

# SUCCESS FOR ALL

April 2015

Volume # 2

## First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education

### Seeking Their Voices: Improving Indigenous Student Learning Outcomes

#### University of Regina

The Seeking their Voices research project contained three separate initiatives focused on improving indigenous student learning outcomes: the heart of the research based on the voices of students, parents, teachers and school administrators in six Saskatchewan high schools, a literature review, and perspectives from national and international academics, school administrators and policy leaders. Not surprisingly, the message from each processes are consistent.



A copy of the entire research project is available upon request from the Northern Lights School Division Director of Learning- First Nations, Metis and Inuit Programming. Some highlights from this research are:

The review of the literature confirmed key factors regarding the improvement of Indigenous student learning:

- Language and Cultural Programming: focused on the need for awareness by teachers of their students cultural background and the importance of relationship.
- Parent and Community Engagement: meant a different relationship that took into account the history of school as an agent of assimilation.
- Student Engagement and Retention: included the importance of meaningful student/teacher relationship and recognition that the school reflected dominant Western values.
- Effective Schools: meant schools that, in addition to typical factors, included meaningful cultural and instructional practices aimed at improving learning outcomes.
- The Role of Assessment: was focused on evidence based decision making that reflected culturally relevant assessment and avoided high stakes testing and labelling of student success through a competitive marks based system.
- Classroom and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: focused on effective instructional practices, high expectations, appropriate assessment models, and the need for close student/teacher relationships.
- Retention/Support to Teachers/Administrators: recognized the link between the length of teacher/Administrator tenure and student achievement and the need to support teachers through strategies such as security of tenure, fair compensation and benefits, effective induction, and ongoing professional development.
- Governance and Leadership: supported the relationship between effective governance/leadership and improved student outcomes, as well as stronger governance relationships between provincial and federal/First Nations educational authorities.

### Edmonton Public Schools First Nations, Métis and Inuit Website



The Edmonton Public School System has a First Nation, Métis and Inuit website full of a number of valuable tools and resources which are available for download at no cost. Anything on the site, produced by them, has no copy right restrictions. Take a peek <https://sites.google.com/a/epsb.ca/fnmi-education/home>

## Empower Your Spirit Website!

First Nations, Métis and Inuit students experience greater success as engaged participants when learning is authentic and connected to their personal values and life experiences.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit students and families need to feel that the curricula honors their perspectives, histories, languages and cultures. Inspiring Education calls for a greater integration of multiple perspectives, including cultural perspectives, in learning experiences for all students.

This website will provide opportunities to expand your understanding of literacy and numeracy practices from First Nations, Métis and Inuit perspectives and gain tools and strategies to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit and all students' success in your community. <http://empoweringthespirit.ca/>



## Literacy Seed Kit



**Literacy Seed Kit:** In collaboration with Alberta Education and Northland School Division, this 76 book collection was created as a travelling classroom library. The collection as a whole contains fiction and nonfiction, a variety of genres, textual features and mainly books which portray Indigenous people in a modern context rather than only an historical one. Curricular outcomes are indicated for each literature selection from Grades 1 - 9. Ten of these kits along with the books have been purchased and will be provided to schools who participate in an orientation to the kit in the fall. More information will be sent to school administrators regarding this opportunity and the accompanying resource prior to the event.

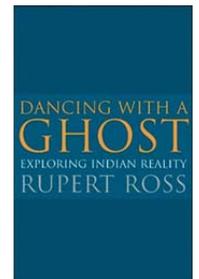
## Oyate First Nations, Métis and Inuit Book Reviews

Over the years, Oyate has read and reviewed thousands of books, videos, maps, music, and other literature for and about American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, First Nations and Indigenous peoples. They strive to bring you thoughtful reviews of this literature because they know it is so difficult for most people to select literature about Native peoples that portrays them in authentic, honest, and culturally appropriate ways. For several hundred years, literature about Native peoples has continued to be dominated by voices who do not represent them accurately or appropriately. Because there is so much fallacious material out there, many people – parents, teachers, and children alike – can get confused about what is accurate and what's not. Oyate makes it their mission to bring you literature that is accurate and appropriate. They subject every book to a panel of reviewers, who scrutinize its contents to ensure that it meets a high standard of quality. To learn more about their review process, please see their website: <http://www.oyate.org/>

## Recommended Professional Reading

### **Dancing With A Ghost: Exploring Aboriginal Reality – Rupert Ross**

“As a Crown Attorney working with First Nations in remote northwestern Ontario, Rupert Ross learned that he was routinely misinterpreting the behaviour of Aboriginal victims, witnesses and offenders, both in and out of court. He discovered that he regularly drew wrong conclusions when he encountered witnesses who wouldn't make eye contact, victims who wouldn't testify in the presence of the accused, and parents who showed great reluctance to interfere in their children's behaviour. With assistance of Aboriginal teachers, he began to see that behind such behaviour lay a complex web of coherent cultural commandments that he had never suspected, much less understood. As his awareness of traditional Native teachings grew, he found that the areas of miscommunication extended well beyond the courtroom, causing cross-cultural misunderstanding-and ill-informed condemnation.” Copies of this book are available to read through the Director of Learning First Nations, Métis and Inuit Programming.



## Upcoming Events:



J. A. Williams School will be hosting their 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual MAMAWINTOWIN Round Dance April 25<sup>th</sup> at the Bold Centre.

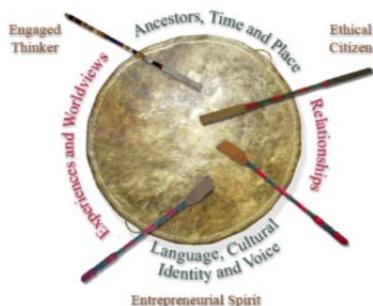
**North Star Elementary will host their 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual First Nations, Métis and Inuit Celebration Day, May 5, 2015**

Denise Miller will kick off the event with presentations from 9:00 am to 11:30am. The Celebration starts at 9:00 with her first performance for the K's and grade 1's. The second performance is at 10:00 with the grade 2's and 3's. There will be potluck lunch provided for guests and afternoon presentations from community members.

## Coming Soon....



**Guiding Voices: A Curriculum Development Tool for Infusion of First Nation, Métis and Inuit Perspectives  
May, 2013 DRAFT**



(Guiding Voices) contains guidelines and criteria for infusion of the diversity of First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI), Aboriginal and Indigenous perspectives and experiences in the development of curriculum (programs of study, assessments and learning and teaching resources) in Alberta. The document, which will be available online, provides links to guidelines and criteria while reflecting a continuum of dynamic and infinite FNMI, Aboriginal and Indigenous learning; teachings and understandings; and pride in these understandings. This tool provides a sample template for guiding curriculum developers as they infuse FNMI perspectives and experiences into their development processes. The tool includes a rationale for the infusion of FNMI perspectives as well as guidelines, considerations and examples demonstrating how the guidelines can be used in curriculum development. The Foundations for Guiding Voices, the historical and contemporary documents and resources influential in the development of Guiding Voices are available as an appendix, should additional background information be desired or required.

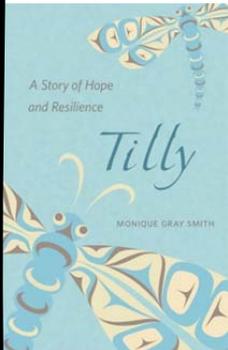
**“I believe we all have a purpose for being on Earth. I believe that life is our classroom. It allows us to learn what we need to learn to fulfill that purpose with understanding, compassion and love. The twenty-first century is destined to bring us back to why we are here and who we really are.”** – Adele Arcand, Former Director of Education, Treaty 6 (as quoted in Education is Our Buffalo).

# Métis and Inuit Literature Winners

## 2014 Winners

### **Tilly, a Story of Hope and Resilience**

2014 Burt Award for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Literature - 1st place



Tilly, a Story of Hope and Resilience is a revealing, important work of creative non-fiction loosely based on author Monique Gray Smith's own life that tells the story of a young Indigenous woman coming of age in Canada in the 1980s. With compassion, insight and humour, Gray Smith illuminates the 20th-century history of Canada's First Peoples — forced displacement, residential schools, tuberculosis hospitals, the

Sixties Scoop. In a spirit of hope, this unique story captures the irrepressible resilience of Tilly, and of Indigenous peoples everywhere.

Author: Monique Gray Smith  
Publisher: Sono Nis Press

### **The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America**

2014 Burt Award for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Literature - 2nd place



The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America is at once a "history" and the complete subversion of a history — in short, a critical and personal meditation that the remarkable Thomas King has conducted over the past 50 years about what it means to be "Indian" in North America.

Author: Thomas King Canada  
Publisher: Doubleday Canada

### **They Called Me Number One: Secrets and Survival at an Indian Residential School**

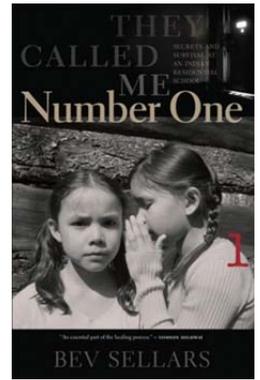
2014 Burt Award for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Literature - 3rd place

They Called Me Number One: Secrets and Survival at an Indian Residential School is the first full-length memoir to be published out of St. Joseph's Mission at Williams Lake, BC. In it, Chief Bev Sellars tells of three generations of women who attended the school, interweaving the personal histories of

her grandmother and her mother with her own. She tells of hunger, forced labour, and physical beatings, often with a leather strap, and also of the demand for conformity in a culturally alien institution where children were confined and denigrated for failure to be White and Roman Catholic.

Author: Bev Sellars  
Publisher: Talonbooks

<http://www.codecan.org/burt-award-canada>



## David Bouchard Visits Northern Lights Schools

"David did an excellent job for us. He certainly captured our students' attention with his music and storytelling. I really appreciated the pride of his Metis culture that was so obvious, and you could sense our Metis students' pride in their culture grow as they listened and interacted with him." - Rob Wicker, Principal, Aurora Middle School

