

**VISION AND DIRECTION
for the
EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF THE METIS PEOPLE
OF SASKATCHEWAN**

(A Discussion Paper)

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VISION STATEMENT FOR METIS EDUCATION

IN THE EXERCISE OF METIS GOVERNMENT AND OUR INHERENT RIGHTS TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND EQUITY, WE EMBRACE THE GOAL OF EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION. OUR PEOPLE WILL PREPARE, WITH CONFIDENCE, FOR THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THE FUTURE, THROUGH AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM THAT IS ACCESSIBLE, COMMUNITY ORIENTED AND TECHNOLOGICALLY AND CULTURALLY RELEVANT. IN THE TRADITION OF OUR ANCESTORS, WE WILL FORGE A NEW PATH WHILE HOLDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF COOPERATION AND RESPECT.

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past year, the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan has undertaken a number of formal and informal conferences, workshops and other forums in an attempt to determine the scope of authority sought by the Metis community in the area of education.

This document provides an overview of the issues and goals highlighted during this process and details a series of actions which will result in the realization of Metis educational equity. Ultimately, we envisage a province-wide Metis System of Education founded on the principles of "community responsibility", "equity", "cooperation" and "partnership".

From the Metis perspective, the first step to the achievement of parity in education and training will be to negotiate a series of legislative and jurisdictional changes with the Province of Saskatchewan. Parallel to this, will be the restructuring of the Metis Nation and its legislative assembly to include a Metis Board of Education.

II. MOVING TOWARD A STRATEGIC PLAN

To date, the meetings have shown that the issues and goals for Metis education can be broken down into some preliminary categories. These include:

- . jurisdictional and legislative considerations for ownership of education by the Metis community;
- . continued partnership and cooperation with existing educational systems;
- . student funding and support systems;
- . inter-cultural issues and Metis materials development;
- . employment and socio-economic considerations;
- . distance education; and,
- . financial considerations.

Included in this paper are the preliminary goals and directions for action, in each of these categories. This work will form the initial structure of what will become a formal Strategic Plan for the Metis Education System.

III. THE DEVELOPMENT OF METIS EDUCATION IN SASKATCHEWAN

Background:

In 1976, the Metis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan secured funding from the Secretary of State to organize a province-wide Cultural Conference. The purpose of this Conference was to develop a strategy to renew and strengthen the Metis community in Saskatchewan.

Delegates to the Conference determined that the creation of a native-controlled institution for the advancement of research, culture, education and employment-oriented programming, related to Metis people, would provide a positive first step. The Institute became known as the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research, Inc. (GDI), named for the heroic Metis leader, General Gabriel Dumont. It represents one of the earliest examples of Aboriginal control in Canada in the field of education.

The Gabriel Dumont Institute was formally incorporated in December 1976 under The Societies Act. In 1981, with the dissolution of The Societies Act, the Institute was continued under The Non-Profit Corporations Act. Operations began in January of 1980. Eight months later the Institute accepted its first students into what has become its core program, the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP).

At approximately the same time as the initial steps were being taken for educational programming, serious efforts also were being made in Metis materials development. In January 1976, the Metis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan began what was to become one of the foremost library collections on Metis history in Canada. Research for the Aboriginal Rights/Metis Historical collection began in the Saskatchewan Archives in Regina and was then expanded to include all eighteen archives in Canada. As well, archives in the United States and Britain were researched.

The result was a political, social and economic history of Indian and Metis people, documented from such sources as the British colonial records, Hudson's Bay Company records, the Selkirk Papers, and Canadian Government records and transcripts. As well, papers of individuals who, in different capacities, influenced Metis history were included.

In May 1980, this landmark collection of uncatalogued materials on Aboriginal Rights and Metis History became the cornerstone of the newly-opened Gabriel Dumont Institute Library, in Regina. This wealth of historical material, right within the Institute walls, proved a great boon to the immediate need for the production of curriculum development and Native Studies materials at the Institute.

Gabriel Dumont Institute Today:

The Gabriel Dumont Institute is recognized as the education and cultural arm of the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan. It is managed by a Board of Governors comprised of twenty-three members including: three representatives from the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan; one representative from each of the twelve Metis districts; two representatives from the Metis Women of Saskatchewan; one representative from each of the two provincial universities; one representative from the provincial government and two GDI student representatives.

Financial support for the Institute is provided through a core grant from the Saskatchewan Department of Education. Additionally, the Institute has had significant fee-for-service contractual agreements with government departments, agencies and organizations.

Each year, close to five hundred students attend Gabriel Dumont post-secondary education and training programs in communities across the province. Cooperative arrangements with both the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina, as well as with the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST), ensure full accreditation and recognition of these programs.

In addition to the provision of direct educational services, the Gabriel Dumont Institute has gained national recognition through its research and publications. Curriculum materials are recommended on several provincial school lists and include written media, videos and film strips.

More recently, the Institute has moved into the field of corrections and has established a Community Training Residence for female offenders in Saskatoon.

Current Initiatives in Metis Education and Training:

Recently, there have been dramatic changes in the delivery of Metis education and training in Saskatchewan.

(i) **Dumont Technical Institute:**

The Dumont Technical Institute (DTI), is negotiating an academic partnership with the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology (SIAST). The new Institute will assume the responsibilities for Metis post-secondary technical and vocational programming as well as for adult basic education.

(ii) **PATHWAYS Initiative:**

The Metis Nation of Saskatchewan and the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission Saskatchewan Region entered into an agreement in 1990 to "...ensure that the needs and priorities of the Metis are addressed" in the new Canadian Labour Force Development Strategy. This initiative is called "PATHWAYS".

This Partnership relationship was supported by CEIC agreeing to five principles which will allow Metis participation on the Canadian Labour Force Development Strategy. These include: the need for Metis community consultation and control in matters pertaining to the labour force; the use of effective delivery mechanisms for employment-related programming and services; mechanisms to ensure that funding and institutional development reflects the level of need; meaningful employment equity and a revision of eligibility for programs and services to be more effective in meeting Metis needs.

In order to implement the PATHWAYS process the Metis received federal funding to organize and operate six Local Aboriginal (Metis) Management Boards (LAMBs) in Saskatchewan. Each LAMB is made up of two Metis geographical districts and has jurisdiction over the training and employment service dollars for Metis in the district. The LAMBs each select one of their Board members to sit on the Regional Aboriginal (Metis) Management Board (RAMB). The RAMB is mandated to develop, support, review and evaluate Metis employment and training policies and initiatives at the regional level.

(iii) **Metis Cultural Centre:**

Promotion and retention of the Metis culture are among the ideals of Metis education. A Metis Cultural Centre will be established under the guidance of the Senate and Elders. With an Archives, a museum, programs in languages, fine arts, crafts, sports, Metis history, genealogical research, Metis festivals and community outreach.

(iv) **Metis University Colleges:**

The Gabriel Dumont Institute is currently negotiating with the University of Saskatchewan for recognition as an Affiliated College. Similar negotiations will be undertaken with the University of Regina.

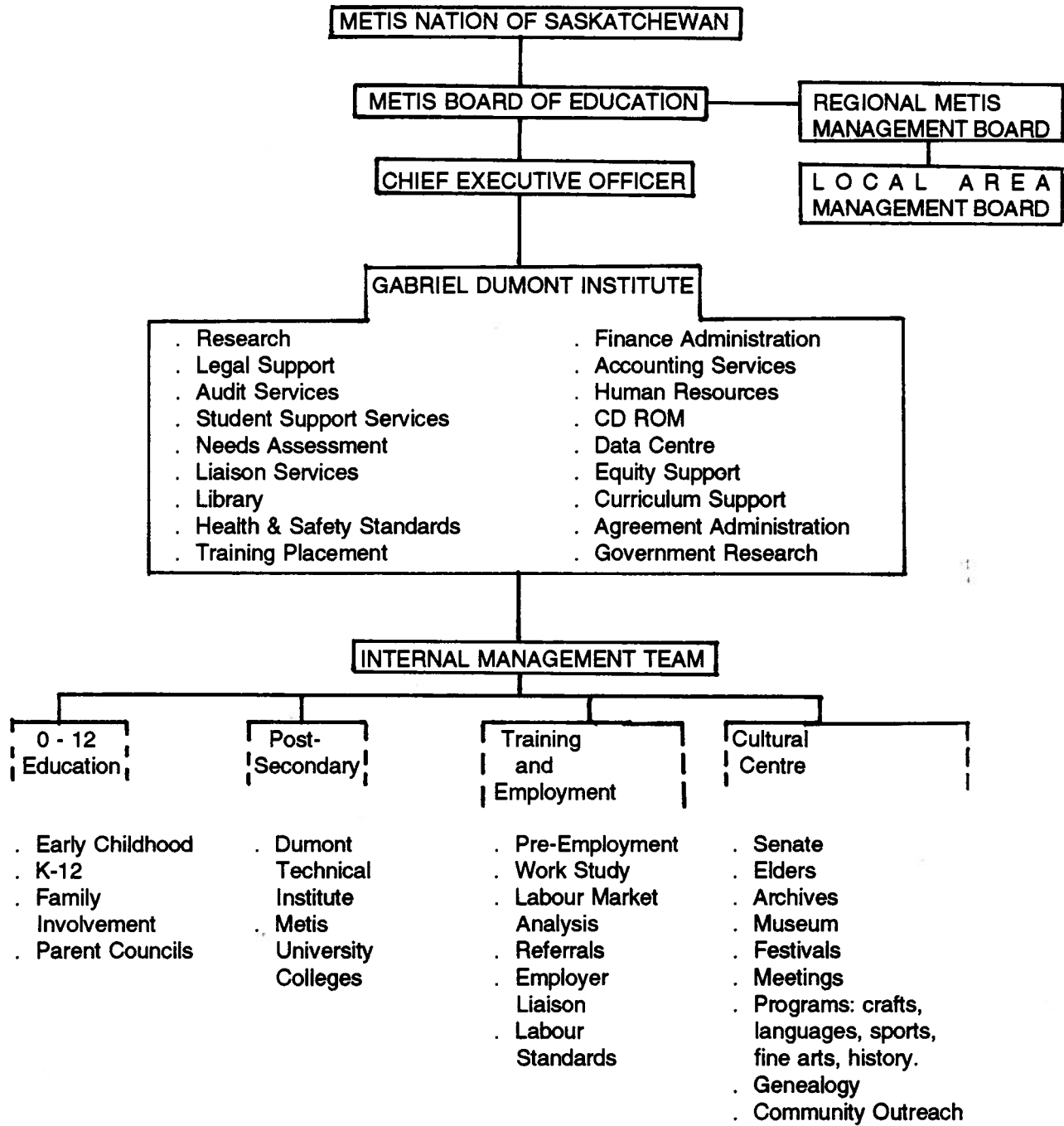
(v) **Early Childhood Education Initiative:**

The Gabriel Dumont Institute has taken preliminary steps to pilot and establish permanent Metis pre-school "head start" programs in five Metis communities: North Battleford, Prince Albert, Cumberland House, LaLoche and Pinehouse.

IV. THE NEED FOR A METIS BOARD OF EDUCATION

The scope of these initiatives makes imperative the creation of a province-wide Metis Education Board which can develop and implement Metis educational services and policy among the various institutions and jurisdictions. A community-driven Metis Education System will enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and economy of Metis educational institutions and initiatives.

The educational management structure adopted for the purposes of the administration and supervision of the educational and financial policies of the Metis education system, shall be organized according to the following chart.



Rationale for the Metis System of Education

The Metis population of Saskatchewan is a human resource that has been under-valued and under-utilized for generations. The demographic, educational and socio-economic profiles of the Metis population of Saskatchewan warrant a mandate for a more responsive system of education. Consider, for example, the following trends and statistics:

(i) Young and Growing Population:

Almost 50% the population of the Metis Nation is under 15 years of age, and almost 2 out of 3 are under 25 years of age. The birthrate among Metis is higher than the general population which is aging and decreasing.¹

(ii) Low Educational Attainment/Accessibility:

According to the 1986 Census, over 32% of the Metis population in Saskatchewan, age 15 and over, had less than a Grade 9 education. This is proportionately twice the provincial average.

The GDI Metis Family Literacy Survey has shown that 56.3% of respondents had dropped out of either elementary or secondary school (G.D.I., September, 1993).

Over 70% of Metis had no post-secondary training in 1986, with only 7.5 having a university education (G.D.I., September, 1993).

(iii) Poor Literacy Skills:

Forty-five percent of Aboriginal peoples are functionally illiterate by present day standards, and three-quarters of these people are in an age bracket where their productivity should be at a maximum (G.D.I., September, 1993).

(vi) Poor Socio-Economic Status:

The Aboriginal populations of Saskatchewan are the poorest Aboriginal people in Canada according to the 1986 Census. Only half of all Saskatchewan's Aboriginal people of employable age participate in the labour force, the lowest participation rate in Canada.

(v) A Culture Being Lost:

The 1993 Family Literacy Survey of the Saskatchewan Metis population has shown that only 27.8% of respondents could speak one or more Aboriginal languages although 72.4% expressed an interest in learning an Aboriginal language.

¹The Gabriel Dumont Institute (September 1993), Metis Family Literacy and Youth Education Strategy, submission to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

The Literacy Survey further shows that only 16.8% of Metis were taught an Aboriginal language in elementary school and this dropped to 9 percent by high school. The majority did not receive instruction in Metis Studies.

The cited statistics leave no doubt that the Metis education system has an important mission to fulfil. Most importantly it has special obligations to the Metis community and to the students who participate in its education and training programs. These obligations can best be realized and prioritized by reference to a set of fundamental principles regarding Metis education.

V. PRINCIPLES FOR THE FOUNDATION OF A METIS EDUCATION SYSTEM

The following fundamental principles reflect the essence of Metis philosophy and beliefs that should guide Metis education into the next century and beyond.

1. The Metis Education System will be subject to the Legislative authority of The Metis Education Act.
2. The provincial Metis Board of Education will serve all aspects of the Metis Education System, including Early Childhood, K-12 and post-secondary. In consultation with the Executive Branch of the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan, and the Metis Legislative Assembly, the Board will be entrusted with the development, implementation and management of the policy, operation and administrative needs and responsibilities of the Metis Education System, in accordance with The Metis Education Act.
3. The Metis Education System will provide for the integrity, unique qualities, abilities and potential of each student and will be designed to stimulate and support the total development of each individual.
4. The Metis Education System will reflect the involvement of the Metis community, the cooperation of parents and families, mutual respect between staff and students, and the principles of free enquiry and expression.
5. The Metis community will have the jurisdiction to decide where to locate its education and training institutions.
6. Metis-controlled schools will be inclusive, rather than exclusive, and admission to our education programs will remain open to all students regardless of their race, religion, national origin, age, gender or sexual orientation.
7. The Metis Education System will establish and maintain uniform standards of academic and technical excellence, which are accredited and recognized by certification bodies, academic and educational systems and institutions across Canada.
8. The Metis Education System will be built upon the goal of life-long learning and will be responsive to the social, cultural and political realities of our communities, Saskatchewan, Canada and the world. In this system, Metis students will be prepared to participate in both Metis and non-Metis communities.
9. The Metis Education System will promote Metis cultural identity and heritage among

students, both individually and collectively.

10. The Metis Education System will provide the people of the Metis Nation with sufficient education and training to realize equity and meaningful employment.

VI. JURISDICTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE CONSIDERATIONS FOR OWNERSHIP OF EDUCATION BY THE METIS COMMUNITY

Issues:

The educational and training needs of Metis communities are high, and existing education policies and systems of education have not met those requirements. Education should be a community guided effort that builds upon strengths. Most importantly, it should be accountable to the Metis community. At present, Metis education and training are governed by Provincial legislation which, although of benefit to the Metis population are limited in their ability to support the collective and individual goals and objectives of the Metis Nation. Currently, Metis education and training initiatives are accountable to a wide variety of Federal and Provincial agencies, all having their own sets of policies, regulations and procedures. The effect on the Metis institutions is to force the allocation of an inordinate amount of time and resources to meeting the needs of the sponsoring agencies.

Goal #1:

TO DEVELOP AND COMMUNICATE THE METIS EDUCATION VISION.

Action: Design a vision and mission statement for Metis education.

Action: Highlight current issues in Metis education and draft preliminary goals and directions for action.

Action: Develop and make available, a Metis Education Mandate that would clearly articulate, to both the Metis and non-Metis communities in Saskatchewan, the jurisdictional responsibilities of the Metis Nation. This would include the mutual responsibilities of Metis and non-Metis governmental institutions for the education and training of Metis citizens.

Action: Produce a document that acts as a strategic and operational plan for the development and implementation of a Metis Education System.

Goal #2:

TO ENSURE THERE IS LEGISLATIVE, POLICY, REGULATORY AND PROGRAM SUPPORT FROM THE SASKATCHEWAN AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS FOR METIS INSTITUTIONS, PARTICIPATION, POLICIES AND PLANS REGARDING THE EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN METIS.

Action: Draft and implement the Metis Education Act.

Action: Identify federal and provincial legislative, policy and regulatory provisions that may either support or restrict the implementation of the Metis education vision.

Action: Review these jurisdictional boundaries to determine how they might promote or constrain the involvement and decision-making power of the Metis community in meeting education and training needs.

Action: Recommend changes to any provisions, that are counter-productive to the achievement of Metis education, training and employment objectives.

Action: Identify legislative changes required to implement the transfer of management or authority to the Metis with regard to education, training and employment programs and services.

Action: Review federal and provincial programs that could support or restrict achievement of Metis education, training and employment objectives.

Action: Recommend changes to Federal/Provincial programs that assist Metis education and training objectives.

Goal #3:

TO HAVE THE PRIORITIES OF METIS INSTITUTIONS FOCUS ON ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE METIS COMMUNITY.

Action: Develop a strategy to mobilize the Metis community to take the lead role in assessing, articulating and prioritizing their education and training needs.

Action: Support the Metis community in the design, management and delivery of the provincial and local Metis education systems and have the resources in place to facilitate this process.

Action: Continue, through our Metis institutions, to deliver education and training programs and courses in Metis communities across the province.

Action: To effectively communicate to the Metis community educational program and service information.

VII. CONTINUED PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION WITH EXISTING EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

Issues:

Metis students must develop themselves in both Metis and mainstream cultures. In developing an autonomous system of education, Metis will continue to work to improve general and Metis education by working jointly with existing public and private educational institutions and systems. Most particularly, we will continue to work to improve the level of general education by supporting the specific development goals of public education, especially in relation to Metis.

Goal #1:

REGARDLESS OF JURISDICTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS, THE CREATION OF AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE METIS CAN ENJOY EQUAL EDUCATION, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES WILL CONTINUE TO BE OUR TOP PRIORITY.

Action: Continue to monitor and evaluate the overall effectiveness of our participation on ministerial and departmental committees.

Action: Continue to sit on ministerial committees and departmental committees to give guidance, support and feedback on issues pertaining to the Metis.

Action: Through the Tripartite Sub-Committee on Education, Training and Employment, prepare and update provincial and federal inventories and decision-making processes of the departments involved in education, training and employment issues affecting Metis.

Action: Set up an official information sharing relationship with the education arm of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations.

Action: Work toward equitable representation of Metis on all mainstream educational institute governing councils and school boards and have within the Metis School System, recognition of reciprocity such that where non-Metis student numbers warrant, non-Metis parents will have the right to sit on boards.

Goal #2:

TO COMPLIMENT AND STRENGTHEN THE EXISTING EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM WITH GUIDANCE, SUPPORT AND FEEDBACK ON MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE METIS AND THE PROMOTION OF THE METIS CULTURE.

Action: Identify and evaluate current provincial and federal education, training and employment policies, programs and services as they apply to Metis, with a focus on determining the gaps in these initiatives and implementing positive changes.

Action: Continue to make available expertise and resource materials developed by Metis so that programs within the existing education system can be improved.

Action: Continue to provide Metis support to all school boards.

VIII. POST-SECONDARY STUDENT FUNDING AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Issues:

Until 1982, Metis and Non-Status Indian students received funding for post-secondary education from the NSIM Bursary Program. Since that time, administrative decisions have adversely affected Metis and Non-Status student funding. Following are a number of significant issues:

- . The principle of assisted post-secondary education for Metis and Non-Status Indians has been abolished and Metis are required to apply for student loans and bursaries.
- . The most needy Metis students, meaning those with families and other responsibilities, incur the greatest debt.
- . Program changes within the Saskatchewan Education Student Financial Assistance Branch have resulted in the debt load, for a Metis student to complete post-secondary degree training, to be increased from \$8,500 in 1983 to approximately \$35,000 in 1992.
- . Metis students make a commitment of at least fourteen years to the bank when they sign up for a degree program.
- . Finally, there is considerable evidence that Metis students may be worse off as graduate professionals than they would have been had they not borrowed to go to school, but had remained on social assistance or on minimum wage.

In the past, there has been much emphasis on the larger concepts of Aboriginal program design and delivery and too little attention to the day to day living issues facing Metis people who wish to access and benefit from these programs. In 1992 the Gabriel Dumont Institute surveyed ninety students in its urban programs. The results of this survey highlight the challenges faced by many adult Metis students and their families.

- . Sixty-six percent had not completed Grade 12 and required preparatory upgrading in writing, math, literacy and other pre-requisites in order to begin their program.
- . In the year leading up to their enrolment at the Gabriel Dumont Institute, only 44 percent of the students were actively employed or registered in education or training programs. More than half of those that had been employed that year had been in positions that, when pro-rated to full-time, were paid less than \$15,000 per annum. During that same year, 53 percent of the respondents were receiving income support through either Social Assistance payments (22%) or Unemployment Insurance (31%).

Just under 70 percent of all responding households (average household size 2.9 persons) had a current total family income of less than \$15,000 per annum. Only 8 percent of the students had a spouse who was employed.

The amount of disposable income the families had each month after food, rent and other necessities are paid was insufficient: 16 percent indicated they could not even cover necessities each month; 22 percent found that some months there was not enough money for necessities; and another 14 percent found themselves with less than \$50 disposable income each month.

Twenty-eight percent of the student families were having problems finding enough money for food and other necessities and 57 percent did not have enough money for adequate dental care.

Child care issues were of concern to many of these student households. Seventy-three percent had at least one dependent, with 60 percent having one or more children under 12, and 40 percent having preschoolers. Thirty-seven percent of the respondent's were single parents.

Even though 99 percent of the students surveyed had been in their program less than 18 months, 41 percent had lived in more than one residence in the community since the start of their program. Twenty-two percent were still unsatisfied with their residence and actively looking to move.

Goal #1:

TO HAVE IN PLACE A COMPREHENSIVE FUNDING SUPPORT SYSTEM TO ASSIST POST-SECONDARY METIS STUDENTS.

Action: A bursary program, administered through the Metis Board of Education, must be funded immediately by government to meet the needs of Metis participating in post-secondary education.

Action: Establish Metis Student Services which would provide continual updates and services to the Community regarding changes in student funding policy and information on scholarships and bursaries.

Goal #2:

TO ACHIEVE EQUITY IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR METIS STUDENTS BY RECOGNIZING AND ADDRESSING THEIR UNIQUE NEEDS.

Action: Put in place a comprehensive student support system including direct or referral services in areas of finance, child care, housing, medical and family services.

IX. INTER-CULTURAL EDUCATION AND METIS MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

Issues:

The Metis System of Education will need to expand the role of the Gabriel Dumont Institute to heighten self-identity within the Metis population and to develop, among all peoples, an appreciation and understanding of historical, cultural and contemporary Metis issues. One of the most important outcomes of inter-cultural education will be a change in attitude about the value of the Metis culture and the importance of a culturally sensitive approach to education and training.

Curricula materials have traditionally portrayed Aboriginal peoples in negative and stereotypical fashion. Through concerted efforts this material has been somewhat eradicated within the Saskatchewan Education System.

There is now an established provincial and national demand for the type of materials developed and produced through the Gabriel Dumont Institute. These products are unique and not available through other sources. There continues to be a demand for the production of high-quality, accurate Metis materials for curriculum and information resources.

Goal #1:

TO OFFER INTER-CULTURAL EDUCATION AND TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE METIS.

Action: Establishment of a central Metis Cultural Centre with a quality collection of Metis resource materials, reference and information services, and the capacity for genealogical and archival research.

Action: Develop an Inter-Cultural Training Unit within the Gabriel Dumont Institute.

Action: Develop options to ensure continuous Metis participation in the design, delivery and evaluation of inter-cultural training programs for management and staff in federal and provincial education, training and employment-related departments.

Action: Prepare and deliver inter-cultural awareness modules.

Action: Provide and update a collection of research and resource materials on Metis topics and issues.

Goal #2:

TO ENSURE THAT THE METIS ARE APPROPRIATELY REPRESENTED IN ALL SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS IN SASKATCHEWAN.

Action: For newly developed Metis materials, utilize Saskatchewan Education's curriculum materials approval process so that these materials can be promoted and used throughout the Saskatchewan school network. In turn, the Metis Board of Education will provide validation and evaluation on all materials which discuss Metis culture and which are intended for use within the curricula.

- Action:** Encourage public and academic libraries to upgrade collections with more Metis and culturally sensitive materials.
- Action:** Develop strategies and actions for the development, distribution and use of Metis research, curriculum materials, library resources and publications.
- Action:** Develop accredited Metis Studies courses at the University, Technical and Preparatory levels.
- Action:** Promote instruction in Aboriginal languages in Saskatchewan schools.
- Action:** Make Aboriginal language instruction available in Metis institutions.
- Action:** Increase representation and visibility of Metis teachers in Saskatchewan schools.
- Action:** Negotiate for the inclusion of Metis Studies courses into all education programs in Saskatchewan.

X. EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

Issues:

The failure of the mainstream school system to educate and graduate Metis people has a strong impact on future employability. Only one-half of all Saskatchewan Aboriginal people of employment age participate in the labour force, with participation rates directly related to levels of schooling. For example, one-third (32.7%) of Saskatchewan Aboriginals having less than grade 9 are employed; 49.3% with grades 9 to 12 are employed; 74% with some post-secondary education are employed; and, 85% of Aboriginal people who have graduated from University participate in the labour force.*²

Similarly, the positive impact of education on employment income can be seen with Saskatchewan's Aboriginal population. While the average employment income of persons with less than grade 9 is under \$10,000, the average income for high school graduates is over \$11,000; with a post-secondary diploma, \$16,000 and upon university graduation over \$23,000.*

The majority of Aboriginal people, who are employed, work in the Service Sector. A large number of these employees are in low-paying, entry-level jobs. Many of these workers are in positions which are on the Surplus List for Saskatchewan and will require retraining and skill enhancement to remain in the labour force in the future when there will be an increasing demand in occupations

*Census data from 1986 as interpreted by Gabriel Dumont Institute in "Meeting the Need: Into the Nineties - A Metis Education Strategy", 1990.

which require more than a Grade 12 education.+²

The social costs associated with Aboriginal peoples' poor socio-economic status are exceedingly high. Impoverished living conditions, dependency on social assistance and low educational attainment are pervasive. Moreover, in Aboriginal communities, the alarming incidence of family violence, suicide, and incarceration may be attributed, to poor employment opportunities and a lack of proper education and training.

Goal #1:

TO INSTILL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AND MAKE AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITIES WHICH PREPARE PEOPLE OF THE METIS NATION FOR LONG-TERM, MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT.

Action: Design and negotiate cooperative education and employment programs for Metis.

Action: Establish a comprehensive support system to assist in the employment of Metis graduates.

Action: Establish partnerships with provincial and federal education, training and employment-related departments to manage and/or deliver programs intended to increase employers' hiring and advancement of Metis. (This could take the form of Human Resource Development agreements within various economic/employment sectors).

Action: Assist employers with the development of their human resource plans and employment equity programs.

Action: Plan and deliver programs intended to increase employment advancement opportunities for Metis, particularly in occupations related to the development of Metis government institutions. (Meeting this goal will require linkages with other subcommittees to determine the human resources that are required in specific sectors such as justice, health, social services, etc.).

Action: Work with prospective employers so that they recognize and respect the training and certification issued by a Metis education system.

+Native Persons - Employed Labour Force by CEC and Detailed Occupation, 1986 Census, Table 19 as interpreted in "Meeting the Need", Gabriel Dumont Institute, 1990.

XI. DISTANCE EDUCATION

Issues:

There is no doubt that the Metis should receive priority in funding for Distance Education as the Metis population fits almost all of the provincially-designated risk categories. For example:

- . Many Metis are in rural schools with limited grade levels and subjects.
- . A significant proportion of Metis live in northern and rural areas which are unable to attract specialty teachers in the areas of math, science, Aboriginal languages and fine arts.
- . Metis communities have specific curriculum needs.
- . Adult upgrading needs are higher for the Metis than for the general population due to low high school completion rates.

Provincial and federal funding is being put into distance education and now, as the province is reorganizing its Distance Education Strategy is an opportune time for the Metis to receive a share in these resources. The Metis, through G.D.I. and Pathways, have expertise in community delivery and off-campus student support systems. Distance education technology will enable Metis education institutes to deliver to diverse Metis communities.

Goal #1:

TO MAKE DISTANCE EDUCATION AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE METIS EDUCATION STRATEGY.

- Action:** Develop a Distance Education Policy for the Metis Board of Education.
- Action:** Develop a prioritization and implementation plan for Metis Distance Education.
- Action:** Obtain, from the Saskatchewan Department of Education, results of the evaluation pilots on distance education.
- Action:** Request immediate membership on the provincial Distance Education Program Review Committee (DEPRC).

XII. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Issues:

The current fiscal climate facing Canada and its provinces demands that Aboriginal programming and, indeed, all programming, be more successful, yet more practical and economical than it has been in the past. "New" sources of funding for initiatives such as the Metis Education System are not readily available and a realignment of existing funding has been met with opposition from those

affected. Our right to funding for the education of our people, however, must not be deferred.

The social and economic data cited in provincial and federal statistics, clearly indicates the need for increased resourcing for Metis education and training. Resourcing will be needed in the area of capital infrastructure, human resources, planning and development, materials development, administration and program implementation.

Goal #1:

TO EXERCISE OUR RIGHT TO HAVE FUNDS FOR THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF THE METIS OF SASKATCHEWAN.

Action: Compile and update data on the number of Metis involved in various types of education and training.

Action: Identify and evaluate current fiscal and human resources devoted to provincial and federal education, training and employment-related programs as they apply to Metis, the focus will be on determining what is actually required to meet Metis goals in these areas.

Action: Planning for Metis management and financial control of programs and services requires knowledge about the possible impact of Treaty Indian land settlements on the property tax base used to finance some educational facilities. There is a need to develop an on-going information-sharing process regarding the implications for Treaty Indian agreements for Metis education and training within the province.

Action: Assess the organizational and management structures which will be required in order for Metis institutions to exercise increasing levels of policy, program and service responsibility over education, training and employment.

Action: Review the financial requirements necessary to create and implement the Metis community-based education process, including the finances needed to truly involve and give ownership of the education system to the Metis community through strategic and operational planning.

XIII. CONCLUSION

"Visions and Directions" has presented the primary issues and challenges that we will face in our quest to develop a Metis Education System. It is not enough to undertake a review of Metis education, training and employment. Given the continuing disparity of education, training and employment opportunities experienced by Metis today, it is imperative that real changes begin to occur. This will only happen with full and meaningful participation of Metis.