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1. RATIONALE

The Winnipeg School Division recognizes that it serves a diverse population and is committed to making education meaningful and responsive to, and inclusive of, the cultural diversity that characterizes the Canadian society;

One aspect of that commitment is the recognition of the significant Aboriginal population within the Division and the development of initiatives which will enhance the education of Aboriginal students as well as be of benefit to all students;

Aboriginal people have an historical and unique relationship with Canada;

The Aboriginal community has declared its belief in the inherent right to self-determination of Aboriginal people and the importance of a holistic philosophy (which may be illustrated in a medicine wheel, Exhibit 1) as providing the framework to view education as a lifelong learning process;

The Aboriginal community has also identified the importance of the integration of Aboriginal values, languages, histories and cultures in all aspects of education;

The Aboriginal community has made known its understanding of Aboriginal education to mean holistic education that is inclusive of Aboriginal perspectives;

2. PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

This policy reflects the belief that education is a life-long learning process that encompasses students, parents/guardians, and the community. The Winnipeg School Division will work with all partners in the educational process to ensure that an education of high quality is provided based on the following philosophy:

- 2.1 The importance of recognizing that each child has gifts and strengths that need to be nurtured.
- 2.2 The importance of balance in our lives that is extended beyond the intellectual to the development of the physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional parts of a holistic philosophy.
- 2.3 The importance of balance in the learning process that involves students, parents/guardians, educators, and the community.
- 2.4 The importance of understanding the reciprocal nature of teaching and learning in the life-long learning process that extends throughout development from childhood, youth, adulthood through to elder.
- 2.5 The importance of maintaining this balance in life based on traditional teachings of Aboriginal cultures.
- 2.6 The importance of the delivery of educational programs of high quality that take into account a view of the whole child.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Aboriginal is defined as First Nation, Inuit or Metis who are descendants of the original inhabitants of Canada.
- 3.2 Aboriginal community refers to the community within the jurisdiction of The Winnipeg School Division that is composed of Aboriginal parents/guardians, children and other representatives of the Aboriginal children who attend school in The Winnipeg School Division.



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- 3.3 Aboriginal Awareness is the knowledge of the way of life, past and present, and ways of being and learning which include understanding, appreciation, and acknowledgment of Aboriginal people.
 - 3.4 Cultural competency is the development of knowledge, skill and confidence to integrate Aboriginal perspectives into all aspects of educational endeavours.
 - 3.5 Race Relations is the development in students of an understanding and respect for their own culture and historical heritage and for that of others.
 - 3.6 Aboriginal languages are the ancestral languages of the Aboriginal peoples.
 - 3.7 Traditional teachings are an Aboriginal cultural group's accumulated knowledge, skills and attitudes passed down from generation to generation for the well-being and survival of its people.
 - 3.8 Spiritual teachings are sacred laws received by the spirit for the growth and harmony of all living things.
 - 3.9 Aboriginal education is defined as the incorporation of Aboriginal perspectives and philosophies in all curricular areas to inform all students of the past and contemporary lifestyles and histories of Aboriginal peoples of Canada. Aboriginal education encompasses the rich traditions and values of the various Aboriginal peoples and applies those concepts to relevant issues facing Aboriginal children and youth today through the curriculum and cultural activities in positive student-centred learning experiences.

4. EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

- 4.1 The Winnipeg School Division, in implementing Policy GBA - Employment Equity, shall ensure that all Aboriginal persons seeking employment opportunities within the Division are considered for employment on the basis of qualifications, work and life experiences, and the ability to do the job.
- 4.2 In accordance with Policy GBA - Employment Equity, The Winnipeg School Division shall actively recruit and strive toward a workforce which is representative of the communities within its jurisdiction in all job classifications and at all levels.

5. ABORIGINAL AWARENESS AND RACE RELATIONS

- 5.1 In the planning for the professional development of staff, the annual plans of all schools and departments within the Division will reflect a continuum of Aboriginal awareness and cultural competency to ensure the enhanced knowledge of Aboriginal histories and cultures by Division staff.
- 5.2 A wide variety of Aboriginal people and community resources will be utilized in the development and implementation of Aboriginal awareness and cultural competency programs for staff.
- 5.3 All students, employees, and those who provide service in the Division are responsible for the development and maintenance of positive race relations within the Division. Included in this is fostering the understanding that the Aboriginal people have a valid historical and contemporary contribution to make to society.



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6. CURRICULUM

- 6.1 The Winnipeg School Division shall provide on-going support to ensure that Aboriginal perspectives, including the factual information about the histories of Aboriginal people, their cultures, languages, and contemporary diversity of lifestyles are integrated throughout the curricula.
- 6.2 The Winnipeg School Division Curriculum Committee shall have Aboriginal representation.
- 6.3 The Winnipeg School Division will continue to develop, support, coordinate and enhance existing initiatives in Aboriginal education.

7. ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES

- 7.1 Within the requirements of the Public Schools Act and Board Policy, The Winnipeg School Division will work cooperatively with staff, parents/guardians, and the community toward the establishment of Aboriginal Language of Instruction Programs (Bilingual up to 50% of class time) and Aboriginal Language of Study Programs (Conversational from 20 - 40 minutes per day).
- 7.2 The Winnipeg School Division is committed to offering Aboriginal language programs. Local community/school needs will be assessed in accordance with Policy IGAL - Language Instruction.
- 7.3 The Winnipeg School Division shall ensure that instructional staff who are hired for language programs are qualified to speak and/or write in the language specified.

8. PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

- 8.1 School principals shall be responsible for developing strategies to ensure active and meaningful participation of Aboriginal parents/guardians and community in the educational process based on mutual respect and understanding, creating a partnership that will result in education of high quality for all students.

9. ABORIGINAL SCHOOLS

- 9.1 The Winnipeg School Division will ensure the integration of Aboriginal values, languages, histories and cultures in all aspects of education at Niji Mahkwa and Children of the Earth Schools.
- 9.2 The Winnipeg School Division shall provide additional resources for cultural and linguistic programs at both Niji Mahkwa and Children of the Earth Schools.
- 9.3 The Winnipeg School Division shall, within the resources allocated, provide ongoing support for the development and preservation of the particular focus in Aboriginal education including academic, cultural, linguistic and technological education offered at Niji Mahkwa and Children of the Earth Schools.
- 9.4 Within the parameters and expectations of Policy GCN - Performance Assessment for all employees in the Division, the performance assessment process for employees at Children of the Earth and Niji Mahkwa Schools will also take into account the philosophy and goals of Aboriginal education.



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10. ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY

10.1 Within the resources allocated, The Winnipeg School Division will continue to cooperate with the community to identify needs and establish culturally appropriate community-based adult education which will include Aboriginal histories, cultures, languages and literacy programs. The organizers shall be encouraged to avail themselves of the wide variety of Aboriginal people and the community resources available in the delivery of these programs.

11. EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

11.1 The Winnipeg School Division will continue to provide opportunities for students, educators, parents/guardians and the community to provide input in the ongoing evaluation and assessment of programs. The assessment of educational programs will take into consideration the philosophy and goals of Aboriginal Education.

11.2 The Winnipeg School Division, in implementing Policy IK - Student Assessment, shall ensure that assessment and evaluation materials and methods are free of bias and take into consideration appropriate cultural content.

12. RESPONSIBILITY

12.1 The Chief Superintendent shall be responsible for the implementation of the Aboriginal Education policy.

12.2 Principals shall be responsible for the implementation of the Aboriginal Education policy at the school level.

12.3 Teachers shall be responsible for ensuring that the teaching practices are consistent with the philosophy and goals of the Aboriginal Education policy.

12.4 The consultants and other support personnel shall be responsible for providing assistance and support to the instructional staff in the implementation of this policy.

13. This policy is subject to the laws of the Province of Manitoba and Canada and without restricting the foregoing is expressly not intended to interfere with the powers, duties and discretions to be exercised by the Division and its Board of Trustees under The Public Schools Act and Education Administration Act of Manitoba and the Regulations thereto.



EXHIBIT
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This Medicine Wheel provides a visual representation of the relationships understood in the context of Aboriginal teachings and world views as referred to in the Aboriginal Education Policy, IGABA. This visual is one example which depicts education as a lifelong process and involves all those who participate in the students' education.

