

SEABIRD ISLAND COMMUNITY SCHOOL:
UNIQUE FEATURES OF AN INDIAN BAND SCHOOL

by

FIRST NATIONS HOUSE OF LEARNING

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LIBRARY

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ABSTRACT

In 1973, the National Indian Brotherhood's "Indian Control of Indian Education" policy was accepted in principle by the federal Department of Indian Affairs and enabled Bands to administer their own schools. As a result, Bands have the opportunity to develop unique features in their schools which distinguish them from other educational systems offering education to Indian children. Based on Indian Control of Indian Education, Bands are able to develop their own philosophies of education which reflect their needs.

The Seabird Island Indian Band established the Seabird Island Community school on its reserve in 1978. This paper examines the unique features of the Seabird Island school and shows how its uniqueness relates to meeting the goals established for the school. The paper shows that the Band's initiatives in education were the latest in a series of leadership ventures which can be traced to the very early stages of the community's development. Second, the analysis of the Band's experience in operating the Seabird Island school shows 1) the importance of involving Indian people, in full liaison with their community, in the educational process, 2) that the Band school is able to

create a context, through its programming, that develops in students a strong sense of Indian identity and, 3) that although the Band may not recognize the dichotomy of its goals in relation to cultural and academic skills, the school's program seems to indicate the merging of the two.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1978 the Seabird Island Indian Band established the Seabird Island Community School on its reserve under Band control. This action was initiated in response to the community's desire to offer members an alternative to existing educational arrangements. Band schools arose because Indian people wanted to have greater control over the education of their children and because they were not satisfied with the education their children were receiving in the provincial and federal education systems. Under local control, Indian people are able to establish unique features in their educational programming.

The purpose of the present study is to examine the operation of the Seabird Island school with a view to examining a) the unique features it is able to have in terms Indian Control of Indian Education b) the unique features it is able to have in terms of the Seabird Island context and c) how these unique features relate to meeting the objectives established for the school.

Data Collection

For the purposes of this study the following data were made available: Seabird Island School Board minutes, Seabird Island School Board Policy Manual, Seabird Island School newsletters, Seabird Island Band Planning Study. Informal interviews were conducted with school staff and community members. The teachers were asked to fill out a questionnaire. The writer spent twelve days over a period of two months at the school in order to 1) acquire practical experience in the administration of a Band school, and 2) to collect data for this study. The Education Administrator was instrumental in attaining permission from the Seabird Island School Board to conduct the study and directed the writer to sources of information by providing the available documents and by helping to schedule interviews with elders, school staff, School Board members and other community members. While assisting the Education Administrator with administrative duties, the writer was able to observe the implementation of the various programs mentioned in the study.

Historical Background of Indian Education in Canada

From the early 17th Century, Native Indian people were exposed to education designed and directed by missionaries and federal civil servants. The missionary approach was to "civilize and Christianize". This gave way in the mid-twentieth century to the federal government approach of assimilation under the aegis of integration, of channeling Indian children into the public schools (Kirkness, 1984:3).

In the 1960s, Indian leaders began to articulate their concerns regarding the deplorable conditions of their people. In response to the educational concerns raised by Indian people, the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs within the federal government prepared a report on Indian education. This report, presented in the House of Commons on June 22, 1971, unfolded before the Canadian public the educational problems facing Indian people. Some of the findings were:

- A drop-out rate four times the national average (96% of Indian children never finished high school);
- A related unemployment rate averaging 50% for adult males, going as high as 90% in some communities;
- Inaccuracies and omissions relating to the Indian contribution to Canadian history in texts used in federal and provincial schools;
- An age-grade retardation rooted in language conflict and early disadvantage, which accelerated as the child progressed through the primary and

elementary grades;

- Less than 15% of the teachers had specialized training in cross-cultural education and less than 10% had any knowledge of Indian languages;
- The majority of Indian parents were uninformed about the implication of decisions made to transfer children from reserves schools to provincial schools (Kirkness, 1984:4).

From this report, it became obvious that the missionaries and governments had failed in three hundred years to administer an effective educational program for Indians. This failure has been attributed to several factors, namely; the absence of a clear philosophy of education with goals and objectives, failure to provide a meaningful program based on Indian reality, a lack of qualified teaching staff and inadequate facilities, and most important, the absence of parental involvement in the education of their children.

The alarming statistics surrounding Indian education and the Native Indian response to the 1969 Government White paper based on eliminating the special status of Indians in Canada, led to the development of the education policy entitled "Indian Control of Indian Education" (Kirkness, 1985:4,5).

The policy paper is a collection of the statements of Indian organizations in Canada covering all areas of concern in Indian education. It is based on two

educational principles recognized in Canadian society: parental responsibility and local control of education (Kirkness, 1982:4). It recognizes that Indian parents must enjoy the same fundamental decision making rights about their children's education as other parents across Canada. It promotes the fundamental concept of local control which distinguishes the free political system of democratic governments from those of a totalitarian nature (Kirkness, 1985:5). The policy asserts that "only Indian people can develop a suitable philosophy of education based on Indian values adapted to modern living." The policy states further that:

We want education to provide the setting in which our children can develop the fundamental attitudes and values which have an honoured place in Indian traditions and culture. The values which we want to pass on to our children, values which make our people a great race, are not written in any book. They are found in our history, in our legends and in the culture. We believe that if an Indian child is fully aware of the important Indian values he will have reason to be proud of our race and of himself as an Indian.

...We want education to give our children a strong sense of identity, with confidence in their personal worth and ability.

We do not regard the educational process as an "either-or" operation. We must have the freedom to choose among many options and alternatives. Decisions on specific issues can be made only in the context of local control of education. We uphold the right of the Indian

Bands to make these specific decisions and to exercise their full responsibility in providing the best possible education for our children (National Indian Brotherhood (N.I.B.), 1972: 2,3,4).

In February 1973, the Minister of Indian Affairs gave official recognition to the "Indian Control of Indian Education" policy stating, "I have given the National Indian Brotherhood my assurance that I and my Department are fully committed to realizing the educational goals for the Indian people which are set forth in the Brotherhood's proposal" (Cardinal, 1977:60). The National Indian Brotherhood was the organization representing the status Indians of Canada. (The N.I.B. is now called the Assembly of First Nations.) The policy enables Indian Bands to administer their own schools through federal funding based on contribution agreements.

Unique Features of Band Schools

The Indian Control of Indian Education Policy enables Bands to administer an educational system based on making education relevant to the philosophy and needs of Indian people. Through local control, Band schools have the advantage and opportunity to develop unique features which distinguish them from other

educational systems offering education to Indian children.

A recent report of the Canadian Education Association (C.E.A.), called Recent Developments in Native Education, discusses the advantages of Band schools. Bands administering locally controlled schools were asked how they felt their school programs had enhanced the quality of education for students. The Ginew Demonstration School responded:

"Our school is founded primarily on the concept of respect. Respect not only for our fellow human beings but for nature and the universe. The school board is most co-operative with the administration and teachers and the added freedom to make programs as relevant as possible is most appreciated. We are in touch with other local control schools to keep abreast of developments and innovations in the educational arena" (C.E.A., 1984:81).

At Mi'Kmaway school, the Report states that

...children are free to speak their native language and are learning that to be Micmac is something to be proud of. They are exposed to native people who are role models and are learning about their history and culture. Due to an excellent student-teacher ratio, the children are receiving superior individualized instruction and are having much more success with their work. This enhances their school self-image and encourages them to continue doing well (C.E.A., 1984:81).

Further, the Report states that

The Wejgwapniag school did not try to bring the child closer to the school but rather the school closer to the child. The school has always tried to be as open and visible as possible to the reserve (C.E.A., 1984:81).

And finally, it states that,

From all indications, it would appear that native children in Band schools are achieving greater academic success and are remaining in school longer than those in provincial school systems or those students attending federally operated reserve schools (C.E.A., 1984:82).

Deriving from the policy of Indian Control of Indian Education and the Canadian Education Association's report on the advantages of Band schools, the unique features of Band schools can be summarized as:

1. a philosophy, goals and objectives based on Indian values,
2. providing a context in which students can develop a strong sense of identity,
3. choosing among many options and alternatives in curriculum planning and implementation, and
4. linking the community and school closer together.

SEABIRD ISLAND INDIAN RESERVE

Information about the Seabird Island Indian Band, its reserve and its people is mainly derived from the results of the Seabird Island Band Planning Study which was conducted in 1984. In addition to the history of the Seabird Island Band, information about the Band's population, employment, recreation, community services, housing and community aspirations is included to provide the setting in which the school will be discussed.

The origin of the name "Seabird" stems from the Cariboo Gold Rush era. Historical records refer to this Island as both "Maria" and "Seabird" Island. These were names of the steam propelled paddlewheelers that plied the Fraser river upstream as far as Yale during the Cariboo Gold Rush. While the Fraser river borders the eastern shores of the Island, the western channels are presently known as "Maria" slough.

The Halkomelem (Coast Salish Dialect) name for the Island is "skow-a-kul" and is translated to mean "bend in the river". Seabird Island is located in the traditional territory of the Sto:lo people, a sub-grouping of the Coast Salish people.

On June 13, 1879, Seabird Island, consisting of about 4800 acres, was allotted to a number of Bands, in common, for purposes of agriculture. The Reserve, Seabird Island, was to be established for a period of six years with the understanding that if not improved within that time, it would be taken away. The Bands to which the Reserve was allotted were: Popkum, Squatits (Peters), Ohamil, Skawalook (Ruby Creek), Hope, Union Bar and Yale.

Yale is considered to be the border between the Sto:lo and Lower Thompson cultures and as a result, the influence of both cultures is present at Seabird, the predominant being Sto:lo.

The Reserve continued under common ownership and in 1958, a Commission of Inquiry was established to determine whether a separate Band should be established for residents of Seabird. Thus, Seabird Island Reserve achieved Band status on January 1, 1959.

The 1984 Band Planning Study shows the total Band membership to be 370, with those residing on-Reserve as approximately 235. In addition, some one hundred other individuals were living at Seabird: non-status Indians, members of other Bands, and a handful of non-Indians. The current resident population at Seabird is about 335 persons. Services to all individuals are provided by

Band local government. Seabird projects its population will increase to 450 by the year 2003.

The Band is the major employer at Seabird. In addition to the administration of the Band, persons are hired for other Band responsibilities such as the Seabird Island Community School and for Band owned businesses, namely the cafe/store, the Seabird-Wigand Farm and Seabird Cattle. The latest economic development at Seabird is a truck wash outfit and a six unit Truckers Inn.

Two businesses owned by Band members provide employment for the owners and others. Peters Electric provides complete electrical servicing while Peters and Son Trucking does bulldozing, backhoeing and hauling work. Both businesses operate on and off reserve.

Individual member initiatives include planting their own vegetable gardens on an annual basis, cultivation of pasture to maintain a small herd of cattle, and a small egg producing project. In a few instances, locatees with certificates of possession lease pasture land to non-Indian farmers from the surrounding community.

Community members believe that skills in farming, construction, forestry, public works, service industry, social services, education, and office administration

are most important for their people. Other skills include autorepair, welding, policework, upholstering, trucking and seamstressing.

The Band survey indicated that Seabird is a sports-oriented community. Sport and team activities include: Slo-pitch, floor hockey, soccer, and aerobics. Sports facilities at Seabird include two soccer fields, one ball pitch, a playground and a gym/hall.

Other recreation activities include movie night, bingo, card night, girls' club, women's group and special events eg. Christmas, Valentines, Hallowe'en parties. Alcoholics Anonymous and Alateen groups meet regularly. The main focus of recreation at Seabird is in the young adult age group who are able to arrange their own means of transportation. Community programs at Seabird tend to be organized by individuals as opposed to being organized by Band staff. Band members are interested in acquiring additional recreational facilities, ie. swimming pool, boat docks, and in expanding the range of recreational activities.

The Band employs a Community Health Representative and a Community Health Nurse. The Indian Health Services X-ray Clinic visits once a year. The Indian Health dentist attends once every two years. People go to Chilliwack or Agassiz for dental work in the

interim. Flouride treatments and dental health care are part of the Seabird school program.

The Band administers its Social Assistance program, not only for Seabird Island members, but for the Scowlitz Band and other reserve residents as well. Family counselling, drug and alcohol counselling, court procedures and education/employment counselling are provided by the Social Assistance staff, the community Health Representative and the education staff. Home-maker services are available to persons in need.

Public workshops for adults are repeated on an annual basis and are advertised throughout the community. Some workshops that have been conducted include Emergency First Aid, Stress Management and Native Courtworker services.

There are on the Reserve, fifty-five houses, three house trailers, plus a rental complex. The average occupancy rate per household is 3.88 persons. Six households contain more than one family.

As part of the Community Plan, the recommendation has been put forward to enlarge the village core area by creating new housing lots on the periphery. The Band projects that a total of 125 units will be required by the year 2003 to meet housing commitments to its membership.

Community facilities located in the village core include: the Seabird Community Hall, the main school building and two separate buildings used as classrooms, Band Office, Catholic Church, Manse or Father's Trailer, Log Shed, being converted into a doctor's office, Cultural Building, Unit 7 of the Housing units, Maintenance/Yard building and the Fire Hall.

As part of the Band Planning Study, Band members were asked to express their likes and dislikes regarding the Seabird community. In order of priority, the following were noted as "Things I like best about living at Seabird:"

- quiet, privacy, isolation, natural beauty
- sense of family; "it's home"
- friendliness; co-operation among people
- sports/recreation; social activities
- band management; employment
- housing
- store
- no tax
- prosperity
- cleanliness
- the school

In order of priority, the following were noted as "Things I like least about living at Seabird:"

- social problems; people/gossip
- mosquitoes
- lack of clubs, activities, and support systems
- trains, highway, powerlines
- dogs
- road (in need of up keep)
- lack of cablevision
- lack of recreation facilities

- lack of outdoor recreation areas, eg. boatram
- isolation
- bears
- garbage dump
- lack of permanent employment (Seabird Island Band Planning Study).

The study concluded that there is a need for organized activities: recreational, social and cultural. One of the major complaints voiced was that lack of transportation prohibits participation in activities both in the village core and in Agassiz.

Deriving from the results of the entire study the Band translated community aspirations into the following goals:

To develop further economic opportunity on the Reserve.

To provide On-Reserve Employment for Band members and other Seabird residents.

To broaden education and cultural opportunities at the Reserve level.

To provide satisfactory housing for the Band membership.

To define a land use plan that will meet the needs of the expanding community.

To provide additional social and community services that meet the needs of Island residents.

To provide new and improved recreation

facilities and programs.

The above goals, the study states, when realized will contribute to the optimum goal of economic and social self-sufficiency of the Seabird Island Indian Band.

In summary, the Seabird Island Band Planning study shows that although it received Band status fairly recently, (1959) the Band is moving progressively as an established community. Influences from Sto:lo and Thompson cultures are present, the predominant being Sto:lo. However, even the Sto:lo component is derived from a diverse group of Sto:lo communities. Yet the people's determination to acquire a land base to build a community for common interests was not thwarted by the diversity of their backgrounds. Their struggle to maintain the agricultural lands that were allotted for their use attests to their desire to cooperate for common interests, despite their differences.

The Seabird Island Indian Band is future-oriented with the optimum goal of economic and social self-sufficiency. Their future plans include, not only Band members, but members from other Bands, and non-Indian residents on the Reserve. Services offered by the Band are offered to all community residents. The Seabird

Island Community School is also open to enrolment of non-Seabird Band members and non-Indian Seabird residents.

The Seabird Island Indian Reserve is a community unto itself and plans to maintain and expand its resources to include the return of off-reserve members and an increase of non-Band member residents. It is in this community context that the Seabird Island Community school will be discussed in this paper. It will be shown that the Seabird Island Community School is an integral component of the Seabird Island community. The Education Administrator attaches a great deal of importance to the school as a necessary component of a community. She says, "Without a school, you don't have a community."

SEABIRD ISLAND SCHOOL

As early as 1916, Seabird residents made representation to the Royal Commission for the establishment of a day school on the Reserve. This was a result of there being no available space for Seabird students at either of the residential schools in Mission or Sardis. At that time, twenty-four children

were identified as needing educational instruction.

Eventually a federally operated school was established at Seabird. The federal day school was closed in 1969, when the Canadian government was enforcing a nationwide policy to integrate Indian children into public schools. The Department of Indian Affairs (D.I.A.) had rationalized its action by stating that the Agassiz School Board was complaining that students transferring to their system from the federal school were at substandard academic levels. Consequently, all that remained at Seabird was the nursery and kindergarten.

Archie Charles, the present chief of the Seabird Island Indian Band, says that integrating into public schools was part of the government's assimilationist policy. He says that he and others spoke against the idea of integration of Seabird students when they met with DIA over the issue. They were told that the Band had no choice in the matter.

Tiny Pettis, who was involved in the Band's Education Committee at the time and is now an elder member of the later established School Board, says that the parents were concerned about whether their children would be treated fairly in the public schools.

The integration movement did not result in improving the educational achievement of Seabird students and the parents became concerned over the large numbers of their children being channelled into "special" and "remedial" classes. Tiny Pettis, as a member of the Education Committee, remembers having meetings with public school personnel regarding the problems the Seabird children were having in the public schools. She says the Committee confronted the school staffs and principals about double standards in education, one for the rich and one for the poor. She says that the school staffs denied that it was so. She stated that once students were placed in special classes, they were called "dummies" by other students and they "just didn't care anymore." Tiny Pettis fought against having two of her own children placed in "modified" classes rather than in academic classes. She argued with teachers, stating that if her children could get the proper tutoring, they would be able to upgrade their marks to meet the requirements of the academic class. She found a tutor for one of her sons. The tutor worked with him every night of the week for ten weeks. The success of the tutoring resulted in eventually having her son placed in the academic class. She says about the children, "If you're not going to fight

for them, they don't care." Tiny Pettis, has been involved in education at Seabird for over thirty years.

Carole McIntyre, Tiny Pettis' daughter, remembers the meetings with counsellors, teachers and principals. She says, "We used to give them a hard time. More arguing than talking took place." The Education Committee felt frustrated with how the public schools were handling the problems experienced by their children. The staff members from the different schools discontinued attending the Seabird Education Committee meetings and communication between the Seabird people and their children's educators disintegrated.

Berdie Peters, an elder who was involved with the Education Committee, and is now the school janitor and cook, feels that poor communication existed between the public schools and the Seabird Band. She says, "The teachers over there don't say anything that the kids aren't doing good until the end of the year. Then they say the kids might not pass." She says, "The kids stay for awhile, then they drop out. It's always been like that."

Archie Charles says Seabird members knew that the public schools were not working for their children. He says the Education committee monitored the students' achievement in the public schools and tried to work

toward solving some of the problems. But when the children continued to be placed into "special" classes, which labelled them as "dummies", they decided to take control of their education at Seabird. Archie Charles feels that the public schools wanted the Indian students for the tuition money they would be receiving for them, and that they feel the crunch when Indian students are taken out of the public schools. He feels the Seabird children are not able to receive the one-on-one attention they need because there are too many children in the public school classes.

In 1972, the theme of "Indian Control of Indian Education" was gaining national prominence. Continued frustration with the public education system led the Band to begin negotiations with DIA for the takeover of control of educating their children.

A survey was conducted by the Band in early 1978 to show formal support from the Seabird Island Band membership for the reopening of the former federal school under Band control. Band members were in favor. General Band meetings were held to discuss the takeover.

At initial meetings with DIA, the Band was told that they would have to wait until a later date because capital funding commitments had already been made with

the public school. Tiny Pettis says the Band challenged DIA and said that Seabird parents were prepared to pull their children out of the public schools if DIA did not allow them to proceed with the takeover plans. The Department did not deny the Seabird Band the right to control their education. There was a school building on the reserve that could be used, and DIA did not have to worry about duplicating building costs.

The Band controlled school was opened in September, 1978. The Band Council, the Education Committee, and the concerned Seabird parents were responsible for the new direction of providing an education for their children that would reflect their vision of an appropriate educational system.

It was the concern for the welfare of the children that motivated the Seabird Island Band members to embark on a venture in education, and it was the strength of their determination that set out to accomplish it. A school building, a student population, three teachers, and a desire to offer the children a better quality education than they were receiving, were the ingredients for creating the Seabird Island Community School.

The Seabird Island people have a history of initiating action, a leadership quality which can be

traced to the very early stages of the development of the Seabird Island community and can be linked to the success of the school as it has developed into its present state.

A chronology of actions initiated by the Seabird Band emphasizes the leadership quality of its membership.

- In 1914, action was initiated to retain the agricultural lands allotted to the several bands.
- In 1916, Seabird residents initiated action to establish a day school.
- In 1959, The Seabird Reserve attained Band status.
- In 1969, Band members opposed the integration of their children into public schools. During the integration period, Seabird members attempted to overcome problems that resulted from integration by meeting with public school staff.
- In 1978, Seabird Band members challenged DIA's decision not to allow them to take control of their school, and opened in September, 1978.

Local control of education at Seabird added to its history of exercising responsible leadership to solve its problems and build its future. All this was possible despite having to contend and negotiate with the huge bureaucracy (D.I.A.) which was established to administer for Indians almost every aspect of their lives.

FEATURES OF THE SEABIRD ISLAND COMMUNITY SCHOOL

This section examines the data collected from the Seabird Island Community School as it is related to Indian Control of Indian Education and to the four specific features identified in the "Introduction" of this paper as being important in the educational design of Band Schools. The features are:

1. Philosophy, Goals and Objectives.
2. Providing a context in which students can develop a strong sense of identity.
3. Choosing among many options and alternatives in curriculum planning and implementation.
4. Linking the community and school closer together.

Philosophy, Goals and Objectives

The Indian Control of Indian Education policy provides broad directions which Bands can use and adapt to design their own educational policies more suited to their specific situations.

The Seabird Island philosophy states:

We believe in the principle of Indian Control of Indian Education (S.I.S.B. Policy Manual).

Local control and parental responsibility are the fundamental concepts in the Indian control policy. The

policy basically states that Indian people want their children to have an education that will allow them to function effectively in both their own cultural setting and in the greater Canadian society. It states:

We believe in education
 ...as a preparation for total living
 ...as a means of free choice of where to live
 and work
 ...as a means of enabling us to participate
 fully in our own social, economical, political
 and educational advancement (N.I.B., 1972:3).

The Seabird Band provides guidelines and directions in its philosophy, goals and objectives for its educational programming which reflect the Band's desire to develop in students a strong cultural identity. The philosophy states, "We believe education should promote, perpetuate, and enhance our culture, our language, and our way of life." One of the goals is that, "Education should develop and strengthen our community and culture." The Seabird Island School Board's objectives state that it will

- 1) ensure that the Sto:lo history, culture and language are taught,
- 2) ensure that the highly honoured values of self-reliance, generosity, honesty, and respect are taught" (S.I.S.B. Policy Manual).

The emphasis of the policy statements is on reflecting the Sto:lo way of life in the Seabird school's

educational programming. With such specifically stated policies, the Band can provide the context within which to implement its objectives, and to develop program features which reflect the Seabird experience. The philosophy, goals and objectives suggest that community and parental involvement are necessary. The Seabird Island School Board Policy states,

The development of the individual child is seen as a partnership between home, school, and community. The Board will seek to ensure that communication between home and school is open, honest and positive, and that appropriate opportunities are provided for participation by parents and the whole community in the education process (S.I.S.B. Policy Manual).

The Seabird Island School Board's policy statements strongly emphasize culture and community as well as academic achievement.

Education is preparation for total living. It encompasses the physical, social, psychological, spiritual, and academic achievement of each person.

Education should provide the student with the knowledge and skills to live in a multicultural society.

Our education system should raise the academic achievement and increase the number of Indian high school graduates.

The School Board will ensure that our students have the opportunity to choose the best in a multicultural society.

The School Board will ensure that our students have mastered the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic (S.I.S.B. Policy Manual).

The Seabird Island School Board is continuing to develop and to refine its educational direction. The Board began to compile its policies into a School Board Policy Manual in 1981 and recognizes that developing policy is a dynamic process which requires that the policies change when the goals and aspirations of the community change.

Educational Context

The philosophy, goals and objectives developed by the Seabird Island School Board provide a basic framework for the second of the features considered important for Band schools in general, that of "providing a context in which students can develop a strong sense of identity."

Three main aspects of the context in which students can develop a strong sense of identity are important: first, the people who are in charge, who administer and who implement education at the Band school; second, the context of the school itself, and third, the community and its environment.

The school is the responsibility of the Seabird Island Band which, in turn has delegated this

responsibility to the School Board. The Board members provide advice, guidance, support, direction and leadership in matters of education based on their individual beliefs and on the needs of the Native community they represent (S.I.S.B. Policy Manual). The School Board is composed of five members appointed by the Band Council. Three members are from the Seabird Island Band; one from the neighboring Chawathil Band and one from the neighboring Peters Band as children from the Chawathil and Peters band attend the school. Enrolment of students at the Seabird school is a matter of parental choice.

The people. The Indian control policy emphasizes that Indian people are in the best position to determine the educational needs of their children. At Seabird Island the Sto:lo people are in charge of determining the educational needs of their children. Jeff McNeil, a community member who had been involved in the Band school teaching Salish Art and Culture states that, "in the public school, children are outside the process of education; at Seabird, they are inside." In the public school the cultural links between the designers of education and the educational process are weak. In the Band school they are strong.

Children who have been deprived of the opportunity to develop a strong cultural base through the transmission of their culture from the previous generation do not possess the same capacity to learn and adapt (Carnew, 1983:23).

The involvement of the many Native people, particularly Sto:lo people, who participate in the operation of the school throughout each day are the transmitters of the culture as are the School Board members who provide direction and who ensure that the culture is transmitted in an appropriate manner by the staff, both Native and non-Native. Native persons on staff at the Band school include two professional teachers, the Halq'meylem language teachers, teaching assistants, the Education Administrator, the janitor and secretary. Non-Native school staff include the principal, who teaches the grade 5-6 class; the nursery, the kindergarten, the grade 1 and the grade 2 teachers; the learning assistant teacher and the Halq'emeylem language consultant. The number of Native people on staff at the school is significant. The Native staff, are for the most part paraprofessionals and non-professionals. The non-Native staff are all professionally trained. The Native staff, it can be said, are the cultural experts, those most knowledgeable about Native, and more specifically, Sto:lo experiences. Their policy regarding staff selection is "to

ensure that the education staff are either Native or have the knowledge and appreciation for their way of life" (S.I.S.B. Policy Manual). In the regulations for personnel practices, it is stated:

- All applicants/staff must have a good knowledge of Native culture and Native communities.
- All applicants/staff should be enthusiastic about participating in extra-curricular or school sponsored and community activities.

The Native and non-Native staff must be sensitive to the dynamics of community norms and behavior. For instance, it is a practice at Seabird community functions where food is served, that the elders are served first and the children are served last. This practice reflects the community's traditional respect for elders and it also teaches children about patience. Children learn that it is important for the younger people to care for the older people, and when they themselves are older, they will be cared for by those younger.

It is also a cultural norm at Seabird that when a person from the community dies, the people are to abstain from intensive physical activity, such as sports and outdoor games. The norm is applied in the school, and all staff must abide by it even though it may sometimes be difficult with a group of energetic

young ones.

The school staff must also become familiar with the Halq'emeylem language. In addition to the regularly scheduled Halq'emeylem language instruction, the staff are required to learn Halq'emeylem and to integrate the language into their daily discourse with the children. The staff must be familiar with the Salish art form. It is taught in the school and is visible in the decor of the school. The school logo is derived from Salish art and was designed by a community member. Salish art decorates documents that are sent home, such as student reports, newsletters and all occasion cards. The ways in which the staff are able to integrate the Halq'emeylem language and Salish art in the school program are features that have evolved and improved over the years since the Band took control of its school. A community member was partly responsible for bringing the Salish art form into the school and with the assistance of the professional staff was able to use more professional teaching strategies to present his lessons. The Halq'emeylem language teacher and trainee also have the professional staff at their disposal for teaching ideas. The skills of the professional staff can be considered to be derived from the dominant western culture. The expertise of the

non-professional staff is from the Native, or Sto:lo culture. The creation of new possibilities seems to be resulting from the combination of the two cultural groups working together for a common purpose. Both groups are able to expand their own expertise and awareness in the experience of learning from one another.

The Seabird Island School Board has a policy to phase in Native teachers when they are available,

If a qualified Native teacher is available and has the best interest of our people, a well planned phasing in period will take place (S.I.S.B. Policy Manual).

Two teachers presently on staff at Seabird are of Sto:lo descent. A member of the Seabird Island reserve is undergoing training in the Native Indian Teacher Education Program (NITEP) at the University of British Columbia in order eventually to teach at the Seabird school.

Parents and other community members also participate in the educational process as visitors and as resource persons. The school has an open door policy which allows parents to enter the school to visit the teacher or to observe their children in the classroom. As resource persons, parents and other community members are actively involved in participating in the

educational process and are regarded as people who have valuable knowledge to share. At Seabird students are provided with a context in which they are able to develop a strong sense of identity through the people who are in charge of providing that context and who ensure that it is possible through the implementation of policies which were developed for that purpose.

The school. Jeff McNeil, the community member who is in teacher training, stated, "in a Band school, Native students are the majority, in public schools they are the minority. It is an advantage because they have more functional unity among themselves." McNeil says that there is a caring attitude of teachers toward the children, rather than teaching to the norm. Tiny Pettis, the elder who is a School Board member, says about the Band school, "children feel close together, feel more at home than in town." The school is part of the community and there seems to be a sense of community in the school, which reflects more of a family atmosphere rather than that of a formal institution. "Home", "caring", and "closeness" are words commonly associated with the concept of "family".

In 1982, the Seabird Island School Board started a five year plan for school operations, which included a

plan for the construction of a new school slated to begin in 1986. Archie Charles, the present chief is donating land that belonged to his father for the school site, thus giving the school historical meaning linked to the past of the Seabird people.

In relation to school facilities, the Indian Control policy states,

Where Indian communities wish to maintain educational services on their reserves, the reserve school facilities must be brought up to the same standards as those in the outside communities. To provide for all the improvements necessary, Band Councils must make long-term plans for building construction. If the Department of Indian Affairs cannot handle the financing under its usual annual budgeting scheme, other alternatives must be considered. One of these would be a basic change in the Department's long term building policy. Also, through the intermediary of the Department, other agencies could become the source of long-term funding for Indian building programs (N.I.B., 1972:21).

At Seabird there is consensus that there is a need for a new school building with a gymnasium. The school presently operates out of the old federal school building and two pre-fabricated buildings which house the grade 3-4 class, the grade 5-6 class and the learning assistance class. The offices of the Home-School Coordinator and the Education Administrator are located in the Band Office building. The Band Hall is the gym, and sports activities have to be adapted to the

dimensions of the Hall.

Although the Department of Indian Affairs adopted the Indian Control policy in 1973, an area of conflict between the Bands and the Department has been the Department's refusal to construct on-reserve school facilities in those places where it has been involved in joint federal-provincial school construction agreements (C.E.A., 1984:78). The Seabird Island Band took control of their education in 1978. It is because of the joint federal-provincial school construction agreement that there was a delay in the construction of a new school. However, the building of a new school is anticipated to replace the existing sub-standard facilities which are inadequate for providing educational programming necessary for an elementary-secondary school program, which is the goal of the Seabird Island Band.

Complete modern buildings, classrooms, equipment, gymnasiums and staff quarters are needed to implement the goals of

- providing adequate and appropriate educational opportunity, where skills to cope effectively with the challenge of modern life can be acquired.
- creating an environment where Indian identity and culture will flourish (N.I.B., 1972:22).

The important feature of having a proper school facility on the reserve is that it reinforces the sense that it is part of the community, which generates a strong sense of "being at home" and of identifying with the Seabird Island community.

The community and its environment. The cultural heritage and traditions of Indian people are strongly linked with their environment. In relation to traditional Native education, Kirkness states,

Learning was for living -- for survival. Boys and girls were taught at an early age to utilize and cope with their environment. Boys and girls learned how to hunt, fish, trap and farm. They learned whatever livelihood their particular environment offered (Kirkness, 1982:2).

As well, the Indian Control of Indian Education philosophy stresses the importance of learning the value of living in harmony with nature in the Indian tradition:

...As our fathers had a clear idea of what made a good man and a good life in their society, so we modern Indians, want our children to learn that happiness and satisfaction come from:

- pride in one's self,
- understanding one's fellowmen, and
- living in harmony with nature.

- living in harmony with nature will insure preservation of the balance between man and his environment which is necessary for the future of our planet, as well as for fostering the climate in which Indian wisdom has always

flourished (N.I.B., 1972:1).

The Seabird Island Band considers its reserve to be a sanctuary for the animals that inhabit it. Respect for the land and all the living things on the reserve is taught to the children at Seabird and is reinforced in the school. The principal, who teaches the grade 5-6 class, stated, "as a Native kid, you have to understand the environment." The reserve is a rich learning environment and the principal says that he draws upon the children's life experiences on the reserve. For instance, if a student has spotted a bear, the principal uses that experience as a catalyst to teach writing skills or to teach about animal life, drawing from the children what they observed and stimulating interest to find out more about the ecology of the reserve.

The Island's natural environment is rich with plant and animal life, both on the land and in the waterways. Ducks, geese and swans inhabit Seabird Island on a year-round basis. Bald and golden eagles are seen in the environs of Seabird, as are falcon species. Rabbits, skunks, beaver, coyotes, mink and raccoons are plentiful. Blackbears have been spotted on the Island. There have been

reports of a grizzly roaming the Island. Infrequent attacks on cattle give credence to the presence of cougars. The high mountains surrounding the reserve are a natural habitat for these large mammals including deer, which have access to the Island by crossing the shallow waters of the slough.

The slough area was once a major spawning ground for Spring salmon in particular. Today, some Coho still spawn in the waterways -- but they are few. Cutthroat trout and other fish such as carp are found in the slough. On the east side of the Island, the migrating salmon stocks use the Fraser River on their way north. Sturgeon and steelhead trout are caught by local anglers.

The major tree stocks at Seabird Island are alder, birch and cottonwood. Hemlock, fir, maple, wild cherry and yellow cedar are also found. The trees, in particular, the cedar, are recognized for everything they traditionally provided to the Indian people -- canoes, utensils, clothing, baskets, nets, tools, rope and hunting weapons. The cedar is referred to as "Our Sacred Tree".

Many of the stories and legends which are taught in the school are based on the environment

and its plant and animal life. The Salish art form is derived from the natural environment.

Traditionally, Indians survived directly off the land and acquired everything they needed to live a good life from it. Indian people's aboriginal rights and land claims, an issue which has not yet been resolved, particularly in British Columbia, is related to Indian people's right to a land base and to determine its use.

In addition to being an ideal setting for learning about the Indian cultural heritage, the Seabird Island Band addresses itself to more modern applications of the use of the land and its resources. Contemporary uses of the reserve resources are reflected in modern enterprises, which provide a livelihood to some of the Seabird people. They are the Fish hatchery, the Wigand Farm, the Cattle ranch, the egg farm, the electrical company, the trucking company, the cafe/store, and the Truckers Inn.

In summary, the educational context related to identity shows that Seabird children have positive Indian role models through the Native teachers and paraprofessionals in the school. There is a sense of "being at home" by having the school on the

reserve, and a sense of "community", which is strengthened by the school. The Sto:lo culture and heritage are passed on from the previous generation. Indian identity is strongly related to the land, living in harmony with nature and with aboriginal rights to lands and its resources. A strong sense of identity is fostered through conscious effort by the school board to provide the leadership necessary to create the appropriate context. This is accomplished through the commitment of the staff to abide by the norms and respect the values of the community and by utilizing the community and its environment to increase the students' awareness of them.

Curriculum

The Indian control policy states the need to design curriculum according to Indian values,

Unless a child learns about the forces which shape him, the history of his people, their values and customs, their language, he will never really know himself or his potential as a human being. Indian culture and values have a unique place in the history of mankind. The Indian child who learns about his heritage will be proud of his race. The lessons he learns in school, his whole school experience, should reinforce and contribute to the image he has of himself as an Indian (N.I.B., 1972:9).

Students should have the ability to function effectively in and contribute to their own cultural group and the non-Native society. The policy further states:

A curriculum is not an archaic inert vehicle for transmitting knowledge. It is a precise instrument which can and should be shaped to exact specifications for a particular purpose. It can be changed and it can be improved. Using curriculum as a means to achieve their educational goals,, Indian parents want to develop a program which will maintain balance and relevancy between academic skills subjects and Indian cultural subjects (N.I.B., 1972:9).

The teaching of the Sto:lo language, history, and culture has been specifically identified as being important in the cultural area. The Halq'emeylem Language Program at Seabird is seen as the most outstanding feature of the school. The staff and community members are very proud of it.

Historically, religious denominations and federal and provincial civil servants designed curricula for their own purposes which reflected western culture, beliefs and norms. In the 1970s, Indian people began to have a voice in determining what curriculum was appropriate for their children. They began to have input in whichever system of education their children attended, but in varying degrees, the Band school offering the highest

degree of input by Indian people. Seabird Island Band places a strong emphasis on optimizing the learner's cultural capital -- the Sto:lo language, history and culture.

The Halq'meylem Language Program. The language spoken by the Sto:lo people is Halq'meylem. Sto:lo is one of the four major dialects of the Halq'emeylem language. "Halq'emeylem", translated into English means, "those who speak the same language." "Sto:lo" is the Halq'emeylem word for "river". There are very few fluent Halq'emeylem speakers left to carry on and to pass on the language. The Seabird Island Band is attempting to revive the language through the Band school. It has had considerable impact on the community. Every Seabird Island member contacted for this study expressed satisfaction with the language program.

Rather than feeling pessimistic about the fact that the language seems to be slipping away, one parent felt that teaching the Halq'emeylem language to the children in the school, could be a vehicle for motivating parents to learn the language. She stated, "Getting to the parents through their

children is the best way". The same parent also expressed her understanding of the beneficial outcomes of teaching the children the language. She said, "learning their Native language, they (Seabird children) are learning to feel good about being Native and about who they are." A similar thought is expressed in the Indian Control of Indian Education policy,

Language is the outward expression of an accumulation of learning and experience shared by a group of people over centuries of development. It is not simply a vocal symbol; it is a dynamic force which shapes the way a man looks at the world, his thinking about the world and his philosophy of life. Knowing his natural language helps a man to know himself; being proud of his language helps a man to be proud of himself (N.I.B., 1972:15).

The evolutionary development of the Halq'emeylem language was interrupted when the Sto:lo people began to adopt English as their functional language. The Indian control policy addresses this particular situation.

In places where it is not feasible to have full instruction in the native language, school authorities should provide that Indian children and others wishing it, will have formal instruction in the local native languages as part of the curriculum and with full academic credit (N.I.B., 1972:16).

The Halq'emeylem Language Program at the Seabird Island Community School is implemented from the Nursery level to grade six. Students receive formal instruction in the language on a daily basis, and Halq'emeylem classes are scheduled from fifteen minute periods in the primary grades to thirty minutes for the intermediate grades. The classes are scheduled during school hours in the regular classroom setting.

Edna Bobb, a Sto:lo elder, is the language teacher. She is a member of the Coqualeetza Elders' Group, which was formed through the Coqualeetza Education Training Centre in Sardis, B.C. This group of elders, who met weekly had expressed concern that their knowledge needed to be passed on to the younger generations so that it would not be forgotten. The elders' group subsequently became actively involved in the Coqualeetza Education Training centre's two major activities 1) The Halq'emeylem Language Project and 2) The Sto:lo Sitel Curriculum Development Project. It was the elders' idea to translate their knowledge into a form that could be passed on to future generations, and Coqualeetza acted on it. Elders have traditionally been acknowledged as the keepers of wisdom

and knowledge and are held in high esteem by the Sto:lo people.

A Halq'emeylem Language Trainee assists Edna Bobb with the instruction of the language. The trainee is a member of the Seabird Island Community. The trainee position initially advertised to members of the Seabird Island community contained the following criteria: a) to become fluent in Halq'emeylem and b) be willing to take training in language instruction. The trainee has the dual responsibility of having to learn the language and at the same time to learn the skills to teach the language. Neither the Halq'emeylem language teacher nor the trainee have professional teaching certificates from a university institution. They have, however, received training through the Coqualeetza Education Training Centre and through workshops and conferences related to teaching Native languages. Both participate in developing curriculum and materials for the Halq'emeylem language lessons.

The Coqualeetza Centre has developed a resource kit for teaching the Halq'emeylem language which includes materials for kindergarten to grade seven. Materials include lessons designed for each

grade, language cards, dictionary for a language master, an alphabet picture book and more. The Coqualeetza language materials are basically used as reference materials to develop lessons more suited to the Seabird Island language teacher's delivery of language instruction. Seabird is involved in producing high quality materials to be used in their language program.

In addition to the support of the Coqualeetza Education Training Centre and its developed resources, the language program is also supported by the staff; language materials are to be developed with the assistance of the teaching staff (Minutes, 1982). The principal's wife, who is a French language teacher was engaged at a very modest salary to help develop materials for the Halq'emeylem language program. She works closely with the teacher and trainee and shares teaching ideas as well as creating materials. Her position is as a consultant and her work is to compile, and develop written and pictorial visual aides for the Program (Minutes, 1982). The Board is pleased with her work.

A unique feature of the language program is that teaching staff are required to participate in

Halq'emeylem language instruction. This requirement necessitates that they learn the language. This requirement to involve school staff in language instruction was a Board decision and the staff are committed to implementing it.

The teachers are required to remain in their classrooms when the Halq'emeylem language instruction is presented to their students. While the children learn Halq'emeylem, the teachers learn Halq'emeylem. Throughout the rest of the school day, the teachers reinforce the use of the language by integrating it, where appropriate, when teaching other subjects. For instance, the children learn counting, animal names, weather, greetings and songs which the teachers can use in their regularly scheduled lessons. The Halq'emeylem greeting "Láw" which means "hello" and the Halq'emeylem words for "goodbye" are used, even when greeting visitors.

The language is reinforced by the teachers, not only in the classroom, but also on the playground. The bus driver reinforces the language when transporting the students to and from the school and on field trips. The Halq'emeylem language teacher and trainee assist the staff on field trips. In addition to the regular lessons, the use

of Halq'emeylem story books and games, and other materials, the grade 5-6 class uses the school's computers in reviewing Halq'emeylem vocabulary. The Halq'emeylem language program with its variety of methods for teaching it receives a positive response from students. One parent exclaimed when asked what she thought was unique about the Band school, "Wow! the kids are speaking our language!" Other comments from people were,

"The children are enthusiastic about learning the language."

"Daily use of the language encourages the children to use it more."

"Most kids like the language program. They pick it up easy, especially the younger ones. They like counting; it has rhythm."

The language teacher teaches Halq'emeylem songs and started a singing group. Paddle shirts and dresses, traditional style clothing, were made for the singing group. The group performs for community functions, such as Awards night, Sto:lo Day and other occasions. Children are able to show what they have learned in Halq'emeylem through the Clubs program. One of the Clubs that has been established involves visiting elders. The Education Administrator was responsible for this Club on

one occasion and brought a group of students to an elder's home to read Halq'emeylem stories. The elder was delighted to hear the children read in Halq'emeylem. The language is used everyday in the school and has some functional utility within the community. There is little indication that the language is being reinforced in the homes of the students. In many cases, the parents know very little, if any, of their Native language to be able to reinforce it at home. However, the children can bring their knowledge of the language home.

Parents are pleased to hear their children speaking their traditional language and give full support to the program.

The cultural interaction patterns at Seabird have been shown to readily lend themselves to the development of community activities that reinforce the use of the Halq'emeylem language at Seabird. Commitment, creativity and energy on the part of the school staff, the school board and the community members are the important factors which account for the continued improvement of the Halq'emeylem language program.

History and culture. The Seabird school uses the provincial core curriculum as a guide for teaching the knowledge and skills necessary for functioning in both the dominant society and in their community. Texts and materials recommended for teaching the knowledge and skills outlined in the provincial core curriculum are abundant and are easily accessible for purchasing. However, the available texts and materials have often been criticized for not representing the Indian point of view and for not reflecting Indian reality in terms of content and in terms of the teaching and learning processes. A common criticism put forward is that the available materials have been designed for use in the dominant middle-class context. It is for this reason that Indian people feel it is necessary to develop curriculum and materials which reflect Indian reality and to infuse these into the Band school educational design. Kirkness points out that the recent initiatives of aboriginal people have resulted in conservative change, that a much more radical approach to education is necessary to ensure the future of Indian people, and offers an alternate direction for the future.

We cannot continue to use or emulate the existing provincial system of education. To bring about radical change in Indian education, we must first disestablish many of our existing practices based on theories of the society that has dominated us for centuries. Then we must look within ourselves, within our communities, our nations, to determine what form our education must take. We must engage all our people in this process (1985:11).

She cautions us that centuries of outside influence are not easily displaced. Engaging Indian people in the process of education has been happening for over a decade and indications point to the benefits of such an endeavor. A survey conducted by Professor Art More of the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia revealed that "projects which are put together by Indians are more successful than those devised by non-Indians" (CEA, 1984:82).

Seabird Island falls somewhere between the radical change in education and the emulating of the dominant society's educational practices that Kirkness discusses. Implementing locally developed materials and using community resources are in-between factors that partly constitute the uniqueness of Seabird's education program.

Schools are agents for transmitting the values, beliefs and traditions of the people they

serve. Existing educational systems in Canada were designed to serve the dominant society's interests in preserving dominant society's beliefs, values and traditions. These systems of education often neglected and excluded minority groups' cultural capital. Band schools attempt to resolve the issue by drawing upon the cultural capital of Indian people to make education relevant to their reality.

Seabird Island draws, but not solely, upon educational resources produced by the Coqualeetza Education Training Centre for instructional materials related to Sto:lo history, language and culture. Coqualeetza is a Band controlled centre which serves twenty-four Indian Bands in the area which is called Upper Sto:lo. Seabird school uses the Sto:lo Sitel Curriculum which was developed by Coqualeetza. It was developed for use in both provincial and Band schools. The provincial social studies curriculum guidelines were followed for developing units for grades one through seven.

Each unit contains a comparison between traditional and contemporary lifestyles. A variety of multi-media teaching resources were developed for each unit. Units contain materials about Upper Sto:lo families, communities, interaction between

Sto:lo people and their environment, techniques of food acquisition and preparation, the relationship between Sto:lo people and federal/provincial governments, Upper Sto:lo art, music and games, and an overview of the major historical events experienced by Sto:lo people from pre-contact time to contemporary time (Archibald, 1984:20,21).

While the Sto:lo Sitel curriculum development project resulted in the creation of valuable educational teaching materials, which are being implemented in both provincial and Band schools in the Sto:lo area, it was also developed as a curriculum development model. The premise was that other Native studies projects could follow the curriculum design, using their own cultural content (Archibald, 1984:42). It is a curriculum model which involves active participation of Native elders and local community members as an important aspect of its development.

The Sto:lo Sitel provides a basic framework for learning Sto:lo history and culture (Archibald, 1984:43). Band members at Seabird Island feel that Sto:lo Sitel materials are not being put out fast enough, and that it reflects the Sto:lo area rather than focussing on one community such as

Seabird Island (Minutes, Nov. 1984).

To address the generality of the Sto:lo Site1 project to reflect the Seabird Island experience, the Seabird Island Band has been actively involved in researching and collecting materials which refer more specifically to the Seabird Island context. Seabird Island materials -- short stories, poems, games and kits--have been written and catalogued. Some photographs have been taken. Research on the history of Seabird Island is in process.

The teachers at Seabird are contributing to the creation of more Native content units which can fit into the overall curriculum. They divided into three groups, each taking the responsibility for researching and planning units in the following areas: 1) Salish legends for the primary grades, 2) Seabird Island history/stories and 3) Seabird Island community workers (Minutes, Sept. 1985).

The Seabird Island school optimizes the use of existing published materials which include Native content. One of their continuing programs is "to get more and more Native content, specifically Salish content into the curriculum." The school is continuing to increase the Native content materials in their library. Salish legends are being

examined for adapting them into illustrated "big books". New Halq'emeylem stories are being written and illustrated. Native content novels are being evaluated in order to choose novels for class reading and study.

In addition to the more formal collecting of Native content materials, Seabird teachers generate a supply of locally relevant material through the language experience approach in the primary level. At the intermediate level, Native content is incorporated through classroom discussion using various media, ie. newspapers, television (Minutes, Sept. 1984).

The teachers have an abundance of Native content materials to sort through for the purpose of incorporating them into their lessons. In addition to using the concrete written materials, pictures, photographs and artifacts, that the teachers have at their disposal, community resource persons are utilized for the knowledge and skills they have to share with the children in the Seabird school. Some examples of the involvement of community resource persons in the school are:

1. Archie Charles, the Chief, visited the grade 5-6 class to talk about the First Ministers Conference on Aboriginal

Rights.

2. A community member teaches leatherwork.
3. Salish weaving.
4. Community members are asked to get involved with clubs by identifying their skills and hobbies and forming clubs around them. There has been good community response in the clubs program.
5. An excellent presentation was given by a fisheries biologist to grades 1-4 and 5-6. Students were taken on field trips to a spawning channel.
6. Mrs. Pettis, a community elder, visits the school to talk about respect of oneself, others and school property.
7. David Campbell, a folk singer who is well known by Indian people was hired for two days to do music workshops with all the classes.
8. A community member spent a day teaching slahal (an Indian gambling game) to the students and also taught legends.
9. Two community members were enlisted to teach about canoe riding and safety.

Involving community members in the school did not happen spontaneously. It is a result of the conscious effort on the part of the School Board to keep the school staff focussed on the importance of

involving the community in the school. For instance, the Board recommended that the school staff make "extra attempts" to utilize Native resource persons and elders in the school (Minutes, Feb.1983). A list of community resource persons is kept up-dated and costs for honoraria and travel is considered as well as preparing the resource people for coming into the classroom (Minutes, Mar.1984).

Summary. The Sto:lo language, history and culture are integrated into the entire school program, rather than being offered as courses of study that are locked into specified units of time. The school is functioning as an agent for maintaining the cultural values, beliefs and norms of the Seabird community.

There is evidence which indicates that the Board provides strong leadership for the operation of the Seabird school, and that there is systematic communication among the School Board, the school staff and community. This has resulted in the growth of all involved, in being able to learn from one another, to work cooperatively and to keep in mind the vision of offering the children at the Seabird school an "education based on Indian values

adapted to modern living (N.I.B., 1972:3).

Although the provincial core curriculum is used to guide the teaching of the three r's, choosing among many options and alternatives for teaching them is a feature of the school which allows for a great deal of flexibility in using material and people resources which reflect what Seabird people feel is important for the children to learn.

The extent to which the Sto:lo way of life, particularly Seabird Island, is reflected in the school's program is sure to raise the children's consciousness of Indian reality. Using the cultural capital of the children is drawing from the children's strengths, from what they know, and is a pedagogical concept known to be effective for motivating learning.

Linking the Community and School

Strong communication among the school staff, the administration and the community has been referred to earlier as a force leading to the achievement of the educational goals of the Seabird Island Band.

Through effective communication between school and community, Bands are able to link them closer together.

Indian leaders are recognizing that changes can occur only if they (Indian people) have a more meaningful involvement in the total education process. Communication is the vital link. Parents - the Indian community as a whole, must be informed about the education process and the teachers - the school,, must be informed about the community. Communication is the key as it addresses the need to exchange information. From this exchange a systematic linking of the school with the community will result a transformation of education for Indians. The objective being to provide the kind of education that will enhance success for the majority of Indian students. For this to happen, the school must reflect its community, serve its community and have its community serve it (Kirkness, 1980:1).

It has already been shown that Seabird Island members are involved in, not just informed about, the educational process at the Band school. It has also been shown that there is a great deal of information exchange which has resulted in the transformation of education for the Seabird school children, ie. the Halq'emeylem Language Program. Examples have been given regarding the participation of parents and other community members as resource persons in the school. The discussion in the previous section focussed on communication

which related specifically to the school context, on how the information exchanged is utilized in the school.

The vital link - communication between home and school is reflected in the Seabird's statement of philosophy,

The development of the individual child is seen as a partnership between home, school and community. The Board will seek to ensure that communication between home and school is open, honest and positive, and that appropriate opportunities are provided for participation by parents and the whole community in the education process (S.I.S.B. Policy Manual).

Links between the community and school are continuously maintained and strategies for maintaining the links are numerous and varied. For instance, minutes of the School Board meetings are mailed to the parents (Minutes, Sept. 1981). Thus, parents are informed about the decisions the School Board makes regarding the education of their children.

The area of discipline is a concern the School Board felt needed input from the community. A questionnaire on the topic was distributed to parents (Minutes, Oct. 1981). The Home-school coordinator reported:

Received excellent co-operation and response to the questionnaire. It gave me an opportunity to see some Seabird parents and to hear their concerns regarding the operation of our school. Results of these visits and the questionnaire lead to an easier job in defining school rules. Suggestions from parents were very helpful (Minutes, Nov. 1981).

A survey was conducted by the Education Administrator which indicated continued parental support for the Band school (Minutes, Jan. 1984). To ensure that parents understand the school's reporting system, Seabird teachers personally deliver the reports to the parents at their home at least twice during the school year. These visits provide an opportunity for the teachers to explain the students' progress to the parents, to tell them what the children are learning, to answer their questions and to raise concerns the teacher may have about a child. This communication strategy brings the school personnel into the homes of the students enabling them to relate to parents on an informal basis and to increase their awareness of the community and its environment.

The School Board philosophy reiterates the importance of community involvement in the school which illustrates why strong communication links between the community and school have to be

established,

We believe that the ultimate responsibility for education belongs to the parent, child and community. The school curriculum will therefore reflect those teachings and values as determined by them (S.I.S.B. Policy Manual).

A unique strategy used for linking the school and community which reflects the implementation of the above policy is through the Clubs program. Two Club options include 1)visiting elders, and 2) community awareness. The Education Administrator participates in the Clubs program related to the two options. These visits to the community elders and other members by students result in two important outcomes; 1) the children learn what the community has to offer, and 2) community members can witness the children learning. This Club option is particularly important, since the homes of the families are a great distance from one another and transportation is a problem for some children. Children might not otherwise have the opportunity to see and learn about the community.

The following example of a community awareness activity illustrates the type of learning that reflects the teachings and values determined by the community. On one outing, the Education

Administrator brought a group of students to visit an egg farm and then to visit an elder. Preceding the trip to the egg farm, the group stopped to pick some beets and corn from the Seabird Wigand farm to bring to the elder. At the egg farm, students asked the owner questions, such as, "How many dozen eggs do the hens lay each day?" "How many hens do you have?" "How much money do you make each day?" and many more. The students were very courteous and well-behaved.

The group brought the vegetables and a dozen eggs to the elder at her home. The elder lady was once a strong leader in the community, but now being blind and hard of hearing, required the care of a community member. The elder's daughter raised money from the community to hire a person to take care of her mother so that she could continue to live in her own home.

The Education Administrator led the students into a discussion with the elder by drawing their attention to some cedar baskets. The children asked the elder how the baskets were made and how the materials used were acquired. They also asked the elder if she knew their parents. Reciprocally, the elder asked the children what they were

learning in school and told them what it was like when she went to school. When it was time to go, everyone hugged the elder leaving her in tears. She had been so happy having the children in her home to talk with them.

The children, in addition to learning about the egg farm and about the cedar baskets, also learned the values of self-reliance - the egg farm is owned by a community member, respect for elders - caring for the elder by the younger generation, and sharing - the children brought vegetables from the farm to share with the elder. The questioning sessions demonstrated the children's responsibility for their own education. Teaching and learning, this way, is not confined to the parameters of the school and classroom, nor are teachers the sole source of legitimate knowledge.

The production of a school newsletter by the school staff is another strategy used to link the community and school. It is titled "Láw", which means "hello" in Halq'emeylem. Contributions from each staff member includes information about what students are learning, and includes student contributions of artwork, poems and prose. The newsletter also communicates about new developments at

the school, acknowledgements of community contributions to the school program, reports on community events, field trips, testing, and reminders to return library books. Staff members take turns coordinating the production of the the newsletter.

In one issue of Láw, the Seabird Island School Salish Art Club announced the selling of greeting cards which depicted the students' Salish designs. The particular series advertised was the "Salmon Series" and plans for the second series, the "Eagle Edition", was announced. The principal, who heads the Art Club, says the greeting card idea is a particular pride booster for the artists.

Parents of infants and toddlers have an opportunity to visit one another to share ideas and experiences about raising children in a program called "Shxwali te Mele". "Shxwali te Mele" is Halq'emeylem for "Parents and Tots". The program is offered two mornings per week. One morning is for sharing ideas and experiences. Guest speakers are invited for the second morning and involves the Seabird school teachers. Speakers give a 20 minute presentation dealing with what parents can do with children and why. For instance, parents are informed about the levels of physical and mental

development expected of children at certain ages. Children in the program have an opportunity to socialize with other children and to play with toys and puzzles and to look at picture books. Parents can sign out the materials and take them home.

One of the purposes of the program is so that parents and teachers can develop a social relationship on an informal basis. Having teachers participate in the Shxwali te Mele program in an informal manner makes parents and teachers comfortable with one another and takes the teachers off the pedestal.

The coordinator of Shxwali te Mele thought that transportation to the Program might be a problem which would require picking parents up, but stated that interest is so great that parents are finding their way to the Program on their own. Another plus for Shxwali te Mele is the participation of elders who bring their grandchildren and share their ideas and experiences with the younger mothers. Few fathers participate in the Program and the coordinator would like to generate ideas on how to involve more of them.

Other strategies, not less important than the ones mentioned, that link the community and school

closer together are through activities such as:

- Sto:lo Day, involving the Sto:lo community.
- Awards Day, at the end of the school year, each student is recognized for achievement.
- Field trips, ie. to visit the Museum of Anthropology, parents invited.
- Soccer tournament, involving several elementary schools, hosted by Seabird.
- Celebration of Independance of the Seabird Island Indian Band.
- Involvement of young adults in helping with school events from the Student Training and Education Program (STEP). The acronym means "a step in the right direction".

Activities of the school staff and community members indicate a reflection of the School Board philosophy which states that education should be a partnership between home, school and community. Infants, youth, parents and elders are involved in the process of education which shows evidence that life-long learning is an actuality at Seabird, and that the ultimate responsibility for education belongs to them. It is through effective communication between community and school that Indian people are able to develop and implement a suitable philosophy of education based on Indian values.

CONCLUSION

The Seabird Island School Board policy statements seem to reflect a dichotomy between goals of education that are culturally related and goals of education that are academically related. The two types of goals, however, are recognized as reflecting the kind of education the community wants for the children, cultural content and basic skills. By developing in students a strong cultural identity and stressing the importance of mastering the basic skills, it is hoped by the Band that their students will improve academically and that greater numbers of them will graduate from high school. The policy might be strengthened if the dichotomy between the cultural and academic goals was broken, and instead, an integration of the goals were reflected. There is a danger, although not necessarily evident at Seabird, that the Native language, history and culture might be taught as separate courses and not be considered as legitimate knowledge, or adequate for a "preparation for total living" or for living in "a multicultural society" if the dichotomy remains.

Dichotomizing the culture and academic skills is omitting the the fact that acquiring academic skills is a part of the culture. In the process of attempting to make schooling relevant to the philosophy and needs of Indian people, Band schools have incorporated Indian content into the curriculum, a curriculum often based on the provincial curriculum guidelines which were designed to serve the dominant society's interests. Rather than incorporating Indian content into schooling, Indian Bands should consider the concept of incorporating schooling into their culture. That is, instead of having to legitimize the inclusion of Indian culture, history and language in the education designs of Band schools, Indians should be legitimizing the inclusion of the concept of schooling into their cultural context.

The Seabird Island School Board's policy of "a well planned phasing in period" for hiring qualified Native teachers when they are available will be facilitated and accelerated as more and more professional Indian educators graduate from universities.

The importance of having Indian teachers in Band schools cannot be understated. Indian teachers are critical to achieving success in the education provided to Indian people. Kirkness states,

Throughout the literature we witness the concepts of Indian identity, traditions, psychology, culture, language, history as being important in the education of Indians. It is appropriate to suggest that Indian teachers would be most effective in transmitting these concepts. It is apparent that Indian teachers who are products of similar experiences and environments will relate with greater ease to Indian parents and students (Kirkness, 1984a:8,9).

In the same context; the Indian Control of Indian Education policy states,

Native teachers and counsellors who have an intimate understanding of Indian traditions, psychology, way of life and language, are best able to create the learning environment suited to the habits and interests of the Indian child (N.I.B., 1973:18).

Having a majority of professional Indian educators in Band schools should increase the effectiveness of transmitting the concepts of Indian traditions, psychology, way of life and language, which is essential if Indian philosophy and values are to be reflected in their educational programs.

Stated within the Seabird Band's education policy is its objective to ensure that the the Sto:lo people's language is taught. An excellent language program has evolved at the Seabird school under the Band's administration. The Halq'emeylem Language Program is to be commended for the impact it has had on the Seabird community. It has generated a sense of pride in being "Sto:lo". A great deal of energy is expended by the school staff and community to make the Program successful. However, the children are learning a language many of their parents do not speak. Children, in many cases, bring the language home to the parents. The Seabird Island Band is concerned that the parents do not speak their language and would like to establish ways to interest them in learning it.

A suggestion that might be useful for involving parents in learning Halq'emeylem is to schedule a series of Halq'emeylem Days at the school. Lessons, songs, games, and other activities could be arranged in which everyone could participate. Tapes of brief conversations conducted during each session could be made available to the parents to take home to practice. The school staff could display and demonstrate how tapes, books and videos

in Halq'emeylem can be used to learn the language. At community functions, parents and children could demonstrate their knowledge of Halq'emeylem with speeches, prayers and songs. As parents and children increase their knowledge of Halq'emeylem, a day could be scheduled as Halq'emeylem Day, when everyone in the community is to speak only Halq'emeylem. There are many possibilities for involving parents in learning Halq'emeylem which require time, energy and commitment from the entire community if they are to be successful.

The Seabird school is a fine example of implementing Indian Control of Indian Education, and is moving progressively toward achieving its goals. Responses to the staff questionnaire reveal the following perceptions which indicate that the Seabird school is successful in its endeavor to provide their children with a meaningful education.

The most sufficient indicator is that the kids like school. The attendance problems are few. The children receive a lot of praise, give praise themselves and get on very well. Overall, the children are very respectful. The children are enthusiastic about learning the language and are eager to participate in school events.

Because the classes are small, individual

attention is given. Students can accomplish a lot more and hence be proud of their accomplishments. There is community involvement. There is direct communication with the parents at least twice a year. Members of the community come to the school to volunteer their services when possible.

Children are very happy here - we have an atmosphere that the community is happy with.

A warm respect between students and staff. Gradual rise in attendance. Students gaining pride, patience, commitment to do well. Students becoming more independent.

I see much that is good at Seabird School - the deference and courtesy with which visitors are treated by students and staff alike; the warm, almost "family" feeling that the staff and students demonstrate for each other; the students' interest and developing pride in their language; the genuine concern of the staff that the School is meeting and continues to meet the needs of the community it serves; the overall feeling of truly caring about each child.

Students with positive self images. Teachers and support staff who are hard working/committed/ positive. Parents visiting/positive support.

There is a sense of pride in students in being Indian, a sense of self/past/community. There is also the feeling of "worth" in studying Native culture. Students comment about liking school and enjoying learning. In general, there is a relaxed respect between students and staff.

The people of the Seabird Island Band can take

pride in their achievements borne out of eight years of control. As evidenced in the paper, many positive results are occurring, and it is the writers opinion that this school could be considered a worthwhile model for Band schools to follow.

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