



# *Regina Catholic Schools*

**Innovation & Empowerment:**  
Continuous Action Planning Outcomes  
for First Nations, Inuit & Métis Education

**Nominated By:**

The Board of Education for the Regina Roman Catholic  
Separate School Division #81

**Submission For:**

The Premier's Board of Education Award for  
Innovation and Excellence in Education

**September 2016**

**Board Chair:** Mr. Frank Flegel  
**Director of Education:** Mr. Domenic Scuglia



## Innovation & Empowerment: Continuous Action Planning Outcomes for First Nations, Inuit & Métis Education

### Introduction

Regina Catholic Schools has created an environment that supports and continuously nurtures innovation, empowerment and success in support of learning outcomes for First Nations, Inuit & Métis (FNIM) students. This award application takes a three-fold approach, looking at innovative practices developed by the school division – both past and present, then outlining the ongoing role of the Board in promoting and supporting these practices, and concluding with data that demonstrates success for First Nations, Inuit & Métis students.

### Program Goal

In Regina Catholic Schools, the overall goal for FNIM students is to provide educational opportunities consistent with their expressed needs as determined through varied consultative and advisory processes in place *and* close monitoring of ongoing educational outcomes.

### Program Description – A Series of Innovations and Initiatives

Regina Catholic Schools has established a standard where innovation, empowerment and action have become the operating norms for addressing approaches to FNIM educational needs over the past 15 years. Success for FNIM students is not the result of a single program or initiative; it is the outcome of ongoing planning efforts and sustained practices driven by targeted allocation of resources, professional expertise and well-forged partnerships. Regina Catholic Schools has taken an integrated approach to FNIM education marked by several innovations along the way, a few of which are briefly outlined below in order to provide necessary background information supporting the basis of this award submission.

#### *Treaty Education*

In 2002, the Regina Catholic School Board sensed a need for broader awareness around FNIM ways of knowing and understanding in order to create a more conducive and responsive educational environment, having broad potential to address the Board's expressed principle of educational equity. Through Board direction and support, coupled with visionary administrative leadership, the school division developed concrete learning



Miller High School Multi-Cultural Room

initiatives that would allow all students to gain a better understanding of our collective relationships and connections with existing Treaty agreements in Saskatchewan. **As one of the first school divisions to adopt Treaty Education**, the program “Teaching Treaties in the Classroom” was developed and implemented. Since inception, this program has continued to receive significant support from the Board, school division administration, teachers, and in particular, Treaty Catalyst Teachers who were established in all schools. As this initiative progressed, Regina Catholic Schools adopted a leadership role beyond the school division, working with the Office of the Treaty Commission resulting in what is now recognized provincially as a rich history of collaboration, cooperation and co-development of Treaty Education across the province. By 2010, Regina Catholic Schools had provided Treaty Education professional development to over 500 teachers, representing over 80% of all professional instructional staff.

### ***Circle of Voices/First Nations, Inuit & Métis Education Plan of Action (2007-2010)***

In 2007, Regina Catholic Schools engaged in a large-scale and comprehensive process to research FNIM educational “best-practices”, including the study of documented and proven effective practices across Canada, while collecting input from locally established dialogue groups in order to create a basis for future directions in the school division. The intent was to find ways to best meet the needs of a significantly growing population of FNIM students within the school division and create a vision for the future. **As part of this vision,**



**the Circle of Voices Advisory Committee – unique to Regina Catholic Schools - was established.** Along with this advisory body, Regina Catholic Schools developed a 3-year plan entitled “*The First Nations, Inuit & Métis Education Plan of Action*” and delivered this plan across the school division in three phases:

- **Awareness (2007-2008)** – *This phase featured professional development opportunities for teachers in order to create a stronger understanding around FNIM ways of knowing.*
- **Action (2008-2009)** – *This phase involved of a continuation of the professional development noted above coupled with the actualization of curriculum and connected resources addressing Kindergarten to Grade 6 Treaty Education units.*
- **Empowerment (2009-2010)** – *This phase involved support to teachers for expanding their efforts to integrate FNIM ways of knowing across all areas of the curriculum.*

Citing this planning approach in a report entitled, “*Be Bold, Move Forward: Measuring Success*” (2012) released by the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research, **Regina Catholic Schools was recognized as one of two school divisions in the province having developed an education action plan for FNIM students.** Regina Catholic Schools emerged as a forerunner at using this type of planning approach, providing testament to the innovative work occurring in the school division at that time.

#### ***Regina Catholic Schools Renewed Action Plan (2012-2015)***

As a follow-up to the 2007-2010 action plan, Regina Catholic Schools moved to the development of a renewed 3-year plan entitled, “*First Nations, Inuit & Métis Renewed Education Plan*”, (2012 – 2015). This plan outlined a detailed commitment to FNIM students based on a formal Vision, Mission Statement and broad set of Belief Statements driving all educational initiatives intended for FNIM students. This plan also made formal policy connections between the Ministry of Education First Nations and Métis Education Branch through their plan entitled, “*Inspiring Success: Building towards Student Achievement (2009)*.”

The new plan identified key areas for long-term goal setting, with emphasis on data collection around core aspects of literacy (reading and numeracy), early learning readiness, and high school student engagement – focusing on credit attainment, grade level transition retention rates, and on-time graduation rates. This plan also established a data driven approach in the division specifically for FNIM students, including the establishment of reliable benchmarks for gauging subsequent goal attainment. This plan also provided the school division with the ability to maintain a sense of direction and continuity when aligning with the Ministry of Education’s *Educational Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP)*.

#### ***In Conclusion***

The FNIM educational planning initiatives developed by Regina Catholic Schools as outlined above illustrate the visionary leadership of this Board. The Regina Catholic School Board has consistently positioned itself on the leading edge of policy development, broad and inclusive consultation, and resulting educational initiatives focused specifically toward FNIM students. This stance has led to our current state where FNIM students are experiencing significant learning achievements and overall goal attainment.

## Award Criteria Commentary

### Criterion #1 – Evidence of Direct Board Influence and Participation

Direct Board influence and participation in support of FNIM educational initiatives is best evidenced through:

- **Board Policy/Administrative Procedure** – The Board “recognizes that pupils of First Nations/Inuit and Métis ancestry represent a significant group. Divergent educational responses may be required to help them succeed in their educational development.” (Philosophic and Foundational Commitments: Administrative Application 1300 – First Nations, Inuit and Métis People Education)
- **Membership on the Circle of Voices Advisory Committee** – The Board appoints several members (ranging from 3 to 4) to the Circle of Voices Advisory Committee on an annual basis. This representation allows for direct, accurate and meaningful expression of advisory views in the context of ongoing Board governance.
- **Financial Supports** - Support for FNIM educational initiatives are well entrenched in the determination of annual instructional, administrative and operational budgets.

### Criterion #2 – Innovative Nature of the Project

Over the past 15 years, Regina Catholic Schools has created a positive change environment that supports a natural evolution toward innovation and excellence in connection with FNIM education as evidenced by:

- **Treaties in the Classroom Program** (2002 to Present)
- **Circle of Voices Advisory Committee** (2007 to Present)
- **RCS First Nations, Inuit & Métis Education Action Plan** (2007-2010)
- **RCS First Nations, Inuit & Métis Renewed Three Year Plan** (2012-2015)

Combined, these major initiatives illustrate how innovative planning and forward thinking in relation to FNIM education is the norm in Regina Catholic Schools.

### Criterion #3 – Sustainability of the Innovation

With the Board’s overarching goal of education equity in mind coupled with their demonstrated ability to support ongoing consultation, critical partnering, and program development initiatives as demonstrated over the past 15 years, it is clear that Regina Catholic Schools has established sustainability in relation to FNIM education. The Board actively monitors progress toward their goal of education equity through various means including their membership on “Circle of Voices” and through examination and deliberation of regular administrative reports surrounding educational outcomes and planning initiatives for FNIM students.

#### Criterion #4 - Cost Benefit Analysis of the Innovation

FNIM education initiatives reflecting Board priorities are sustained through ongoing instructional and operational budget provisions, including school division funding for ongoing professional development and inputs to support the implementation of continuously evolving planning in response to desired learning outcomes. Additional revenue sources such as the “First Nations and Métis Education Achievement Fund (FNMEAF)” are also accessed to target needs based on education outcome analysis of annual SMART goals in the school division that are specifically targeted toward FNIM students.

#### Criterion #5 - Client Support for the Innovation

Advisory systems in place at the division and local school levels ensure that client support for ongoing educational planning is in place. At the local school level, Learning Improvement Plans associated with the “*Educational Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP)*” are shared with Catholic School Community Councils, where opportunities exist for them to act in advisory and support capacities. At the division level, “Circle of Voices” has existed since 2007 for the purpose of providing formal advisory input to all aspects of FNIM educational planning in the school division.

#### Criterion #6 - Partnerships in Support of the Innovation

As a formal advisory body representing a broad cross-section of interest groups, the “Circle of Voices Advisory Committee” sets the standard for partnering in Regina Catholic Schools. The goals of this committee are to address educational issues related to FNIM students while providing direction and support for school division educational plans and associated goals, to provide advocacy for all FNIM students, to improve communication between FNIM parents and to address social justice issues while identifying gaps in service. The committee also serves to act as a sounding board for Board policies, procedures and initiatives that directly impact FNIM students and their families. The school division also maintains close ties with FNUC, SIIT, SUNTEP and the Gabriel Dumont Institute. On a local school operational level, many partnerships exist to address local needs – particularly through various high school programs designed to promote credit attainment, grade-to-grade retention and improved graduation rates among FNIM students.





## Criterion #7 - Evidence of Improved Student Achievement

A current review of FNIM student educational outcomes arising from the Renewed Action Plan provides an abundance of evidence to suggest that the approach used in Regina Catholic Schools is creating academic success while also meeting the over-arching Board goal of education equity. Presently in Regina Catholic Schools, learning targets are worded as SMART goals and organized under three major areas reflecting specific Board priorities for FNIM students:

- Reading Literacy – Reading Benchmark Attainment (see below)
- Mathematics Literacy – Year End Summative Mathematics Assessment (see page 7)
- High School Credit Attainment/ /Retention/Graduation Rates (see page 8)

While other groups may be targeted for reporting of FNIM SMART Goal outcomes, results are *always* reported to the following groups for input, discussion or advice:

- Circle of Voices Advisory Committee (system wide advisory level)
- Board Briefings (governance level)
- Catholic School Community Councils (local school advisory level)
- Senior, Central and School Level Administration (administrative/planning and implementation level)
- RCS Data Wall (general access level)

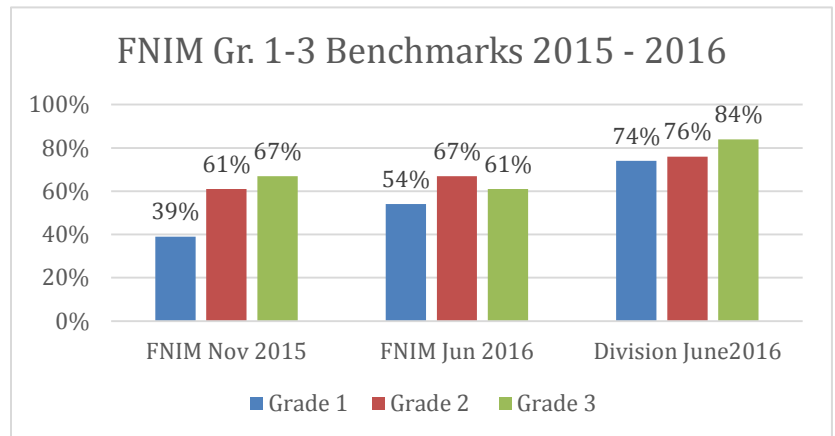
## Data Set #1 - Elementary Education/Reading Literacy

### The 2015-2016 FNIM Reading Literacy Benchmark SMART Goal

By June 2016, the percentage of self-declared FNIM students in the English program who meet or exceed reading expectations will be 75% for Grade 1, 80% for Grade 2, and 85% for Grade 3.

### Reading Literacy: Goal Commentary

Self-declared FNIM student benchmark results have improved significantly over the past four years. The achievement gap has been reduced with the support of targeted interventions. The cohort of students is very fluid, which accounts for inconsistencies in trends. For example, there were 100 self-declared FNIM Grade 2 students enrolled in June 2015 and 121 self-declared FNIM Grade 3 students in June 2016. For these reasons, the 2016-2017 benchmark goals for FNIM students will continue to be the same goal the Board has targeted for all students in the division.



## Data Set #2 - Mathematics Literacy

### The 2015-2016 FNIM Mathematics Literacy Benchmark SMART Goal

By June 2016, the percentage of FNIM students in each of Grades 2 through 8 who pass the school division end of year summative mathematics assessment will increase by 10% from their performance outcomes in June 2015.

### Mathematics Goal: Commentary

In June 2014, the school division established a benchmark for this assessment. At that time, 404 out of 607 self-declared students (67%) achieved a passing grade.

#### FNIM Student Benchmark - Established June 2014

Self-Declared	PASSED
607	404 (67%)

#### FNIM Achievement Outcomes (Post-Benchmark) – June 2015

Self-Declared	PASSED
736	499 (67%)

#### FNIM Achievement 2015-2016 SMART Goal Outcomes – June 2016

Self-Declared	PASSED
694	540 (78%)

In June 2016, Grade 1 to 8 results show an overall 10% increase for FNIM students over June 2015, meeting the 2015-2016 SMART Goal. At this time, 540 out of 694 self-declared students (78%) achieved a passing grade. Several interventions attributed to this success including:

- *The FNIM coordinator collaborated with teachers to provide opportunities for the infusion of FNIM ways of knowing into understanding of mathematics.*
- *The RCSD Mathematics Consultant was increased from .50 FTE to 1.0 FTE for 2015-2016 and a guided math approach was promoted as part of this added resource allocation.*
- *Specifically targeted math interventions and supports were provided.*

In conclusion, Grade 1 to 8 mathematics assessment results show an overall 11% increase for FNIM students over the initial 2014 benchmark indicator. The combined effects of increased focus on mathematics at the school level along with the introduction of specific program initiatives and the infusion of additional resources at the division level have resulted in meeting the success target for FNIM students.



## Data Set #3 – Secondary Education Graduation/Retention Rates/Credit Attainment

### 2015-2016 FNIM Secondary Education SMART Goals

Goals for FNIM students at the secondary level are as follows:

- **Attainment of Academic Credits** – From September 2015 to June 2016, 80% of self-declared students in each of Grades 10, 11, and 12 will attain a minimum of 8 credits.
- **Targeted Retention Rate** – By June 2016, the percentage of self-declared Grade 10 students completing Grade 10 and remaining in school for Grade 11 will be 90%.
- **Targeted On-Time Graduation Rate** – By June 2016, the on-time graduation rate for FNIM students in Grade 12 will be 70% or greater.

### Secondary Education Goal Commentary

#### Credit Attainment (2015-2016)

Data shows that credit attainment targets were met for 2 out of 3 grade levels.

Grade	Self-Declared FNIM Count	Minimum 8 Credits Attained	% Attainment of 8 Credits
Grade 10	72	52	72.2%
Grade 11	61	49	80.3%
Grade 12	45	36	80.0%

#### Enrolment Retention (2015-2016)

Data shows that retention rate targets were met for all secondary schools and the SMART goals was well surpassed across the school division as a whole.

School	Grade 10 FNIM Count in September 2015	FNIM Student Count Enrolled in Grade 11 (by June 2016)	% of FNIM Students Retained
Riffel	11	11	100%
O'Neill	25	23	92%
Miller	34	34	100%
LeBoldus	6	6	100%
<b>Division</b>	76	74	97.3%

#### On-Time Graduation Rate (2015-2016)

Data shows that the Grade 12 On-Time Graduation Rate was met in 3 out of 4 schools and the SMART goal was met across the school division as a whole.

School	Grade 12 FNIM Count	On-Time Graduation Count	On-Time Graduation %
Riffel	7	7	100%
O'Neill	19	16	84.2%
Miller	9	4	44%
LeBoldus	8	8	100%
<b>Division</b>	43	35	81.4%