries.

The changes that had taken place in the community made education for the youth even more critical. A respondent explained this view:

> Education is so important. The main reason the people in our community needed to have our children to be educated, because like, for example, in our time people would live by trapping, hunting. None of these young people will do that nowadays. It's mostly leave the reserve. If they go in the bush, if they run out of food, they might starve to death, or they might freeze. They don't know how to make a fire or kill anything. That's why. Even though we can't leave our culture, we've still got to have Elders to train them how to hunt and how to clean up the furs, whatever, trapping, fishing, whatever it is.

Another respondent explained that in the old days people helped themselves. If they killed a cow, they shared it with their neighbor. Now, with fur prices down and with the young people uninterested in trapping, the focus for preparing young people for the future has been forced to change.

A respondent concluded: "They've got to remind themselves. They've got to know how to do their living, because I don't think anyone will supply us like this all the way in the future; we've got to help ourselves."

In a changing world, the struggle to find a cultural identity colored every action and thought.

Summary

In an analysis of the data, a number of themes emerged. These have been identified and discussed in this chapter. First of all, the legacy of past practices in Native education, the legacy of racism, has been the inability of community leaders to act in a decisive way to initiate needed changes to the practice of Native education. In addition, it was felt that past practice had also led to social problems in the community. A second theme identified pertained to the relationship between the community and the school. It was found that the health and success of the community were closely tied to those of the school. Problems in the community were reflected in the school. The participants concluded that the school would improve only if and when the social problems in the community were addressed. Clo ›ly tied to this theme was the need for value identification and value clarification. Before goals could be set for the school, community members needed to determine personal goals, and the community as a whole needed to determine a community vision for the future.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS, REFLECTIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Major Findings

The 20 primary participants in the study shared their perceptions of local control of education in their community in response to the research questions identified in Chapter 1. Participant responses varied in style. Some responses were richly descriptive, others primarily analytic, and still others philosophical and reflective. Several respondents were shy and somewhat tentative. Together, the participants provided reflective and detailed descriptions of the impetus for change, the steps taken to initiate local control, their perceptions of the initial and subsequent changes, and their evaluation of these changes. In addition, the respondents shared their goals and hopes for the future of education services in their community.

Most participants felt that, as stakeholders, their views on education should be solicited and considered before policy decisions were made. Their comments demonstrated their frustration with the lack of community-member involvement in the decision-making process. As the study progressed, it became apparent that few participants were aware of the impetus for change or the initial steps taken to implement local control of education in their community. Those who were informed expressed their frustrations. They felt that the impetus for change had come from DIAND officials. They felt ill-prepared for the devolution of power and felt forced to rush through the steps that were taken for reasons of expediency rather than to meet local needs. Most participants felt isolated from the apex of

control. Even education and community leaders felt impotent; they felt that government officials were making decisions on their behalf. As a result, no community-initiated goals or mandates were set in place prior to the inception of local control, and community members and leaders felt no sense of ownership. The school, although physically central to the community, was both spiritually and philosophically isolated from the general population.

The respondents shared their perceptions of the changes that had taken place within the first five years of local control of education in their community. A number of improvements were identified. Student attendance and staff and student retention had improved; Elders had become peripherally involved in the school, and local culture had become a component of the curriculum. In addition, parent-community involvement and, correspondingly, school-community communication had improved. The participants felt, however, that the school continued to be isolated from the community. They also felt that the general community had not yet been adequately informed of or involved in decisions affecting education.

The respondents identified several factors which affected their evaluation of local control of education in their community. Adults shared their experiences with and observations of residential schools. They judged the current practices on the basis of these perceptions. The participants explained that their own sense of personal identity was unclear. As long as the community members struggled with these cultural-identity issues, it was maintained, they would find it difficult to evaluate the extent to which the school reflected community values. Several respondents pointed out that without a clearly defined

mandate, it was impossible to evaluate local control of education. As a result, evaluative comments spoke to past and present personal experiences with education, and there was no general consensus from the participants as to the appropriateness of current practice.

The respondents shared their vision for the future. They hoped that the children of the community would complete their education and remain in or return to their community to become the teachers, social workers, nurses, police: All positions currently held by non-Natives would be held by these young people. The participants hoped that the school and community would work together to bring healing to their community and a bright future for their children.

Personal Reflections

Significance of the Methodology

Personal reflections of the study must include a discussion of the appropriateness of the methodology chosen. I chose a qualitative format because I wanted to provide myself and others with a *slice of life* view of one community's experience with local control of education. I felt that a rich descriptive format would provide insight that quantified data could not provide. In this study I have attempted to reflect the perceptions of the stakeholder participants.

The purpose of this study was to ascertain stakeholder assessments of local control of education based on their personal experiences with and perceptions of local control in their community. The participants were asked to identify the initial intents and goals for the school and the steps taken to meet those goals. Further, they were asked to assess the progress made in achieving identified goals

and to share their ideas for future improvements. The Stake model (Worthen & Sanders, 1987, p. 131) was used as a framework for gathering data. I felt that this model fit the purpose of the study and as such aided in the data-collection process. Data were obtained primarily through semistructured interviews with four participants in each of the following five categories: Elders, community education leaders, parents, students, and Native educators. Purposive sampling was used, and participants were chosen by *reputational case selection* and through *network selection.* I make no claims for the generalizability of findings; however, in choosing participants representing a variety of ages and experience based on their willingness to participate, their availability, their experience with or knowledge of the school operation, and recommendations by a key person or another respondent, I have attempted to present a wide-angle view of local control in Eagle Feather community.

I feel that the semistructured interview format and the atmosphere within which the interviews were conducted aided in ensuring the trustworthiness of the data which were gathered. The participants were assured of confidentiality and were invited to identify the location and time of their choice for their interviews. By providing a comfortable and safe atmosphere for the interviews, I encouraged honest and open responses. The semistructured interview format provided the participants with the opportunity to introduce further areas of concern and allowed me to delve into and explore these areas. Several formal interviews and informal discussions were held with representatives of DIAND, the PSD, and interagency and school staff. These interviews and discussions, in combination with observations

and a document search, were used to provide contextual clues to increase researcher insight and understanding. Although I did not personally know most of the participants, many knew of me because I had worked in the community as a teacher several years prior to beginning this study. I feel that many respondents were willing to participate in the study because I was not a complete stranger to the community. I have taken measures to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. I feel that the sense of trust and shared experiences helped to provide an atmosphere conducive to honest responses. The reader, however, should be aware of the potential for researcher bias in this study.

The data analysis was done over several years. I took steps to maintain the integrity of the data. The taped interviews were transcribed; and in the analysis process, both the transcriber and I reviewed the tapes and transcripts to ensure their accuracy and completeness. We made only minor changes for clarification purposes. The respondents were given the opportunity to check over their transcripts to make corrections and to ensure further the accuracy of the transcripts. I went in person to take the transcripts to the respondents. I asked each participant to read over his/her transcript and to make changes as necessary. I made arrangements to return later for the revised transcript. Several respondents asked to look theirs over while I waited; others asked me to read the transcript to them. Still others chose to have me return at a later date. A number of respondents wanted additional time to go over their transcripts or were unavailable when I returned to pick up their revisions. On my return to Edmonton, I wrote to ask these individuals to send me their

revisions. In the following months I listened to the tapes, reviewed notes and transcripts, and began to make notations of the categories that had emerged.

In August 1992 I began work as a principal in a Native community in northeastern Alberta. For a period of two years I became immersed in this job and found little time to work on this research. When I began again to work with the data, I repeated the steps outlined above. Pencilled notes in the margins of transcripts became the basis for an outline of categories. I repeated these steps; I divided categories into subheadings, then used the codes from these notes to determine outline headings. By the time I was satisfied that the headings reflected the flavor of the responses, I had read through the transcripts and listened to the tapes many times. I then discussed these categories with several member advisors. Finally, I cut the transcripts into strips and placed them into envelopes according to their identified classification. I feel that the steps that I took in data analysis resulted in an accurate reflection of respondent views. I have based the major findings of the study on the themes which emerged in this data analysis.

Significance of the Literature Review

As I analyzed the data and reflected on the findings, I found themes which had also emerged in a review of the literature: I found similarities in terms of the school and community relationship, the need for value and culture clarification, and the role that a history of racism in Native education plays in current assessment and practice.

The community-school relationship: The cycle of defeat, the cycle of success. According to the literature, there is a close relationship between the success of the school and the health of the community. First of all, the attitude of the community members affects the success of the school (Littlechild, 1995; NIB, 1988b). A participant in Littlechild's study explained:

> I think that one word here is "Attitude!" . . . So when I'm saying attitude, we had to address that! We had to convince our membership that if you were to look at this in a constructive way, we could do things for ourselves! (p. 58)

The attitude of educators affects the success of students (Cameron, 1990; Dawson, 1988). Secondly, the social health of the community affects the success of students. Hull (1990) concluded that "Indian students and adults are well behind other Canadians in educational success" and that this is a result of "such factors as family status and income" (pp. 3, 11). He also concluded that parent socioeconomic status is related to student high school retention. Callander-Fyten (1992) also commented on this relationship. Based on interviews with 10 administrators of band-controlled schools in northern Alberta, she concluded: "The dealings that the parents and other members have with the school seem to be directly related to their own well-being as people and as community" (p. 32). She expanded on this issue:

> Alcohol and family violence were regular if not daily problems in the lives of community members. The unsettling effect that these factors have on the lives of both adults and children make[s] it difficult to express concern about outside agencies such as the school when the immediate family unit is in such jeopardy. (p. 32)

Community involvement in the school was directly affected by community health. At the same time, community involvement in the school affected school success. Littlechild interviewed education

leaders of six Alberta band-controlled school systems. He concluded that "a successful Band Control School System is defined by the amount of community involvement there is in the school(s), and is truly achieved only when the development of the school(s) also becomes the development of the community" (p. 116).

Similarly, the respondents in this study commented again and again on the interrelationship between the school and the community. A healthy community will result in a healthy school, and vice versa. Several comments reflected this attitude:

> If we want to improve our school, we have to improve ourselves and our community environment because they are all married together.
>
> If there's a good school, there's a healthy community environment. If you've got a [poor] school, then you've got a problem at the community level. . . . That's why the community school will carry the image of the community in how well it does its job.
>
> The school depends on the community, but we know the community can't do anything, so the school has to do certain things on its own.
>
> We're damaging our kids. It's not fair to them; . . . they're supposed to be molded so that they become positive contributors to society. But we're not doing it, . . . because there are a whole bunch of problems that stem before us and before our parents and before our grandfathers, and I think we need a Napoleon or something to change the world. Then we might have a school . . . that would support and enhance, perpetuate our visions, our aspirations.

The respondents challenged parents, community leaders, and educators to work together to bring healing to the community and to strengthen the bond between home and school. Both the students and the general members of the community would benefit by such a three-way combined effort. The literature also reflected this view.

Value clarification and community healing: The road to a successful school program. A review of the literature revealed the need for Native communities to clarify cultural values in order to bring about healing. This cultural identification would then be the basis for vision statements in setting educational goals for the community school (Akan, 1992; Hampton, 1993; Weber-Pillwax, 1992; Wildcat, 1995). Wildcat, who based his conclusions on interviews conducted with six educational leaders involved in Native education, addressed this issue. He quoted one of his respondents, who explained the importance of identifying values and beliefs:

> Native communities are into this phase of healing and one of the qualities you need to get started in your healing is being able to have some values and beliefs that you can follow or fall back on in tough times. (p. 85)

Weber-Pillwax explained the connection between cultural-value clarification and school success: "A native child must learn to know himself in his own cultural group before he can begin to know himself as part of another cultural group" (p. 11). Weber-Pillwax expressed the view that an alien cultural climate in a classroom "is a place of death" (p. 11). She explained the importance of a collective vision to a native child's development:

> What is it then that holds a native child to his people, and to his own identity as a native person? It is the collective vision of the shape of the earth, a vision that the earth is shaped by the interrelationships of all mankind, a vision of which he is a part. . . . [She concludes:] When we begin to live under a collective vision, . . . we find a freedom of our individual life which never gives rise to the superficial argument that the wishes of the one must give rise to the wishes of the group. . . . But without the visionary aspect of leadership, a people cannot develop creatively as a whole; nor can the individual within the whole develop. (p. 15-17)

The literature reflected the view that cultural identity and value clarification are significant factors in developing a positive climate where student learning would be maximized.

The respondents in this study expressed this view as well. The following excerpts from participant comments reflect this view:

> But I'm Native, and I can't just forget it, because my background is important, and I have to learn to grow with it and see who I am before I can really feel comfortable with these changes.
>
> A lot of our young people don't understand their cultural background. . . . All of these things will have an impact on the children's future.
>
> But it's very confusing, and I feel that even for myself it has a lot to do with all the changes that are happening to our culture and losing it, and it's very confusing.
>
> I think that the main thing for the Native people here is that we have to understand that we are losing our Native culture, and we should really be talking to the Elders to see what they think.

The views expressed by these respondents are reflected in the literature. A Native administrator concluded: "If we are not careful, we are going to be absorbed into the white world, where basically we'll say we're Indian but we truly are not because our system will be exactly the same. And that's the contradiction" (Wildcat, 1995, p. 79). Both the views expressed in the literature and those expressed by respondents in this study advocate the need to address cultural identity in education.

The legacy of racism in Native education practice and assessment. There is some evidence in the literature to support the conclusion that the colonial model for education has had a negative impact on Native efforts to control their own education. A Native

educator interviewed by Wildcat (1995) spoke of the devastating results of growing up with this model:

> It's something that Indian people have learned, to drag themselves down and other people so quickly, when things don't work right away. And if they're going to turn around those feelings that they have learned from the residential school time, that whole colonial attitude that Indians are not able, and to come back to what they are really about, they must learn to feel good about who they are. (p. 76)

Another respondent in Wildcat's study also commented on this:

> Native communities have been destroyed in terms of being sources of initiative, vision and innovation. The Native community has responded to changes made on their behalf and to the racism of society at large, so they have gotten into a bunker mentality. It's this, "we and them." And so they end up stereotyping the forces that are negating them. They are correct in their analysis of the force negating them but instead of thinking creatively, they are thinking reactively. (p. 74)

Blackman (1993) interviewed six individuals who held various positions in Native schools. She concluded:

> Politically, economically and socially the colonial model ensured that the Indian population was effectively curtailed in its ability to manage its own affairs. Reserve communities have had only one model to work with and that is one established not for their benefit but for the colonizer's convenience. (p. 117)

The respondents in this study also commented on the effect that past experiences with the colonial model had had on their views of education. Community leaders did not have the confidence to take the initiative in their community school. "They [the Council] decided that [they] weren't experienced, that Indian Affairs had to get involved, . . . and the old bureaucracy mentality got back into play." The respondents also commented on the fear that all community members had. The general community did not have confidence in their leaders

or in themselves to make the right choices for their children's education. A respondent commented on this:

> Our people, too, lack confidence in one vision. They lack confidence so much that they don't want to isolate themselves. In the community they say, "This is wrong. This is what we need to do." They're scared to do that; that's not being normal.

Another comment also reflected the fear that the community leadership did not have the skills to cope with local control of education:

> Then I had doubts. Every time the band tries to do something and it gets started, it doesn't go ahead; it doesn't work out, so they just let it go. So I [wondered] if they're doing the right thing, and I was scared.

Past experience with a racist, colonial model of education has affected Native community members, leaders, and educators; they are afraid to take initiatives. This view is reflected in the literature and is confirmed by the results of this study.

Implications

For Practice

This study was limited to the perceptions presented by 20 stakeholders of local control of Native education in one specific reserve community. No generalizations can therefore be made to the practice of local control in all Native communities. The researcher feels, however, that the results of this study provide a number of implications for those involved in Native education. The insights provided by the participants may provide a perspective for others who are attempting to evaluate their own experience.

Community involvement. Stakeholders expressed frustration with the isolation of the school. They saw it as a separate entity over which they had no control. They also felt left out of the decision-making process. Perhaps community leaders responsible for local control of education should consider means to involve community members in the process. The respondents suggested that the community be informed of and involved in the decision-making process. Perhaps by taking steps to alleviate this frustration, the leaders would also alleviate the concern for a lack of ownership. People who have *bought into* the school are much more likely to support it.

Teacher training. This study seems to suggest that there is a cultural gap between non-Native staff and Native students. The respondents suggested that teacher orientation for non-Native teachers be expanded and implemented. In addition, they suggested that efforts should be made to encourage teachers to remain in the community for a longer period of time, to include teachers in community activities, and to provide Native teacher aides to help in the classrooms. A long-term solution would be to encourage local people to take teacher training so that they could eventually replace the non-Native teaching staff. Community leaders may wish to consider these suggestions.

Elder guidance. With respect to the guiding principles for the school, the leaders may wish to consider the concerns and suggestions presented by the participants in this study. The respondents feared that their cultural identity was changing; Elders should be asked to provide leadership in understanding and identifying cultural values.

They felt that vision statements and a mandate should be the guiding forces for the school. Elders, it was felt, needed to be involved in setting these guidelines.

Community health. This study appears to suggest that the success of the school is closely tied to the health of the community. Perhaps an effort could be made to break the cycle by addressing some of the social problems in the community. A healthy community would be reflected in a successful school; an effective school would be reflected in increased stability in the community. Community leaders might wish to address this concern.

For Future Research

This study attempted to gauge community perception of local control of Native education. Its scope was limited to the insights shared by the 20 participants. It might be worthwhile to use the issues and themes which emerged from this study as a basis for quantitative research to determine specific areas of need and strength and thereby suggest alternatives for improvement.

A number of respondents expressed a concern regarding the lack of appropriate testing instruments. They felt that it was difficult to assess student achievement or any policy change that might impact this achievement, as long as appropriate tools to measure student progress were lacking. It would seem worthwhile, then, to complete a study which assessed current testing practices with the goal of generating culturally appropriate tools for analyzing student progress. Once such an instrument has been generated, a further study could assess various curricular and policy changes to measure their effect on

student achievement. The respondents identified the need for further research in these areas.

Whereas this study focussed on the impressions of Native stakeholders, primarily community members, it might be interesting to interview teachers to determine the difficulties they face and to generate alternatives to maximize their effectiveness.

Future studies might also seek to involve community resource people in generating curriculum that more closely reflects the needs, interests, and learning styles of the Native community.

The results of this study seemed to suggest the need for an alternative model of leadership for Native education. Perhaps further study could focus on preparing a model which more closely reflects the values and goals for Native education.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to gauge stakeholder perceptions of their experience with local band control of education. The intent of the study was to follow the steps taken to introduce local control to one community and to ascertain the goals that had been set, participant assessment of the practice in terms of those goals, and their recommendations for future change. The result of the study was to provide readers with insight into the issues in Native education as identified by the study participants. In addition, the participants provided their vision for the future of Native education in Canada.

Hampton (1993) shared an anecdote of his youth which reflects the purpose of this study:

> In Mankato, Minnesota, I walked down the stairs to a little convenience store. I stood in the aisle hesitating over the choice of soups when an old white man confronted me. "Do you have a little time?" I looked at him, shaking where he stood, bright eyes, open by complex face. I expected he wanted me to carry something and felt good to be chosen. I had the spacious time of youth and in his eyes I liked myself; strong, young, and respectful. "Yes, I have time."
>
> "Wait here," he said and walked away with the slow, small steps of a well-balanced old man. I stood with a slightly top heavy feeling of youth's incipient motion until he slowly returned. He came up the aisle with a large cardboard box. It seemed empty and I was puzzled until he thrust it forward, holding it in front of my face. My center of gravity dropped and I felt the earth's strength through my body. Relaxed and ready, I waited for his move as I had learned to wait in the dojo, in alleys behind bars, in classrooms, and in sacred ceremonies. His question came from behind the box. "How many sides do you see?"
>
> "One," I said.
>
> He pulled the box toward his chest and turned it so one corner faced me. "Now how many do you see?"
>
> "Now I see three sides."
>
> He stepped back and extended the box, one corner toward him and one toward me. "You and I together can see six sides of this box," he told me. Standing on the earth with an old white man I began understanding. I had thought he wanted me to carry his groceries, but instead he gave me something that carries me, protects me, and comforts me. (pp. 305-306)

The views and suggestions presented in this study will, it is hoped, present another side to the Native education experience and thus contribute to the insight required by leaders to make effective changes in Native education for the successful delivery of programs for reserve Indians. The following comment by a study participant expressed the challenge:

> We don't need a Master's degree in Education to be involved in our educational programming. All we need to do is have an interest, have the commitment, and be able to support the school.

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Appendix A

Correspondence

9618 - 109 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 1G5

November 20, 1991

Chief and Council

Dear Chief and Council:

I am currently enrolled at the University of Alberta in the Department of Educational Administration, Faculty of Education. As a part of this program, I will be doing an extensive educational study. In 1987 the _____ Band initiated local control of education with the opening of the _____ Community School. At that time goals were set in place and steps were initiated to create a culturally relevant, locally controlled program. I feel that an examination of those steps, and the community's assessment of the process, would be of significant merit to the stakeholders. The insights that can be gathered from your community's efforts, and the successes of those efforts, could provide other locally controlled schools with a basis for assessing and/or improving their program. I wish, therefore, to have your permission to undertake a study of this nature with the _____ Band.

The format of the study would involve the development of a qualitative design to gain the ideas, reactions, and assessments of Elders, parents, administrators (board members, director of education, principal, and vice-principal), teachers, teacher-assistants, students, and general community members. The methodology would involve extensive interviews of the stakeholders. Steps will be taken to guarantee anonymity to respondents. The specific study design will be discussed with a designate of the Chief and Council and/or the school board prior to initiating the data collection.

A study of this nature not only would benefit the members of the _____ Band, but would also provide insight for other communities considering or in the process of developing a locally controlled educational program.

I appreciate your considering this request and look forward to hearing from you in the very near future.

Sincerely,

Wilma de Waal

WdeW/lp
cc: Band Manager
Director of Education

9618 - 109 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 1G5

November 20, 1991

Director of Education

Dear Mr. _____:

Enclosed please find a copy of a letter sent to the Chief and Council requesting permission to undertake a study at the _____ Community School.

Sincerely,

Wilma de Waal

WdeW/lp
Encl.

9618 - 109 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 1G5

November 20, 1991

Band Manager

Dear Mr. _____:

Enclosed please find a copy of a letter sent to the Chief and Council requesting permission to undertake a study at the _____ Community School.

Sincerely,

Wilma de Waal

WdeW/lp
Encl.

9618 - 109 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 1G5

June 4, 1992

[Public School Division representative]

Dear Mr. _____:

Enclosed is a transcript of our conversation. I appreciated your contributions. Please look this over and make any appropriate additions, deletions, or changes and return this to me as soon as it is convenient.

Enclosed is also a form stating your agreement to participate in the study. You will not be identified ni the thesis as a participant. Also, if I wish to use a direct quotation from your transcript, I will write to you to obtain your permission.

Again, thank you for your participation. If you have any questions, I can be reached at the above address or by phone at 425-8227 or by fax at 433-4753.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Wilma de Waal

WdeW/lp
Encls.

9618 - 109 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 1G5

June 4, 1992

Ms. _____

Dear Ms. _____:

Thank you for your contributions to the study. You have a transcript of your interview. Please make any changes you wish and send it back to me as soon as possible. My address is noted above.

I appreciated having the chance to speak to you and look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

Wilma de Waal

WdeW/lp

9618 - 109 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 1G5

June 4, 1992

[Leadership representative of the Band]

Dear Mr. _____:

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me during my last visit to _____. Again, your contributions and insight proved to be invaluable.

We discussed the minutes of school board and education meetings, and you asked me to get these from _____. She, unfortunately, did not have a chance to get these together before I left _____. Please request these. If there isn't time for someone to photocopy them, would it be possible to send them to me? I'll copy them and return the originals. These minutes (notes) are an important factor in the study.

Please get back to me on this as soon as possible. Again, _____, I appreciate all of the help you have given me. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Wilma de Waal

WdeW/lp

9618 - 109 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 1G5

June 4, 1992

Director of Education

Dear Mr. _____:

I'm sorry I missed seeing you on my last visit to _____. I have appreciated your input into my research and would like to request further information in the following areas:

a) Sources of Income for School Programs (1991/1992):
   - per-student grant $_____
   - capital grant $_____
   - special education $_____
   - education project $_____
   - other (please specify) $_____

b) Budget Allocation:
   - salary $_____
   - administrative costs $_____
   - books and materials $_____
   - prof. development: total $_____
     per teacher/staff member $_____
   - capital costs (building maintenance, heating, etc.) $_____
   - library $_____
   - hot lunch program $_____
   - other (please specify) $_____

c) How has the budget changed in terms of allocation and sources since you became Director of Education (e.g., additional sources? increased/ decreased grants, more to salary? cut to library? etc.)?

d) What is your role in the school?

e) What is your vision for the future? What would you still like to accomplish?

If you have anything further that you wish to share, or that you feel would contribute to the study, please send this to me as well.

Again, I appreciate your participation and contributions. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at the above address or by phone (425-8227) or fax (433-4753). I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Wilma de Waal

Box 1776
Lac La Biche, AB
T0A 2C0

December 15, 1992

[Leadership representative of the Band]

Dear Mr. _____:

As you know, I am working on a thesis on band-controlled schools. On several occasions, I had the opportunity to speak with you and others in the community to gather data for the study. Thank you for all your help. In August I moved to Heart Lake, Alberta, to begin a job as the principal of their school. The first few months were very busy, as I proceeded to get settled into a new home and job. This left little time to do my research. In January, I will proceed with the data analysis. As soon as I have a summary report completed, I would like to give that to you to read before I commence work on the final report. I would appreciate feedback on that from you. If you have any questions, or any information that you think would be helpful, I can be reached at the above address or at (403) 623-3344 (home) or (403) 623-2600 (work).

Thank you for your help and support. I will keep you informed as to the progress on this research.

Sincerely,

Wilma de Waal

Box 1776
Lac La Biche, AB
T0A 2C0

December 15, 1992

Chief and Council

Dear Chief _____:

As you know, I am working on a thesis on band-controlled schools. On several occasions, I had the opportunity to speak with members of the community to gather data for the study. I appreciated the support given by Chief and Council.

In August I moved to Heart Lake, Alberta, to begin a job as the principal of their school. The first few months were very busy, as I proceeded to get settled into a new home and job. This left little time to do my research. In January, I will proceed with the data analysis. As soon as I have a summary report completed, I would like to give that to you to read before I commence work on the final report. I would appreciate feedback on that from you. If you have any questions, or any information that you think would be helpful, I can be reached at the above address or at (403) 623-3344 (home) or (403) 623-2600 (work).

Thank you for your help and support. I will keep you informed as to the progress on this research.

Sincerely,

Wilma de Waal

Box 248
Neerlandia, AB
T0G 1R0

August 16, 1995

Chief and Council

Dear Chief and Council:

In 1992 the Chief and Council in position at that time allowed me to collect data for a research project I conducted as part of the requirements for a Master of Education program. Enclosed please find a draft copy of the study results.

The first three chapters of this paper contain the research methodology and a literature review to form the framework of the study. Chapter 4 contains a synopsis of the data collected through interviews with members of the community. Chapter 5 outlines the themes which emerged from the data, and Chapter 6 is a summary of the study findings. You may find the conclusions in Chapter 6 of particular interest. I would be pleased to receive your feedback on this study. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at the above address.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak to members of your community. I am sorry that it has taken me so long to get the results to you. I hope that you will still find this research helpful.

Sincerely,

Wilma de Waal

WdeW/lp
Encl.

Appendix B

Statement of Participation

I, _____, agree to participate in the thesis research
name

conducted by Wilma de Waal.

I understand the purpose of the study.

I understand that I can look over the transcript of my interview and make any changes that I want.

I understand that I can opt out of participation at any point in the process.

_____
signature

_____
date

Appendix C

Interview Questions

Stakeholders' Assessment of Local Control

Questions:

1. What does local control mean to you?

2. What do you think were the goals of local control?
   What was the initial purpose of local control?

3. What were the concerns that local control was to address?
   How have those concerns been addressed?

4. What steps have been taken to fulfill those goals?

5. What has been the role of [Elders, students, teacher-assistants, parents, community leaders] in fulfilling those goals?

6. What is your assessment of local control?
   (Have the goals been met?)

7. What are the successes of local control?
   What do you feel have been the advantages of local control?

8. What are some changes that you would like to see made?

9. How has local control made a difference in the community?

10. What do you see as the future role of local control in your community?

Appendix D

Tables

Table D1

Band-Operated Schools, Canada, 1975/76-1989/90

Year	Band-operated schools
1975/76	53
1976/77	64
1977/78	104
1978/79	107
1979/80	115
1980/81	133
1981/82	159
1982/83	181
1983/84	191
1984/85	203
1985/86	229
1986/87	243
1987/88	262
1988/89	280
1989/90	300

Table D2

Enrolment by School Type, On-Reserve Population, Canada, 1975/76-1989/90

Year	Federal	Provincial	Band-operated	Private	Total
1975/76	29,581	38,079	2,842	1,315	71,817
1976/77	30,012	36,884	3,340	1,481	71,717
1977/78	29,412	41,358	5,639	1,679	78,088
1978/79	28,605	45,438	5,796	1,520	81,359
1979/80	27,742	45,742	6,311	1,442	81,237
1980/81	26,578	46,852	7,879	1,492	82,801
1981/82	22,525	43,652	13,133	1,156	80,466
1982/83	21,825	38,511	15,912	1,164	77,412
1983/84	21,893	39,474	16,715	n/a	78,082
1984/85	21,669	40,080	18,372	n/a	80,121
1985/86	19,943	39,712	20,968	n/a	80,623
1986/87	18,811	40,053	23,407	n/a	82,271
1987/88	17,322	40,520	26,429	n/a	84,271
1988/89	13,783	40,954	30,845	n/a	85,582
1989/90	11,764	41,720	34,674	n/a	88,158

Table D3

The Band-Controlled School Experience: The Impetus for Change

Descriptive information	Schools					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Dropouts	X			X		
Attendance				X		
Loss of Native language	X		X			
Government attitudes of assimilation and paternalism	X					
Need to address cultural differences	X			X		X
Learning styles/teaching styles	X		X			
Parent control of education	X		X		X	
Reaction to Bill 101, Quebec		X				
Academic achievement				X	X	
Hearing loss amongst school-aged children				X		
Pride/values lost (traditional)				X		
Spiritual, economic, emotional depression				X		

Schools:

A. Mi'kmawey School
B. Kahnawake Survival School
C. Lakeview School
D. Kipohtakaw School
E. Seabird Island Community School
F. James Bay Cree School Board

Table D4

The Band-Controlled School Experience: Strategies for Change

Descriptive information	Schools					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Inservice/teacher training						X
Native teachers	X			X		
Advanced and remedial programs			X			
Native language classes for students	X				X	X
Native language classes for adults					X	
Native spirituality emphasized	X			X		
Curriculum adapted to student needs	X	X		X	X	X
Elders and parents share knowledge				X	X	X
Books and materials developed to teach local history and culture		X			X	
Individualized instruction	X					
Multi-level instruction			X	X		
Community involvement	X	X		X	X	
Local government involvement in enforcement of school rules and regulations	X					
Two-way school/community communication	X	X				X
Teaching strategies to meet Native needs						X

Schools:

A. Mi'kmawey School
B. Kahnawake Survival School
C. Lakeview School
D. Kipohtakaw School
E. Seabird Island Community School
F. James Bay Cree School Board

Table D5

The Band-Controlled School Experience: Results of Changes

Descriptive information	Schools					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Increase in training or employment opportunities for community members	X	X			X	
Increased student self-esteem/pride in identity	X	X		X		
Revitalization of community spirit towards education	X	X				
Integration of community services:						
Child-abuse prevention	X					
Nutrition	X			X		
Alcohol and drug-abuse prevention	X			X		
Recreational activities	X					
Improved school climate	X					
Increased parent involvement	X				X	
Children show increased respect for Elders and culture	X					
Increased attendance				X		

Schools:

A. Mi'kmawey School
B. Kahnawake Survival School
C. Lakeview School
D. Kipohtakaw School
E. Seabird Island Community School
F. James Bay Cree School Board