



Aanjiwin: Transition Supports for First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students



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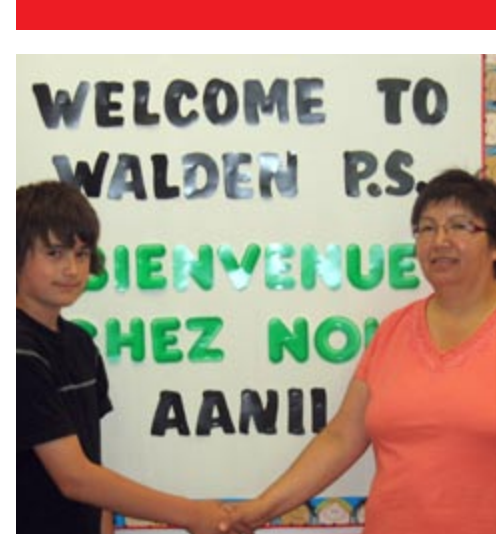
Transitions can be difficult for any student, but sometimes due to circumstances or specific situations, transitions for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students may require more individualized supports. The cultural context from which these students may be coming requires teachers and other staff members to ensure that First Nation, Métis and Inuit students feel comfortable in order for them to make a smooth and successful transition into whatever new learning environment they are entering.

This document will outline some suggestions and strategies that will help schools support First Nation, Métis and Inuit students during the following transitions:

- First Nation School to Provincial School (Rainbow School)
- Elementary to Secondary
- High Mobility (school to school)
- Secondary to Postsecondary/Workplace

This resource document has been compiled by the Principal of First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education, Kathy Dokis-Ranney.

The suggestions within this document have come from a variety of sources, including the Aboriginal Youth Leadership Group, parents and a transition committee consisting of teachers, support workers and other educators of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal descent.



First Nation School to Rainbow School Transitions

As staff, consider:

- Arranging for the students from the First Nation community to come for a visit to your school
- Planning a trip to visit the First Nation community from which you will be receiving students
- Setting up pen pal/buddy programs with students from your school with students from the First Nation community school
- Setting up a meeting with the Education Counsellor or Chief and Council of the community
- Inviting an Elder to be available during the transition phase
- Making contact with the families prior to the transition
- Holding an information session in the community for families
- Offering Ojibwe language at your school
- Providing information to your school community of special events taking place in the First Nation community that staff and or students may like to attend
- Ensuring your First Nation Communities are aware of events taking place in your school and working with them to support parents/families to attend



Elementary to Secondary Transitions

There are already a number of wonderful transition plans in place in the Rainbow District School Board that support all students as they make the transition from the elementary to the secondary school environment. In this section, you will find additional suggestions that may further assist you when supporting First Nation, Métis and Inuit students as they make the transition from elementary to secondary school.

As staff, consider:

- Making contact with the First Nation, Métis and Inuit students at the feeder school to inform them about specific supports available to them in the high school
- Planning visits to the feeder school with other First Nation, Métis and Inuit high school students to set up buddy systems or do presentations to Grade 8 classes
- Gathering specific information about the First Nation, Métis and Inuit students such as learning styles, interests, strengths and concerns, etc. (This may be part of cross panel meetings.)
- Inviting Aboriginal Support Workers to cross panel meetings
- Making contact with the family of the First Nation, Métis and Inuit students coming into the high school to help answer questions or to inform them of the available supports (e.g. First Nation, Métis and Inuit centres, Aboriginal Support Workers, courses and programs, etc.)
- Inviting the Aboriginal Support Worker to the summer welcome barbecues to meet with students and families
- Inviting Aboriginal Support Workers to be part of transition meetings regarding First Nation, Métis and Inuit students
- Following up with students and families after transition takes place as a check-in
- Allowing students the opportunity to work with the Aboriginal Support worker in the First Nation, Métis and Inuit centre



High Mobility Student Transitions



These transitions refer to students who, for a variety of reasons, may move from one school to another often throughout any given school year or even from year to year. These types of transitions can contribute to gaps in their learning. These gaps often result from missing units as they move from school to school, time that may be missed from school during the actual transition, and/or time that students may take to begin to engage and take part in their new school.

It is important that schools do not see mobility as an excuse to expect low achievement and/or failure from students. Instead, schools need to ensure that high expectations are in place for all students, regardless of their situations. As well, schools need to put processes in place that help these students feel welcome into their new schools and feel they are important members of the school community with gifts to offer.

As staff, consider:

- Developing school protocols that ensure each new student is welcome and supported and monitored over time to ensure a successful transition has been achieved
- Contacting the family ahead of time to welcome them to your school and learn more about the student as quickly as possible
- Partnering the student up with a buddy
- Developing a mechanism for receiving information about student learning from the sending school (e.g. units of study completed in various subject areas)
- Preparing, in advance, for incoming or departing students when possible
- Creating an orientation brochure or CD for your school (This might be created by students.)
- Developing a school welcoming program and training student volunteers to implement (Where possible, include other Aboriginal students.)
- Finding out student strengths and interests as soon as possible to help them make connections to activities going on in your school
- Having an information/welcome package available for new students/families

Secondary to Postsecondary/Workplace Student Transitions

As staff, consider:

- Arranging for career awareness days that are inclusive of First Nation, Métis and Inuit people
- Arranging for students to meet with First Nation, Métis and Inuit role models
- Providing opportunities for students to learn more about postsecondary institutions and their programs, including supports available for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students
- Developing portfolios with First Nation, Métis and Inuit students with a focus on career pathways/development and goal setting
- Working with students to develop résumés
- Informing students of possible bursaries or other funding opportunities available to First Nation, Métis and Inuit students
- Informing students of opportunities that allow them to engage in transition activities in various postsecondary institutions
- Informing students of dual credit opportunities at Cambrian College and Laurentian University
- Providing information about various job opportunities, including specific job opportunities for First Nation, Métis and Inuit people in the local community and across Canada
- Keeping students informed of opportunities to help out in the community
- Working with students to take on leadership roles/projects within their respective schools/communities
- Ensuring First Nation, Métis and Inuit businesses and organizations are included in your Co-operative Education choices and available to all students
- Informing students of the Moccasin Trail Program at Laurentian University to support students making the transition to university
- Contacting Wabnode Institute at Cambrian College to support students making the college transition
- Contacting Gezhtoojig Employment and Training for information regarding apprenticeship programs and other employment and training opportunities for First Nation, Métis and Inuit people
- Bringing First Nation, Métis and Inuit students to the annual Aboriginal Youth Education Day to make connections with postsecondary institutions, employment opportunities and supports and Aboriginal role models



Effective Practices to Support all Transitions of First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students

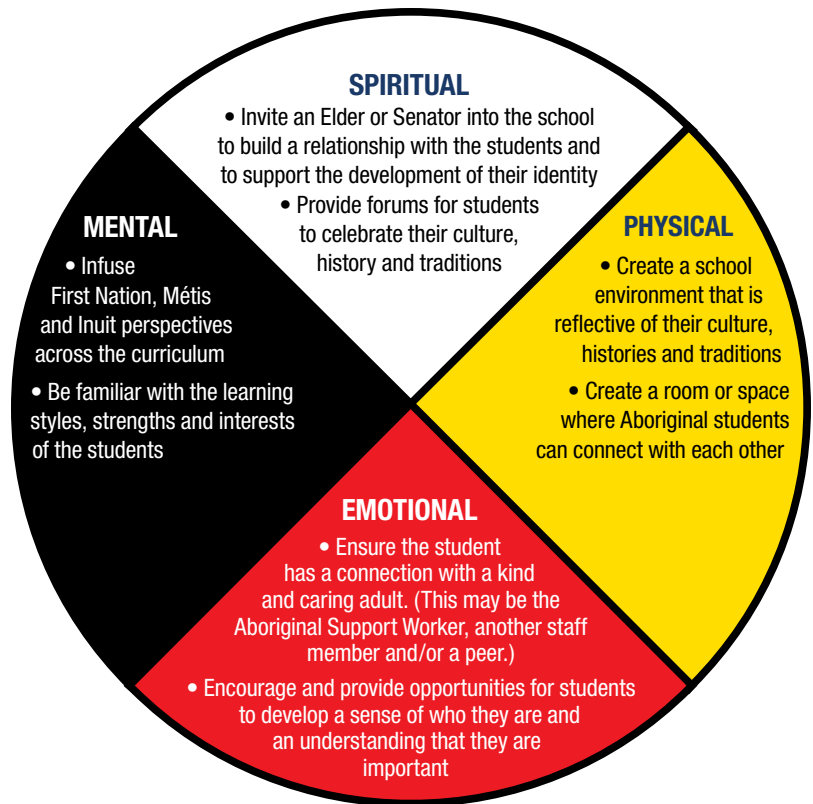
As staff, consider:

- Working towards creating an environment that is reflective of First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures ensuring student, family and community input
- When arranging to meet, if the student/family wishes, involve an Elder
- Including First Nation, Métis and Inuit perspectives across all subject areas, not just in Native Studies and Ojibwe classes or in an isolated unit of study
- Working with your student's local First Nation community (See Appendix 1 for First Nation Community Listings.)
- Offering Native Studies and Ojibwe language courses to all students, not just to First Nation, Métis and Inuit students
- Investing the extra time that may be needed to really get to know First Nation, Métis and Inuit students
- Including signage in the Ojibwe language around the school, in newsletters and on announcements
- Informing all students of Aboriginal events or activities going on in the community
- Learning more about First Nation, Métis and Inuit learners (See Appendix 2 for suggested resources.)
- Learning more about culturally responsive teaching and learning (Contact Principal of First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education, Kathy Dokis-Ranney.)
- Planning an information event in the First Nation community where applicable
- Reaching out to the First Nation community to ensure they are able to attend school transition events held outside of school hours (e.g. by providing transportation, ask for help to get the word out, etc.)
- Holding a transition event in the First Nation Community
- Inviting First Nation feeder schools to transition professional development
- Personally inviting the parents/families of your First Nation, Métis and Inuit students to take part in School Councils, special events, volunteer opportunities, etc.
- Supporting First Nation, Métis and Inuit students in getting involved in school activities and events (e.g. attend with them, pair them up with someone they are comfortable with)

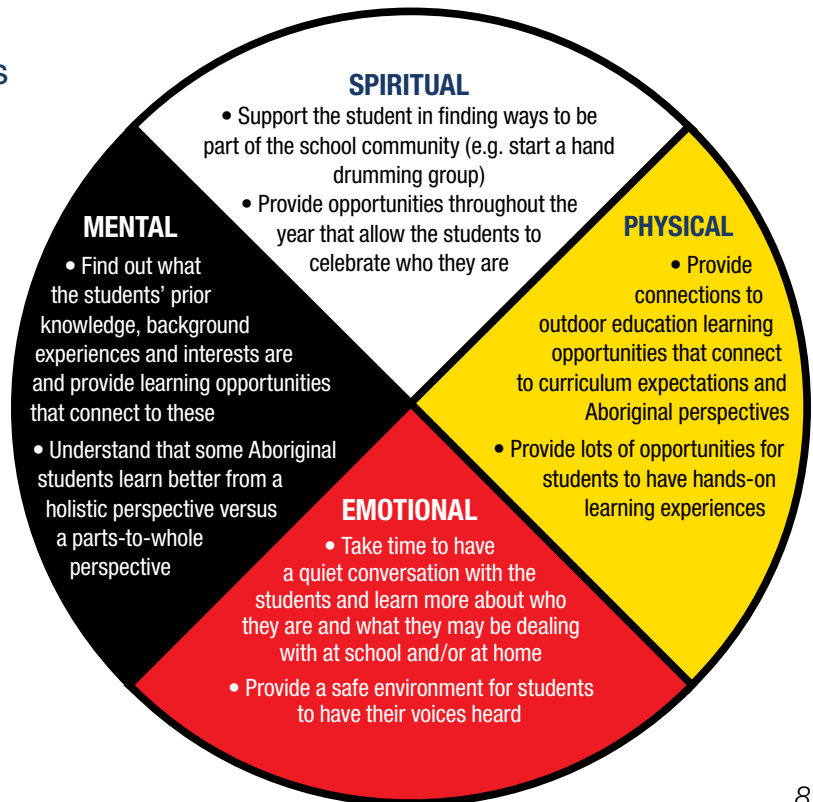


Common Transition Issues

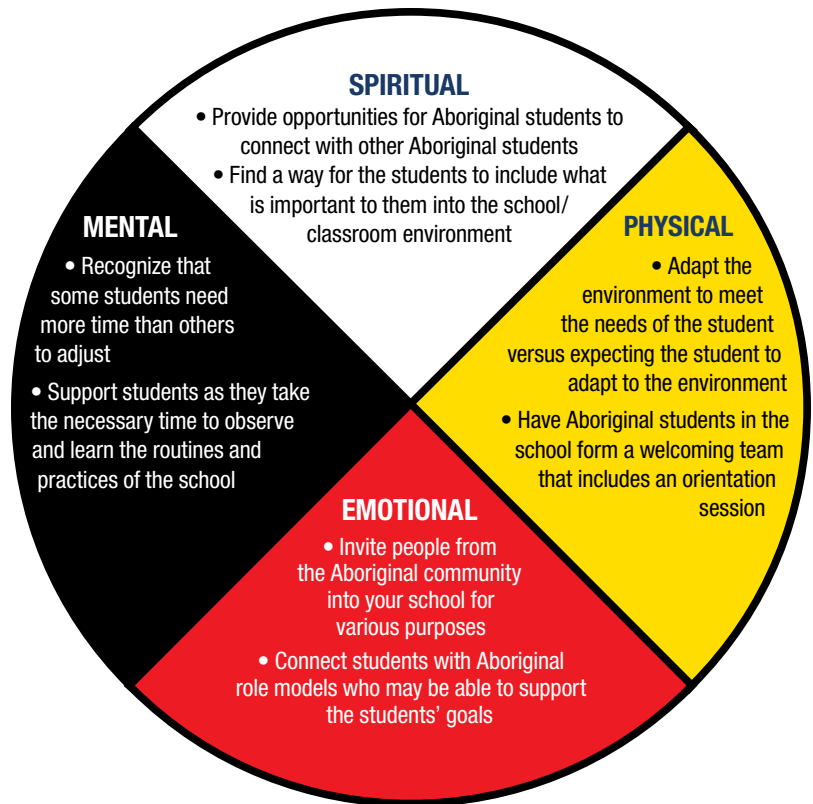
1. Students feel like they don't fit in and/or are isolated because they are Aboriginal.



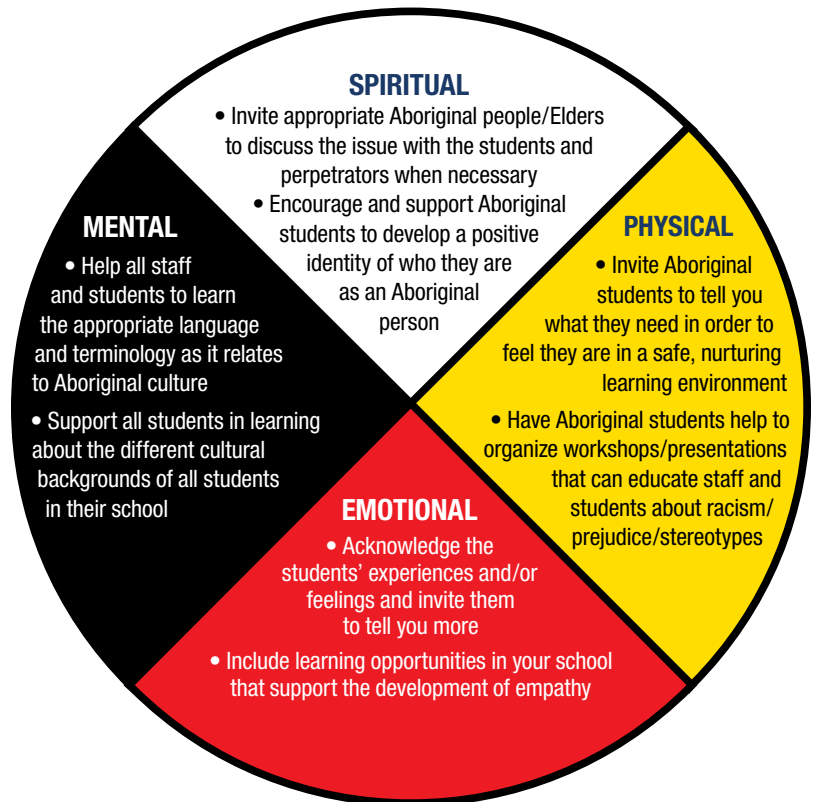
2. Students experience difficulties related to attendance and/or academics.



3. Students find it difficult to adjust in their new school.



4. Students experience discrimination/racism and/or feel people discriminate or are racist towards them.



Appendix 1

First Nation Community Listing

Rainbow District School Board provides education services to 11 First Nation communities across Sudbury, Espanola and Manitoulin.

At the time of the creation of this document, the following First Nation communities operated their own community schools. Phone numbers and fax numbers for each of the community's Band Offices have also been included:

Dokis First Nation (Kikendawt Kinoomaadii Gamig)

Phone: (705) 763-2200 Fax: (705) 763-2087

JK to Grade 4, then transition to Monetville Public School

Sagamok Anishnawbek (Biidaaban Kinoomagegamik School)

Phone: (705) 865-2421 Fax: (705) 865-3307

JK to Grade 8, then transition to Espanola High School

Whitefish River First Nation (Shawanosowe School)

Phone: (705) 285-4335 Fax: (705) 285-4532

JK to Grade 6, then transition to A.B. Ellis Public School in Espanola

Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve (Pontiac School, Wasse-Abin Junior School and Wasse-Abin Wikwemikong High School)

Phone: (705) 859-3112 Fax: (705) 859-3851

JK to Grade 12, however the Board sometimes has students register at some of its schools when families move away from the community

M'Chigeeng First Nation (Lakeview School)

Phone: (705) 377-5362 Fax: (705) 377-4980

JK to Grade 8, then transition to Manitoulin Secondary School

The other First Nation communities listed below attend school in the Rainbow District School Board from JK to Grade 12:

Sheguiandah First Nation

Phone: (705) 368-2781 Fax: (705) 368-3697

Sheshegwaning First Nation

Phone: (705) 283-3292 Fax: (705) 283-3481

Wahnapiatae First Nation

Phone: (705) 858-0610 Fax: (705) 858-5570

Atikameksheng Anishnawbek

Phone: (705) 692-3651 Fax: (705) 692-5010

Aundek Omni Kaning First Nation

Phone: (705) 368-2228 Fax: (705) 368-3563

Zhiibaahaasing First Nation

Phone: (705) 283-3963 Fax: (705) 283-3964

Although the students from Sheguiandah, Sheshegwaning, Wahnapiatae, Atikameksheng Anishnawbek, Aundek Omni Kaning and Zhiibaahaasing First Nations do not attend school in their respective communities at this time, we need to consider the richness of the cultural differences and experiences these students bring to our schools. As a result, schools and teachers need to take the time to learn more about who these students are and what their background knowledge and experiences have been. Doing this allows teachers to better engage these students by connecting the curriculum to their students' experiences to ensure they feel connected and achieve success.

Appendix 2

Suggested Resources

First Nation, Métis and Inuit Presence in Rainbow Schools

<http://www.rainbowschools.ca/programs/FirstNations/FirstNations1.php>

Collected Wisdom: American Indian Education by Linda Miller-Cleary and Thomas D. Peacock (One copy has been sent to every school.)

The Seventh Generation: Native Students Speak About Finding the Good Path by Amy Bergstrom, Linda Miller-Cleary and Thomas D. Peacock

Native Learning Styles – Can be ordered through Ningwakwe Learning Press at <http://www.ningwakwe.on.ca/> (One copy has been sent to every school.)

Just Reach Out: Back to High School Transition Guide – Can be ordered through Ningwakwe Learning Press at <http://www.ningwakwe.on.ca/>

Engaging and Empowering Aboriginal Youth: A Toolkit for Service Providers at <http://youthrelationships.org/documents/Engaging%20and%20Empowering%20Aboriginal%20Youth%20-%20Toolkit%20for%20Service%20Providers.pdf> (Also available in the First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education folder in First Class Conferences.)

Supporting Aboriginal Student Success: Self-Esteem and Identity, A Living Teaching Approach by Dr. Pamela Rose Toulouse at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/research/toulouse.pdf> (Also available in the First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education folder in First Class Conferences.)



69 Young Street, Sudbury ON P3E 3G5
Tel: 705.674.3171 | Fax: 705.674.3167
Toll Free: 1.888.421.2661