How Partnerships Can Support Improved Aboriginal Student Success?

November 15, 2011
Agenda

1. Overview of MAEI
2. Current Initiatives
3. Partnerships
4. Research on PSE Aspirations
5. Strategies to Address the PSE Issues
6. Contact Information
7. General Discussion
Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative (MAEI)

- Established in 2008
- 2 full-time and 2 part-time staff
- Projects in 24 schools across Canada (2011-12)
- Key to success:
  - identifying partners who want to support Aboriginal student achievement
  - implementing unique and effective programs
Current Initiatives

Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Project

• Overview:
  – Students in Grade 11 and 12 learn how to create a product or service-based business
  – Lessons focus on innovative hands-on activities, guest speakers and business mentors
  – Funding is available for students to start a micro-business
  – Using the services of local banks students open and maintain accounts, and comply with all required record keeping/accountability measures

• Locations (2011-2012): nine schools in six provinces

• Partners: school boards, local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal business people, banks, industry sectors, Nelson Education
Current Initiatives (cont’d)

Model Schools

• Goal: to support JK to Grade 8 teachers and principals in two band-operated schools in Southern Ontario to improve student achievement in literacy and eventually in numeracy
• Timeframe: five year project ends in June 2014
• Strategies: based on the teaching, training and assessment strategies that were successful in Ontario’s Turnaround Schools program
• Resource package: guidelines and videos that could be shared with other band-operated schools in Canada after the project ends
• Partners: two First Nations, three universities, schools boards, Ontario Ministry of Education, Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation, Judith and Larry Tanenbaum Family Foundation
Current Initiatives (cont’d)

Promising Practices in Aboriginal Education Website (PPW)

http://www.maei-ppw.ca/

- Purpose: clearinghouse website launched in December 2009 to enable the sharing of curriculum materials, classroom practices, relevant policies, interesting initiatives and research related to successful practices in Aboriginal education
- Focus: JK – Grade 12, Parent/Community Engagement, Early Childhood
- Users: educators, researchers and others access the site to enhance learning opportunities and to improve educational success for Aboriginal students
- Partners: school boards, ministries of education, FNMI organizations, post secondary
Current Initiatives (cont’d)

Mentoring

1. Accounting
   • Focus: to mentor Grade 9 and 10 Aboriginal youth for up to 15 years as they complete high school, attend university and become Chartered Accountants or other professionals
   • Locations: Vancouver, Edmonton, Regina, Winnipeg, Fort Frances, Thunder Bay, Sudbury and Owen Sound
   • Partners: Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants (BDO Dunwoody; Ernst & Young; Grant Thornton; KPMG; Meyers, Norris, Penny), school boards

2. Banking
   • Focus: to mentor Grade 9 and 10 Aboriginal youth for up to 15 years to complete high school, attend university and become bankers
   • Locations: Edmonton and Winnipeg
   • Partners: Scotiabank, school boards
Partnerships

1. Free the Children

• Purpose: to raise awareness among Canadian children, youth and teachers about the obstacles facing Aboriginal education, from the schools on First Nations reserves struggling for support to students who face incredible odds to obtain quality education
• Timeframe: launched in February 2011; is on-going
• Materials: posted lesson plans and Awareness Action Guide emphasized that all students and educators can benefit from learning more about the histories, cultures, traditions and perspectives of FNMI people
• Partners: Free The Children, foundations, school boards
Partnerships (cont’d)

2. Ashoka Changemakers

• Purpose: an on-line competition to solicit and reward ideas/projects designed to improve FNMI student success from early childhood to adult education

• Timeframe: begins in mid October 2011; winners will be announced by March 2012

Research on PSE Aspirations

   • Indigenous students:
     – many planned to leave school prior to graduation
     – were less likely to have identified a future career or what education and training they would take after high school
   • Family and friends provided most of their career advice
   • Students indicated the key barriers to achieving their aspirations were:
     – lack of family support
     – Minimal amount of career advice they had been given
     – Scant knowledge of requirements for further education and/or job training
     – Poor academic achievement
Research on PSE Aspirations (cont’d)

2. CMEC Report (2009)
Factors and obstacles preventing Aboriginal students from going on to PSE:
• negative perceptions of school
• their views of PSE
• limited access to key information
• general indecision
• pressure and anxieties/fear of failure related to PSE
• poor grades
• learning disabilities
• inadequate information about PSE
• varying levels of teaching quality
• costs of PSE
• PSE entrance requirements
• lack of information among parents resulting in less than optimal parental
  support and engagement in the planning and decision-making process
Research on PSE Aspirations (cont’d)

   • Study of 10,000 low-income PSE students across Canada
   • Many teenagers decide if they will go on to PSE before Grade 9
   • Those who decided during or after high school to attend PSE are more likely to leave after the first or second year
   • For students who made the decision early, parents play a big role
   • Aboriginal students:
     – were substantially more likely than non-Aboriginal students to leave PSE without graduating in their first or second year
     – more likely than non-Aboriginal students to be first generation PSE students
     – less likely than non-Aboriginal students to have savings for PSE
Strategies to Address the PSE Issues

CMEC recommended:

• provide students and parents with more practical information about PSE

• present information about PSE along with information about careers to clarify how both are linked and to help students to think more constructively about PSE and potential careers for the future

• providing parents with information (e.g., about student loans)

ABORIGINAL STUDENTS RECEIVE TOO LITTLE INFORMATION ...TOO LATE ABOUT PSE
Contact Information

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