

Ministry of Education  
Ministry of Training,  
Colleges and Universities

Aboriginal Education Office  
Mowat Block  
900 Bay Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

Ministère de l'Éducation  
Ministère de la Formation  
et des Collèges et Universités

Bureau de l'éducation des Autochtones  
Édifice Mowat  
900, rue Bay, 12e étage  
Toronto ON M7A 1L2



# Ontario

**MEMORANDUM TO:** Directors of Education

**FROM:** Alayne Bigwin  
Director  
Aboriginal Education Office

**DATE:** December 7, 2007

**SUBJECT:** **Request for Submissions to Participate in an Urban Aboriginal Education Project**

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The Aboriginal Education Office is seeking submissions from urban school boards to participate in an exciting new initiative designed to meet the needs of Aboriginal students in large urban centres.

One of the Ministry of Education's commitments in the *First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework* is as follows: "in collaboration with school boards, First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities and organizations, develop innovative approaches to meet the needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students living in large urban centres". We recognize that urban school boards face unique challenges in supporting Aboriginal students within their schools in terms of finding ways to reach out to Aboriginal families, communities and other service delivery organizations in order to build partnerships and develop strategies to support Aboriginal student achievement.

In response to this challenge, the Aboriginal Education Office is launching a pilot project that will encompass the development of three urban Aboriginal education models for First Nation, Métis and Inuit student/family/community engagement that could be applied in different urban settings based on varying geographical and demographic circumstances. These models would be developed as a result of in-depth inter-jurisdictional research and pilot projects carried out in three urban boards in Ontario.

#### **PROJECT OVERVIEW:**

##### Steering Committee

- A Steering Committee will be established with proposed representation from the following organizations:
  - Urban school boards:
    - Three boards: one from the north, one central, one south
  - Postsecondary institutions (one college, one university) from within each of the three urban boards
  - Aboriginal organizations:
    - Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres
    - Métis Nation of Ontario

- Ontario Native Women's Association
- Chiefs of Ontario
- Teachers Federations
- Principals Associations
- Council of Directors of Education
- Trustee Associations
- Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians
- Ministry of Education, represented by the Aboriginal Education Office
- The committee will be co-chaired by one school board and one Aboriginal organization

### Activities and Timelines

- *Establishment of Steering Committee – January 2008:*
  - Invitation to Aboriginal organizations and education stakeholders to participate in the initiative.
  - Three urban school boards will be selected through the request for submissions process to be part of the initiative.
  - Following the selection of the three boards, a similar RFS will be sent out to postsecondary institutions within each board area for the selection of one college and one university representative per board.
  - The first task of the steering committee will be to establish a work plan and detailed budget for the initiative.

- *Under the direction of the steering committee, the following activities will be undertaken:*

#### Phase One – January 2008-August 2008

- Contract research on effective urban models implemented in other jurisdictions that are supportive of Aboriginal student achievement: e.g., Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Vancouver, potentially some international examples. The focus of the research would include, but not necessarily be limited to:
  - Retention
  - Transitions (early years to elementary, elementary to secondary, secondary to postsecondary/training/work)
  - Academic achievement
  - Community and family outreach and engagement
  - Challenges related to issues of high mobility

#### Phase Two – September 2008-June 2009

- Based on the research, pilot projects will be developed and implemented in each of the three boards
  - Projects will be focused on the unique circumstances of each board, taking into account the geographical and demographic differences in urban settings from different parts of the province.
- Three sub-committees, one for each board, will be established under the steering committee to oversee the development and implementation of the pilot projects.

#### Phase Three – July 2009-January 2010

- Based on the results of the pilot projects, urban models with case studies and effective practices will be developed for each board which can be adapted and implemented in other urban settings based on similar geographical and demographic circumstances.
- The development of the models will be overseen by the three respective sub-committees and approved by the steering committee

**REQUEST FOR SUBMISSIONS:**

Urban school boards are invited to submit a proposal to participate in the development of the Urban Aboriginal Education Models. Three boards will be selected: one from the north, one central, and one south. The criteria for the selection of school boards include:

- School boards must be from large urban centres (census metropolitan area – CMA, or census agglomeration – CA, as per Statistics Canada Census definitions).
- Demonstrated commitment to supporting Aboriginal student achievement (e.g., targeted programming).
- Demonstrated partnerships with urban Aboriginal communities and organizations.
- Demonstrated capacity to commit to the full term of the initiative, including a commitment to provide services in kind, such as human resources, to the initiative.
- Either have developed or be in the process of developing a policy for voluntary, confidential Aboriginal student self-identification.

Interested boards are invited to submit their proposals, using the attached template, to the Aboriginal Education Office by **December 20, 2007** to:

Aboriginal Education Office  
Ministry of Education and Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities  
900 Bay Street, 12 Floor, Mowat Block  
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2  
Fax: 416-212-3140

Please direct any questions regarding this memo to Alayne Bigwin, Director of the Aboriginal Education Office, or Michelle Braakman, Coordinator of Policy and Research, at 416-326-3561.



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Alayne Bigwin

C: Dominic Giroux, Assistant Deputy Minister  
Kit Rankin, Director, Field Services Branch  
Ginette Plourde, Director, French-Language Education Policy and Programs Branch  
Regional Managers

Attachment

**DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN ABORIGINAL EDUCATION MODELS  
SCHOOL BOARD PROPOSAL**

**School Board:**

**Director:**

**Board Contact Name:**

**Contact Information:**

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**Description of current commitments in support of Aboriginal student achievement:**

**Description of current partnerships with urban Aboriginal communities and organizations:**

**Description of board capacity to participate in the initiative and potential in-kind contributions:**

**Status of the development of a policy for voluntary, confidential Aboriginal student self-identification:**

**Other information to support this proposal:**