

PARENTAL & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FINAL REPORT

**Six Nations Life-long Learning
Task Force**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This final report includes all of the information provided in the initial report and provides input and further recommendations for consideration to the Six Nations Lifelong Learning Task Force (LLTF).

Our engagement with the LLTF, administrators, educators, parents and community members included;

- Phase 1: in-person interviews with administrators, and
- Phase 2: online feedback of the first report with educators and community members

Through the discussions with Six Nations educators and administrators over the past six months, many great best practices were uncovered, including;

- Decades long parent-led Home & School Committees
- Modern uses of technology for parent-teacher communication
- Engagement of local community members as guest educators and speakers specifically on culture and language

In addition, there were some challenges that were brought forward which limit the success of parent and community involvement, including;

- Parental abdication of their role in children's education
- Unclear of community capacity and potential for engagement beyond culture and language
- Teachers taking on roles of supporting students, parents and community members resulting in over-work

This final report provides the initial recommendations from our interviews with administrators in Six Nations schools and incorporates feedback provided on the initial report from educators and parents/community members.

Note that the feedback provided in this final report is a synopsis of all feedback in an aggregate. It is not intended to outline individual feedback provided during this engagement but to highlight common insights and themes. For detailed individual feedback please connect with the LLTF to provide these details.

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The initial report reviews the current state of both the local Six Nations schools' parental and community practices as well as global best practices that exist in education.

ENGAGEMENT

In our initial report, feedback was gathered by the following participants;

- Kathleen Manderville, Director of Federal Schools
- Candy Browatzke & Deneen Montour, JC Hill/Jamieson Elementary School
- Reva Bomberry, IL Thomas Elementary School
- Stacy Hill & Amy Bomberry, Everlasting Tree School
- Zandra Bear-Lowen, SNP STEAM
- Jeannie Martin, Grand Erie District School Board
- Karen Sandy, Six Nations Language Commission
- Nichole Martin, Six Nations Polytechnic

The following individuals were invited to participate however did not respond to the invitation;

- Robin Staats, Emily C General Elementary School
- Travis Anderson, Oliver M Smith Elementary School
- Jeremy Green & Linda Staats, Gawennio/Kaweniio Private School

Since the initial report, community members and Six Nations educators' input was sought through both a means of online participation (FocusGroupIt) and in person meetings/interviews.

The online focus group was completed by;

- 11 Educators
- 7 Parents/Community Members

An in-person, online feedback session was facilitated with members of the Everlasting Tree School team.

INITIAL REPORT

CURRENT STATE & ISSUES

Through the length of this full engagement with the educators and administrators at the Six Nations schools and education programs, there were a number of issues and promising practices that rose to the forefront. The following includes an overview of the themes of these discussions;

PARENT LEADERSHIP / HOME & SCHOOL

Most schools that participated in our interviews mentioned their core engagement with parents is through the school's home and school committee. Parental engagement through home and school committees was very active in most schools and has helped to develop a parental relationship with teachers, principals and school administrators.

Currently, home and school committees focus on adding to the learning journey of the students. Fundraising efforts are often in support of students to participate in extracurricular activities either to bring their classroom work to life or to add additional experiential education through activities.

One administrator in our interviews noted that there is confusion on the role of parents through the home and school committee. Thought to be a committee for parents to be engaged in the activities in the school and support activities through participation and fundraising, it was noted that home and school committees were also intended to act as advisory boards for school administrators.

The home and school committee is an untapped resource for parents to be engaged in the learning journey of students. This is the vehicle put in place for parents to exercise their voice in what is being taught in the school and where focus is being placed in learning.

This raises the question on governance. What type of governance model is currently being used in the education system? Are we using a colonial governance model to lead our education system?

PARENT-TEACHER PARTNERSHIP

Parents play a pivotal role in the education of their children. In fact, parents are a child's first teacher - the one who supports them in exploring the world and guides them in their initial learning journey.

In this vein, it is vital that there be a strong parent-teacher relationship and that they be viewed as partners in supporting a child's learning journey.

However, what we heard in the conversations with administrators is that some parents are not carrying out their responsibilities to provide support in the education of their children. The example that repeatedly came through in our discussions was that parents are saying that a child is the educator's responsibility when they're at school.

On the flip-side to this, parents are doing well when it comes to advocating for their children. There are instances when parents have approached administrators when a child is not being treated well by others at school or when an instance of bullying might be coming to life in a child's life - parents step up to the plate to support and protect their child in these instances.

It was noted by administrators that teachers are willing to and have been going above and beyond, even staying late to meet with parents or going to homes to ensure that key conversations are had or signatures are obtained.

We understand that all of us are working at maximum capacity. Most families have busy lives and some are single parent families. When the parents are not or unable to be present to do their part in their child's development of learning, the teachers are having to pick up and take full responsibility for the child's learning. This causes capacity issues for teachers and the risk of dwindling passion & drive for teachers increases and the risk of burn out increases.

In some instances, parents need more support to be able to know the expectations on them as parents in the child's learning journey. Some parents may not have the resources needed in order to effectively support that journey. These resources could include; knowledge, experience or time.

A few schools have been providing this additional support by offering opportunities for parents to gain more knowledge and experience. Schools indicated that they have offered sessions to parents in language, life and interpersonal skills, and child development to further help them to be able to understand their role and support their child's learning.

We need to keep in mind that our community is still working through our own path from under colonial rule. There are intergenerational and continued effects of colonization within us which make some of this movement challenging. We can see behaviours come to light due to this and know that as a part of the responsibility of both teachers and parents, focus on respecting one another and working the partnership in a non-confrontational way is needed.

Parts of our discussions with educators and amongst our consulting team was dedicated to getting back to our traditional Haudenosaunee ways - the natural law. In this way, parents, especially women, are the caretakers of our children. Clan families are responsible for the nurturing, learning and growth of a person, even beyond childhood. Therefore, when we talk about parental responsibilities in a child's education, we should really be embarking on a broader conversation on a family's responsibility as a part of the partnership to support a child's wellbeing; physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

The saying "it takes a village to raise a child" cannot be any more relevant or true here. Our children are our medicine and we need to work together to treat them and their development with the same respect.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

One avenue that some educators are using to support the parent-teacher partnership is technology.

In our discussions with Six Nations' school administrators, the use of technology was one component on how they continue to engage parents in their child's learning journey. Gone are the days of notes lost in the bottom

of gym bags when teachers use these online systems and apps to connect with parents.

This best practice is a great way to ensure that parents know what is going on in the school and to connect in as well with the teacher if there are any questions regarding their child. It also allows the communication to flow asynchronously at the time when either teacher or parent(s) is/are available instead of needing to book time when all are available to discuss student issues.

The “Remind” app is one of these applications that are currently being used in schools and an application that could be invested in throughout all schools to support the parent-teacher relationship.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

Many of the participants in our discussions noted that community resources are used in all of the support that they offer to students in their schools. The community partnerships that are currently in place or being explored in different schools are; community agencies, community members, and corporate partnerships.

Community Agencies

Primarily, teachers used the services of social services organizations (Health Services, OT, Speech Therapy, etc.) but increasingly schools are beginning to reach out to community organizations and organizations in the broader community beyond social services to support student learning and engage in the student learning journey. An example of this is the PALS program, supported by the Six Nations Police Service.

Community Members

All of the examples that were given when we discussed community member partnerships with administrators focused on individual contributions to language and culture in schools. Most schools bring in local community members to support in language understanding or to share Haudenosaunee cultural practices, including history of lacrosse, maple syrup tapping, and treaties.

In the more senior levels of education, there has been some focus put on bringing in community members through speaker's series workshops to share their knowledge and experience in both traditional and mainstream ways.

Corporate Partnerships

In the higher levels of education, schools have been exploring the use of corporate partnerships to aid in the development of knowledge and skills of students. These corporate partnerships often have a value of helping to close gaps where there has been a historical under-representation of Indigenous people.

An example of the effective use of these kind of partnerships has been with Six Nations Polytechnic's STEAM program and their partnership with IBM. As technology is a space that has historically had under-representation of Indigenous people, STEAM and IBM partner together for students to learn more about the real world of technology and obtain an experience in working in the technology space through potential internships.

Giving Back to Community

Many of the discussions surrounding community engagement has been about how it was that community was utilized in the educational journey with limited discussion on how it is that the school engages in the community, until we talked with the higher education institutions.

Additional to external community partnerships, schools are also beginning to work together in partnerships to build learning for community, with community. Institutions like Polytech, OSTTC and GREAT have been forming alliances and pooling resources to look at the needs of the community beyond the typical education system to give to the community what the community needs to be successful.

CONNECTION TO CULTURAL PRACTICES

As community members, we know of the dark history and the historical impacts of colonization that were put on our people. This history makes its way into our education system and the way in which parents and community members will choose to engage in the system.

In one of our interviews, there was focus put on teachers wanting our children to know who they are and where they come from as a foundational element to make a difference for our children. The federal system was challenged due to the nature of the system being an extension of residential school, and the current investigation into Indian Day Schools - all extensions of colonial practices meant to educate in a non-Indigenous way and imposed on us as people perpetuating our loss of language, culture and identity.

But, all is not lost in our education system. Schools have been doing work that has inspired a whole new generation in the engagement of language and culture. In our primary levels of education, students are being introduced to language and cultural practices and through a life-long learning lens, these cultural practices and language are being taught in post-secondary (Six Nations Polytech) and community programs (Six Nations Language Commission). In spite of the colonial view of education, our language and culture thrives.

Additionally, at the elementary school level, schools have been hosting events to engage parents and communities in the school's activities through well attended cultural nights, cultural workshops for parents, families and community members, and language classes.

At IL Thomas, to support both the cultural angle and parental involvement and support, they have created an after-school language program for parents. This program is intended to support parents in understanding the material that their children are learning in the classroom so that they can better support the child at home with the language. The program also has benefits as the parents are learning the language in order to be able to support their child's learning. This is a classic best practice of parental engagement/involvement with a cultural lens applied.

A few of the schools noted their focus on bringing education back to a Haudenosaunee way of teaching and through this, engaging community members to be able to support.

Culture seems to be the place where our educational institutions have been successfully tackling community involvement and engagement by utilizing

the resources in the community to bring an inspired, hands on, holistic approach, to foster and connect to the land as the classroom.

As a conjunction to the work in culture, it could be said that these community engagements bring us back to a Haudenosaunee way of doing this by virtue of how they are being done. Focus on these extra-curricular learning events has been on bringing families and communities together. When cultural events are hosted, they are often hosted for extended families and/or the broader community. Often, meals are shared and the community spirit is brought back into the environment.

These cultural activities are multi-faceted supports for life-long learning at Six Nations. Rooted in Haudenosaunee community values of community, they hit all the best factors on parental engagement, community engagement, community partnerships, and learning for all ages. Utilizing the ways in which these activities are managed as the foundations for life-long learning at Six Nations would result in some positive movement.

TEACHER CAPACITY

There has been some great work that has been done in the space of parental involvement and community engagement with great ideas that could be leveraged across the full education system but one topic continued to come forward in all of our conversations - teacher capacity.

With so many activities needed to support students, there needs to be a central point that brings things together and currently, this is the teacher. From reading this report, you will see that there is currently a lot on a teacher's plate. Not only is the teacher responsible for the child while they are in school but are also concerned with supporting parents with their responsibilities in a child's learning journey and connecting with local community agencies and members to engage them in supporting a child's wellbeing and learning.

In instances when one of the spokes doesn't seem to work (i.e. parents dis-engaged in education, community not involved in education), it is a teacher's responsibility to close the gap. And, as we continue to work toward enhancing parental involvement and community engagement in education,

teachers carry most of the weight on their shoulders in ensuring that the activities are implemented and support is provided to those needing it.

It was stressed to us by many of the administrators that teachers are at the heart of anything that will be created in the life-long learning strategy. Any recommendation that comes from the Lifelong Learning Task Force (LLTF) will need to consider the responsibilities of the teacher and be careful to not continue to pile on additional responsibilities for teachers.

It would be worth exploring what additional resources could be supplied to the full system (for teachers, students, parents, and community members) to be able to remove some of the additional responsibilities in a teacher's life beyond their core job responsibilities of teaching.

LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Our engagements allowed us to explore learning throughout the life cycle; from introduction to education, to adult community programming. Through these various ways of working through education and learning, we did explore some alternatives to mainstream education, including the community-based programming for high school students and culturally-based education schools. These programs rely heavily on the community to bring them together with their knowledge and in support of the learner in exploring the world. No single teacher is able to know everything that a student is going to encounter so community engagement with our community members and the broad knowledge and experience they have is what will help our learners through their life-long learning journey.

Life-long learning is a key concept in our community and culture - that we constantly are learning things about ourselves and our environment throughout our whole lives. Our teachers are everyone, and everything and our classroom is both inside and outside.

It is interesting to note that as we discussed parental and community engagement with administrators, we observed that as one goes along the learning journey and explores education through a life-long learning lens, the less parental involvement/engagement happens and the more community involvement/engagement happens.

GLOBAL RESEARCH & PROMISING PRACTICES

In addition to the promising practices that were encountered locally, our consultants did research around the globe for other parental and community engagement practices that could be relevant to the Six Nations Lifelong Learning system. We intended to focus on Indigenous communities and best practices within these communities. Countries where we found promising practices include New Zealand, Australia and in other parts of Canada.

COMMUNITY MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

This program is a 1-year mentorship program. It provides an opportunity for students to experience various employment opportunities while also learning valuable and meaningful work ethics that will not only motivate the participants but will also help them develop interpersonal skills through meaningful relationship building and community connections.

In this program, community businesses are able to engage with youth (of all ages and levels of education) while training them for future employment. The student participants gain a sense of self awareness and community connection which will foster their personal growth and development as well as provide them with work experience.

The participants are selected and matched with a community mentor at the beginning of the academic year and set days for activities and field placement throughout. Together, the agency and the school work on applying for financial funding to provide summer employment opportunities to complete the learning experience.

SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAMS

This is an approach to learning that allows students to learn through active participation in projects and programs that meet the needs of the community. Generally, this would be working within the local social services sector and would be geared towards high school and post-secondary students.

This type of project is developed with the local School board to ensure that the program is following school board policies. It could be built into the dual

credit programs and School Within a College Program (SWAC). Currently the SWAC programs and dual credits are more focused on Skilled Trade development but further work can be developed towards ensuring that we are also looking at social services and human services skill development that will benefit the local Indigenous community.

These types of programs are great for community engagement and developing community capacity in social and human services. They also provide the student with a connectedness to their community that they may not ordinarily get. The students are able to discover their responsibility and develop a sense of pride and ownership towards the future of their own community.

COMMUNITY MURAL PROJECT

Art is a missing component in many curricula and yet can provide so many opportunities for critical thinking development and creativity development at any age.

These types of projects are popping up all over and are a great way to bring together many aspects of community. By using the power of art and creativity, the community agencies, schools and citizens come together to create a collaborative piece of art that will exist throughout time as a representation of the participants in that time and space.

This project is one that brings together many ages and community members and promotes engaging conversations, traditional storytelling and sharing of artistic and cultural knowledge. It can also be promoted to be inclusive of language learning and beneficial to community and family cohesion.

CULTURAL LEARNING SPACES AND INCLUSION

Perhaps one of the most popular trends in parental and community engagement is the use of cultural based space. At Unitec Institute of Technology Te Whare Wananga O Wairaka, in New Zealand, they have been very successful in incorporating the Maori culture and language into their every day practices at their campuses.

At their Mt Albert campus, they have built a Maia Centre and Marae on their campus. Marae is a very similar space to the Haudenosaunee Longhouse

and historically is used for traditional ceremony. The Maia Centre is their hub of Maori student services and the Marae is a regular gathering space for learning and events on campus. Perhaps the most unique practice of Unitec Institute of Technology is the inclusion of a traditional Welcoming ceremony for every new student at their institution regardless of cultural background. It is hosted at the Marae and is done solely in the Maori language and provides all new students as sense of safety and inclusion.

Having culturally specific spaces in the institution are key to ensuring that all students, including their families are welcomed and have a sense of community and belonging right from the start.

PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT CONTRACTS

One new trend in education to ensure parental involvement is Parental Engagement Contracts. These are being introduced at primarily private schools throughout the US, to set the expectations of parental participation in their child's education. This contract is inclusive of such things as participating in regularly scheduled meetings, open houses, homework support groups, school and class fundraising, and mentorship programs.

It is important to set the standard of expectations right away when the student enters the education system.

NETWORKING TECHNOLOGY

One way to achieve easy access for parental engagement is the use of technology. Today's family structures generally see many working parents with little time to commit to school activities to some extent.

One trend that is taking off in Early Years education is the use of a smart phone app that allows the parents to be connected to both the student and the early years centre's activities. ECE teachers are using this app to provide daily updates, photos and learning plans. It is an easy and modern method of connectivity to keep parental engagement high.

One example of this technology is the HiMama software technology.

FAMILY LANGUAGE AND CULTURE CLASSES

It is imperative that as a community we connect our youth with our languages and culture. One way to achieve this by engaging our elders in the community who are our knowledge carriers and language speakers.

Schools of all levels have been hosting Language and Culture classes that are led by a community elder to introduce these principles to our families. A very simple and connected way to build capacity and connectivity among our generations and also to create a space for families and communities to work together in a safe space of learning and engagement.

OPEN HOUSES

To move beyond just traditional institutional Parent/Teacher nights, schools are creating more opportunities for families and community members to become involved in the school environment by creating a space of engagement on a regular basis through open houses. These open houses can be homework nights, craft nights, movie nights etc. where parents can come in and interact with educators and build a sense of community within the schools. This is also an activity that can be created in all levels of education, whether it is elementary or secondary schools that engage the parents or it is higher education that engages the children, it helps build a respect for learning and the environments in which they exist.

OUTDOOR LEARNING SPACES

Learning from the land is a key principle of traditional styles of learning and by encouraging more outdoor learning activities and events, we can begin to reintroduce the value of learning existing in all things. It is also an engagement strategy that engages our elders and knowledge keepers in the community to share traditional teachings of medicines, survival skills and connection to land and space.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IDEAS

Based on the current practices and promising practices around the globe, the following are the recommendations for which feedback was sought from educators and parents/community members.

In this section, we provide:

- the recommendation as outlined in the initial report and indicate any revisions resulting from feedback,
- a synopsis of the feedback provided for each recommendation during the second round of community engagement activities, and
- our evaluation of whether the recommendation has merit to include as a recommendation for a lifelong learning education system, more research or input is required, or should not be pursued further.

FROM PARENT TO FAMILY

Based on the discussions that we had with administrators, the first suggestion that we have is to open up our purview when we think about parental engagement. Often parents do not act alone and applying a Haudenosaunee community lens, the broader family plays an integral role in supporting both a child and a parent in a child's learning.

As we explore ways of working in a life-long learning system, instead of thinking about how we engage parents solely, consider engaging families. This could include bringing siblings, aunts/uncles and grandparents into the engagement if they play a role in supporting a child or parent in the family.

Recommendation 1: expand the idea of parental engagement to family engagement.

FEEDBACK: There was support for this recommendation with messages surrounding a deeper connection to Haudenosaunee culture and values. There is a belief that increased support for students through the full family unit beyond the nuclear family could enhance student success. A concern was expressed surrounding privacy and confidentiality if the broader family

is not engaged in the right way, the choice to engage the broader family should still rest with the parents.

Merit of Recommendation: This recommendation has merit to be included.

PARENT/FAMILY-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP

It goes without saying that the relationship between families and teachers is an important one in the success of a child in the learning environment.

Further work should be done to enhance the family-teacher relationship with a focus on creating a successful partnership. In order for the parent/family-teacher partnership to truly work, parents and teachers need to support one another. There will need to be investment made in ensuring that the lines of communication are open between families and teachers and there is role-clarity on the responsibilities that each plays in the education of the student.

Our recommendation for improving these relationships is to co-develop a code of ethics with families and teachers. This code of ethics would outline the ways of partnering with one another and could be grounded in Haudenosaunee philosophy. It could outline core philosophies such as; respect being a key principle, centering engagements around the student, assuming positive intent, and honesty/transparency in interactions.

This code of ethics could be used in conjunction with any other agreements when clarifying the various roles in the student's learning journey.

Recommendation 2: co-develop a code of ethics with families and teachers

Feedback: Many parents do not know what role they could and should play in their child's academic success and within this recommendation we fail to mention the negative impact which some parent's may have dealt with in their own academic journeys. It was noted by some educators that they see a correlation with parental involvement and student success, where more parental involvement would have a positive impact on a student's self-esteem and engagement in education.

It was also indicated that some schools create a yearly parent handbook, however it is not created in a consultative way.

For this recommendation to work, all parties (teachers, parents/families, and administrators) need to work together in concert to build the code of ethics. It is also recommended to reverse the way of doing this, and to focus on a student's needs and together, each participant can agree to their role & responsibilities to satisfy those needs.

Merit of Recommendation: This recommendation has merit to be included.

PARENTAL/FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important for student success that parents and families are aware of their responsibilities as a life teacher and educator in their child's life. This role as a life teacher works in concert with teachers in the education system.

It is suggested that some type of formal agreement be implemented in the schools so that parents are aware of their role. We do not recommend a formal contract or something that a parent or family even needs to sign however documentation is encouraged and should be accessible for families to be aware of their responsibilities.

To support this with a cultural lens applied, it is recommended that a traditional elder or teacher be a part of this engagement to provide cultural background on the role of parents in a child's education. It is hopeful that this addition will speak to community members and increase the likelihood of taking their responsibilities seriously.

It is also recommended that this be repeated annually. As a child continues through the life-long learning journey, their role of the parent changes and the needs that a parent has in satisfying that role will change. This annual event would help educators to get an understanding of the changing needs and provide support or offer advice on where families can obtain the support.

Recommendation 4: some type of annual co-created formal agreement [but not a formal contract] be implemented in the schools so that parents are aware of their role.

Feedback: In general this recommendation was supported however, many caveats were given on how this should be successfully implemented. The idea that the agreement should be co-created was stressed by many of the respondents.

As was mentioned above, instead of this being an exercise in assigning roles & responsibilities, it could be an exercise in discussing a child/student's needs and agreeing on what roles each of the parties has in meeting those needs.

Merit of Recommendation: This recommendation has merit to be included, with a focus on co-creation and the needs of a child/student.

PARENTAL/FAMILY SUPPORTS

As we look to amp up the time, energy and commitment that families have to a child's learning, it is also obvious that with potentially limited capacity of knowledge, experience and time, parents need support to be successful in their roles as life teachers.

There will need to be a way for families to obtain the support they need to be successful in their roles as life teachers.

Some ways that could help in this regard could be;

- the implementation of open houses for students to obtain the support they need while parents also engage in learning,
- creation of family support groups to help families gain the knowledge or experience that is needed to support a student,
- the development of a central place for families to go to obtain the necessary support privately.

Recommendation 5: to [create] a way for families to obtain the support they need to be successful in their roles as life teachers.

Feedback: This recommendation got the most responses with many ideas on potential family supports and existing best practices. Responses range from requests for more one-on-one support for children/students, to enhanced after school programming that engages the full family (per recommendation 1) and not just the student or parents.

Aligned to recommendation 3, there was a disclosed need for support in adopting new technologies to communicate and be engaged in a student's academics and a funding mechanism to assist family members with obtaining the technological resources to support a more technologically engaged communication mechanism.

There was also a suggestion that investment should be made in alternate transportation for students attending off-reserve schools. This would relieve some of the parental/family burden of making travel arrangements for their students and enable students to be further engaged in school activities as they would not need to leave school immediately to catch a bus back home, therefore increasing their extra-curricular activities and enhancing their academic success.

Merit of Recommendation: More Research Required to evaluate the needs from families, capture solutions and calculate time/cost/scope of such a project. A slew of solutions (including one-on-one academic supports, technological connectivity, increased flexibility to support families in the evening, using online more in the classroom, and "bring a parent to school day") were captured in the feedback and could be a starting point for further refinement of this recommendation.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

It was clear from our engagement that rather than be feared, technology should be embraced for the advantages that it brings to building and maintaining a relationship between teachers and parents, especially in the era of technology that we are in.

Most parents at Six Nations have smartphones (iPhones, androids, etc) or tablets/computers and can access applications and the internet to support engagement with teachers.

It is a recommendation from our engagement that an investment be made in sourcing a system-wide application to be used with all schools in the life-long learning program with the necessary communication and training/support for teachers and parents to be able to use the system effectively.

Recommendation 3: an investment be made in sourcing a system-wide application to be used with all schools in the life-long learning program with the necessary communication and training/support for teachers and parents to be able to use the system effectively.

Feedback: This recommendation received a resounding positive response from all who commented. There was some concern on technological access for all Six Nations families as internet and access to computers is not fully available and another concern that face-to-face is still the preferred method of communication within the community.

It is 2020 and the world is embracing technology at faster rates. The community as a whole needs to invest in implementing technological solutions and considering internet access as a “basic right” in the community.

This recommendation has broader reach beyond the education system and so therefore needs to be assessed on the broader investment and impact that is necessary to roll out such a strategy.

Merit of Recommendation: More Research Required to evaluate the time/cost/scope and potential adoption of such a project.

COMMUNITY SKILLS MATRIX

The community engagement that was most prominently featured in our discussions were based in culture - bringing in cultural experts to support the learning for students.

Six Nations is one of the most populous and highly educated First Nations communities and therefore sits on a mountain of knowledge in our

community members. To help our students and to help our families in helping our students, this mountain of skills and knowledge can be utilized in the education of the students through guest speaking opportunities, workshops and direct family support.

To aid in the utilization of these community resources, it is suggested that a community skills matrix be developed to capture the knowledge, skills, and capabilities that exist in the community. This community skills matrix could then be used to identify community members willing and able to support students and/or families with their knowledge and provides an optimal way for community members to be engaged in the learning and development of others in the community.

Recommendation 6: a community skills matrix be developed to capture the knowledge, skills, and capabilities that exist in the community.

Feedback: This recommendation was supported fully by all participants. Some schools currently have resources dedicated to capturing this information for themselves but there is no all-community resource that exists for the full community. In addition, these resources are often only culturally based and do not engage the community as a whole. One educator suggested that a community matrix would not only help community members to be engaged in the schools, but also to help students to be engaged back in the community as well. With a skills matrix like this, we could capitalize on community members as role models, mentors, and guides for all students throughout their life-long learning journeys.

There was some concern on availability and suitability of knowledge to be shared and caution was given as to be culturally sensitive of which knowledge could/should be shared with whom.

Merit of Recommendation: This recommendation has merit to be included.

LIFE-LONG LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE

Our life-long learning system is split in a number of different ways; our federal school system, our private/independent school system, and even our

community-based programming system with no single place where these systems come together.

It is recommended that there be a Centre for Life-long Learning established where the above noted resources and recommendations are implemented. This centre would then become that hub where regardless of which education system your student is in, the support that they, and families, need can be provided.

We can see support groups, study groups, mentoring programs, and family learning sessions being programming that is offered in a central way and building upon our Haudenosaunee values of community.

Recommendation 7: [Establishment of] a Centre for Life-long Learning where the above noted resources and recommendations are implemented.

Feedback: This idea is not a novel idea. It has been suggested before and there are initial resource centres that exist in many of our schools. This idea would explore how access to these resources could be streamlined or centralized.

The positives given to this recommendation were the expansion of life-long learning initiatives and learning supports for all Six Nations members, centralization efficiency for academic resources, and a one-stop shop and house for learning at Six Nations.

There was some concern given for the size of a project like this and the feasibility of creating something that has been discussed many times but never implemented.

Merit of Recommendation: Clarity on the function and purpose of a centralized Lifelong learning resource center is required before further exploration and possibly development of this recommendation.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Within the feedback, there was serious concern of the waning parental involvement in a student's academic journey and a number of other

recommendations were provided to enable parental and community engagement in the education system. Below are a list of the additional recommendation from our educators and parents/community members;

- Seek a system that engages parents and community stakeholder in a grass-roots way
- Complete a household survey to increase engagement with more families at Six Nations
- Establish a community council which would support the development of new and innovative programs in the community (STEAM robotics,
- Consider a unified family of schools and pool resources within the smaller family of schools to maximize support and engagement.
- Educators at SNP STEAM find the school is disconnected from Six Nations, disabling some parents and families from creating a good bond with the school due to its location in Brantford. There is suggestion to bring SNP STEAM on reserve to better enable Six Nations band members to engage with school activities.
- Consider utilizing a professional learning community (PLC) model which centres around everyone's participation in the learning community and how learners, parents/community members, and educators work together to build a positive learning community.

CONCLUSION

It is recognized that Six Nations is beginning the journey on developing recommendations on life-long learning. When we apply a maturity model lens to Six Nations' work in life-long learning, we would place Six Nations in an intermediate category; some processes have been built to be effective in individual educational institutions but there has not been a successful cohesive effort for a common life-long learning language and educational processes that has helped the community as a whole.

With a focus on leveraging the successes happening in individual educational institutions and building a system where processes and programs work across institutions, a successful life-long learning system could be built.