



Manitoba First Nations School System

**Presentation
Indigenous Issues and Initiatives**

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ABSTRACT

This session will relate the chronology of the Manitoba First Nations School System (MFNSS) since 1999, when Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC) began. It will provide information on the approach of Manitoba First Nations education identified in the concept paper, *A Systematic Approach to First Nations Education* (2012), and share information on the MFNSS. This session will share the successes and challenges that the MFNSS has encountered in the first few months of its operation.

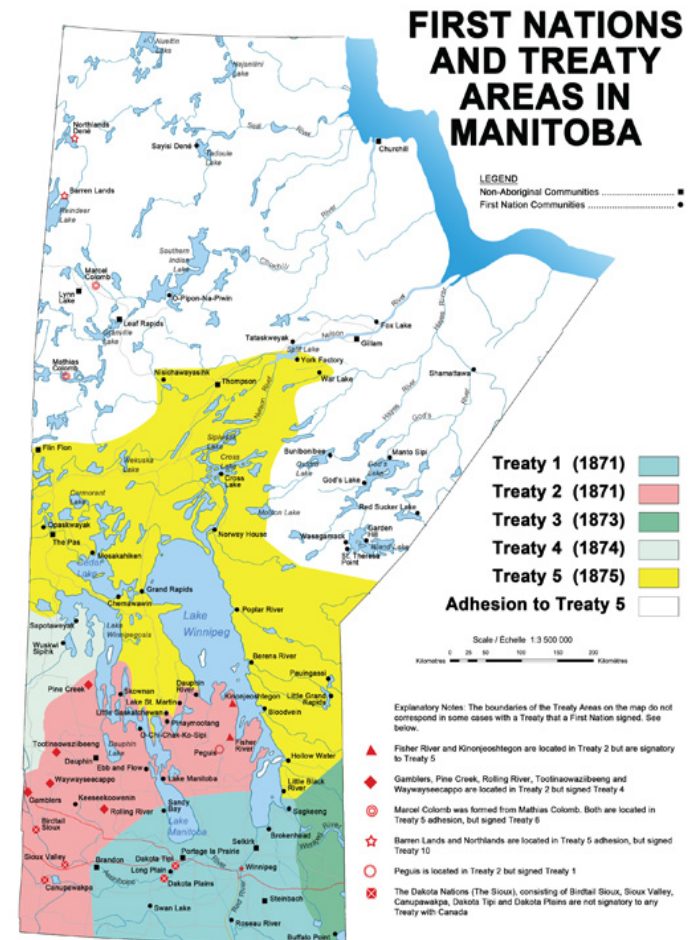
Presentation Outline

- Who We Are
- Historical Developments
- Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre Inc. (MFNERC)
- Manitoba First Nations School System
- Research and Innovation Project

Who We Are

Manitoba First Nations (150,000):

- Cree (Ininiw) (65,000)
- Ojibwe (Anishinaabe) (66,000)
- Ojibwe-Cree (Anishininiw) (12,000)
- Dakota (5,000)
- Dene (2,000)

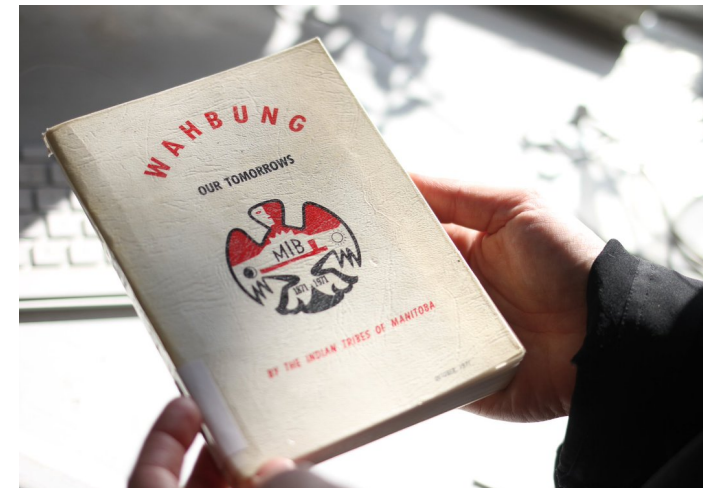


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Historical Developments

Manitoba First Nations leaders outlined their vision for education in **Wahbung - Our Tomorrows, 1971**:

“We...believe in education as a preparation for total living... as a prime means of improving our economic and social conditions...as a comprehensive program which must be designed to meet the needs of the total community by including offerings to people of all ages”



Self-government Process

Education Framework Agreement (EFA) (1990-1994) - The purpose of the EFA was to recognize the commitment of Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) and the federal government to negotiate formal arrangements on education in Manitoba, including new funding arrangements and models for educational systems. Four rounds of community engagement sessions were held with over 10,000 participants discussing their visions of education including new FN education systems.

Framework Agreement Initiative (FAI) (1994-2006) – the FAI was to develop a self-government process in 3 key areas: education, child and family, and fire and emergency services.

Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre Inc. (MFNERC)

In 1998, the MFNERC was created by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) to provide services to over 50 Manitoba First Nations schools (using Gathering Strength Funding).

Priorities (identified by FN Education Directors) were:

- Professional Development – trustees, administrators, teachers
- Consultant Services – Advisory/Facilitators for schools/ teachers (including Special Education)
- Curriculum Development/Research
- Technology
- Nominal Roll/Data Collection
- New Provincial Curriculum

Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre Inc. (MFNERC)

Services currently provided include:


- Consultant Services –Facilitators: literacy, numeracy, physical education, science, early childhood, education administration, language, etc.
- Special Education: Clinical Services, Training
- FN Curriculum Framework /curriculum development
- Land-Based Education/FN Language Specialists
- Data Management/Technology
- Virtual High School
- Publishing/communications
- Professional Development/Training
- Instructional Resource Centre
- Research

Background - Systems

- *A Systematic Approach to First Nations Education; Concept Paper* was presented and approved by the Education Directors, Executive Council of Chiefs and the Chiefs-in-Assembly with a resolution on June 20, 2012.
- This resolution is referred to as the mandate change.
- 2006 – 2009 MFNERC Board of Directors requested the systems development work, through the Research and Development Unit initially, then a working group.
- The system development work included on – going consultation with Directors of Education in Manitoba and Chiefs-in-Assembly. Relevant documents and previous consultations were taken into consideration. Guiding Principles were developed and are included in the guiding documents.



Background – Guiding Principles

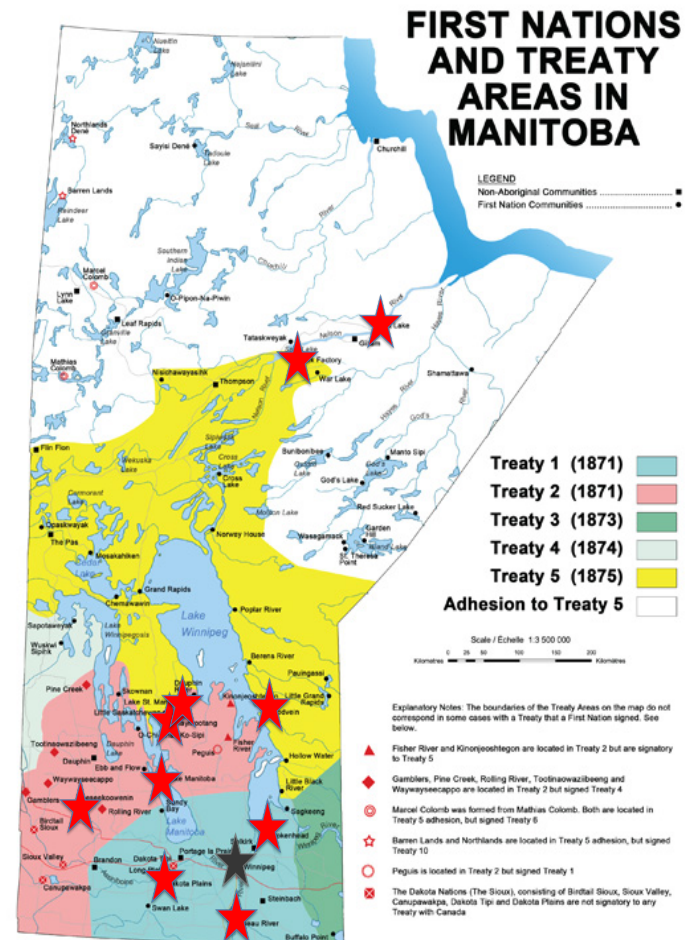
- Any governance and program models that are developed for First Nations Education systems must have the locus of power/authority/jurisdiction remaining with First Nations governments at the local level.
 - Meaningful Elder involvement including the governance level must be an essential component of all aspects of the system.
 - The Education System models must reflect equitable and fair access and distribution of resources and services to all First Nations communities, regardless of geographical location and community size.
 - The models must be visionary and flexible, reflective of continuous improvement and change and be based on community direction and involvement.
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MFNSS – Beginnings PTI

- Partnership with Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation (RRAFN) in southern Manitoba
- In 2012, MFNERC agreed to manage and administer the FN school and programming for the RRAFN K- 8 school & provincial tuition for grade 9-12 students
- RRAFN now part of the MFNSS

MFNSS Partnering First Nations

- Bloodvein First Nation;
- Brokenhead Ojibway Nation;
- Dakota Plains Wahpeton First Nation;
- Fox Lake Cree Nation;
- Keeseekoowenin Ojibway Nation;
- Lake Manitoba First Nation;
- Lake St. Martin First Nation;
- Pinaymootang First Nation;
- Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation;
- York Factory First Nation.



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Manitoba First Nations School System (MFNSS)

- MFNSS is administered by the MFNERC
- Concept was outlined in 2012 – Systems Concept Paper - *A Systematic Approach to First Nations Education*
- Education Governance Agreement signed with Federal Government in December 2016
- Delegation Agreements with 10 Partnering First Nations
- Implementation – July 2017
- 2017/18 – First year of operations of the MFNSS
- N-12 Education & Service Delivery
- Focus – Quality Education, Language & Culture

MFNSS Priorities: Strategic Plan

We will provide:

- A culturally responsive environment
- An environment that promotes health, safety, and well-being
- An inclusive and respectful learning community that is child-centered, responsive and relevant.
- Support for student learning and engagement through improved instruction and assessment practices.

MFNSS - Services

- Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment
- Language and Culture
- Early Childhood
- Special Education
- Data Management
- Private Home Placement
- Operations & Maintenance
- Transportation

MFNSS Research & Innovation

- Identifying baseline data to be collected, identifying various interventions, analyzing the effectiveness of those interventions, and adjusting the interventions based on the analysis.
- Collecting input data from MFNSS schools to establish a baseline of data, analyze baseline data, identify, recommend and apply interventions, gather additional data, and conduct first year analysis.

MFNSS Research & Innovation

- Measurement Strategy
 - Language & Culture - data on language/culture programs, curriculum development, elder involvement, language fluency, language PD/training, language methodology, types of language programs e.g. immersion/bilingual
 - Programming – inventory of land-based programs/ activities, program content/cross-curricular planning, grades, community/ elder/parent involvement, curriculum development; and pilot projects/partnerships
 - Measurement – analyze data from schools on student attendance and achievement (Maplewood), parental engagement; collect baseline staff data/teacher attendance data (baseline for staff wellness/PD)

MFNSS - Challenges

- Growing pains
- Funding/Addressing Historical Gaps
- Socio-Economic circumstances
- Infrastructure
- School size
- Distance between schools
- Time Frame
- Concern of Loss of Control/Treaty Right to Education
- Mandate/ Delegated Authority
- Safe Schools/Facilities
- Governance — Roles & Responsibilities

MFNSS - Benefits

- Partnership between First Nations and MFNSS
- New funding model
- Enhanced quality of education
- Increased salaries
- Economies of Scale (Bulk Purchasing)
- Enhanced classroom support materials – textbooks, library books, technology,
- Health and Safety – Infrastructure enhancement and repairs
- More support services – O & M, Transportation, language, culture, literacy, numeracy, special education, early childhood, training, etc.

MFNSS - Successes

- Support from Federal government
- Partnership with First Nations
- Dedicated staff
- Shared goals - Focus on quality, language and cultural relevancy
- Increased funding
- Increased teacher salaries/easier recruitment
- Safer schools/facilities upgrades
- Increased instructional resources
- Increased morale for staff and students

CONCLUSION

- The MFNSS is Historic – a First Nations managed school system for First Nations students.
- The MFNSS respects the Treaty and Inherent Rights to Education -Each First Nation has made the decision to join the MFNSS to better meet their students' needs.
- The MFNSS and the First Nations work collaboratively in a meaningful partnership.
- The MFNSS utilizes a systematic approach and abides by the guiding principles.
- The MFNSS is an exciting and historic initiative in the development of a system; an opportunity for further success for First Nations students.
- It is an opportunity to do it Right – Learn from others, collect data, create systematic change and transform First Nations Education.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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