



Roundtable Creates Roadmap for Closing the Aboriginal Achievement Gap

A national roundtable has recommended a series of immediate actions to improve success rates for aboriginal students. The recommendations are contained in a report released today by the Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education (SAEE). They were developed at an unprecedented gathering of senior policy makers, aboriginal leaders, researchers and experts held at Concordia University on February 22nd to examine ways to close the achievement gap for aboriginal students.

The fifty participants in the *Moving Forward* roundtable identified a range of strategies to accomplish this goal. Among these were:

- Collect and report better data for monitoring performance and guiding improvement efforts
- Establish common indicators and standards of student attainment and program quality
- Ensure parity of educational services on and off reserves by investing in support structures and training for aboriginal peoples
- Improve training, support and working conditions for teachers in aboriginal settings
- Recognize aboriginal authority over curriculum to reflect community view
- Create Centres of Excellence in Aboriginal Education to conduct research, develop culturally relevant teaching and language materials, and communicate best practices
- Integrate school and community learning for all ages more seamlessly
- Build parent capacity to participate in their children's education by creating aboriginal parenting centres and support associations
- Establish a national network for sharing research and best practice in aboriginal education

“After decades of inaction, jurisdictional disputes and unacceptable failure rates, a joint strategic plan to promote educational progress for native children is an important breakthrough,” notes Helen Raham, Executive Director of SAEE. “This roadmap is a collective way forward for all parties responsible for the success of aboriginal learners. We are pleased the Council of Ministers of Education Canada has endorsed a number of these actions this week and that other organizations and levels of government have expressed a desire for collaborative efforts to create tangible progress.”

A non-profit education research agency founded in 1996, SAEE recently published ten case studies on aboriginal schooling, *Sharing Our Success*. Financial support for the aboriginal education policy roundtable was provided by Max Bell Foundation and Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation.

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Moving Forward in Aboriginal Education: Proceedings Report: <http://www.sae.ca/movingforward>

Media Backgrounder: <http://www.sae.ca/movingforward/MovingForwardMedia.pdf>