



REPORT

Program/Curriculum Success

Turtle Island Voices in the Classroom



RAINY RIVER DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Turtle Island Voices in the Classroom

Aboriginal Perspectives and Turtle Island Voices

One of the Rainy River District School Board's Strategic Goals of Purposeful Learning is to embed the unique historical and cultural story of our Aboriginal Communities into the curriculum. Recently, the resource *Turtle Island Voices*, has been co-taught by members of the School Support Services Department in some of our area schools.

The goals of using this resource are to improve student engagement and to support teachers in using First Nation, Metis and Inuit culturally relevant resources and materials within their classrooms. *Turtle Island Voices* is a comprehensive guided reading resource set that can be used to increase student knowledge of First Nations, Metis and Inuit culture, while supporting teachers and students with a variety of different levels of texts to ensure appropriate challenge and engagement. The Guided Reading approach involves the teacher working with a small group of students who demonstrate similar reading behaviours and can all read similar level texts. The specific stories contained in the resources are a combination of traditional stories that are often passed down between generations and other original works that focus on Aboriginal peoples of the 21st century, as well as stories about the natural environment from the perspective of those that live on Turtle Island.

Throughout the last two months, the Aboriginal Curriculum Coordinator and Student Work Study Teacher have worked together to collaboratively co-plan and model lessons utilizing the Turtle Island resources in teachers' classrooms in Riverview School, Robert Moore School, and J.W. Walker School. These resources have also been shared at school PLCs and staff meetings, which have fostered discussions on the benefits of using these resources to support the teaching of Character Traits and the Seven Grandfather Teachings.

Plans are in place to continue providing this support to teachers across the system, in order to further assist with their balanced literacy instruction. Staff within the School Support Services department will also continue to promote these resources across the Board as a way of enhancing the cultural experiences and perspectives for all of our students in the classroom.