

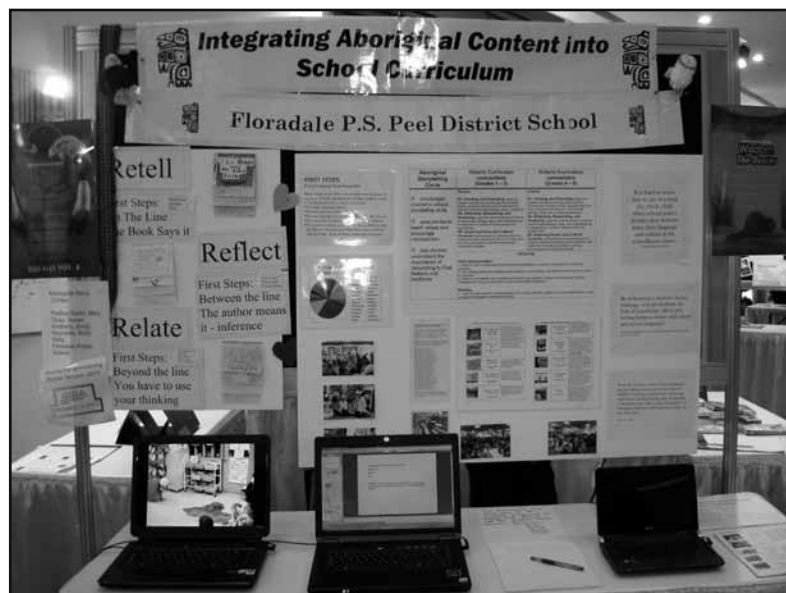
Parent and Students' Involvement in the School Curriculum

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Aboriginal oral storytelling tradition is preserved and enriched as our students tell their own stories in both English and their home languages. Jeanne Conte, Library Coordinator for our board, had this to contribute to the conversation after her visit to our monthly aboriginal storytelling performances by multilingual families of children in grade three: "I visited Floradale during one of their evening sessions. I was truly amazed to see parents and students working together on drama presentations portraying First Nation, Inuit, and Métis mythological and cultural stories that were translated into Punjabi, Tagalog, Gujarati, and many more languages. What a wonderful way to introduce Canada's immigrant community to the history of Canada's First Peoples. As I sat in the audience, I felt the barriers often associated with multicultural diversity melt away in the room. Way to go Floradale! Your work with students and the community illustrates well the principles of Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy by eliminating cultural barriers and promoting a sense of belonging which extends to, and honours, Canada's Inuit, First Nation, and Métis cultures."

The partnership with Susan Kimberly, the Readiness Centre teacher at Floradale, has also had a positive impact on the learning of our students. The students look forward to spending recesses presenting their dramas to the Centre's parents and their preschoolers. These student-produced stories are a natural extension of the many Aboriginal-themed stories and works of art shared at the Centre, and our students take great pride in the beautiful certificates recognizing their volunteer work.

In addition to the dramatic performances, our students created dual language reading responses to books with Aboriginal themes and they took pride in making these for authentic audiences. They also retold



these stories in both their home languages and English, as a class or with parents. These stories were recorded using Audacity and saved as mp3 files so they could be uploaded onto the school website to be shared with the community. You can hear some of these stories by going to: myclass.peelschools.org/ele/NA/19927/Default.aspx.

We are very proud of the progress we have made, and the "icing on the cake" was a written comment from George Beaver, an elder of the Six Nations Haundenosaunee. At the Super Conference 2011 poster session, he wrote: "I fully approve of what you are doing as far as telling our Native people's stories. It is a way to let non-Natives know we have ideas - such as the idea of the Earth as being our Mother. We also have ideas about conservation of the earth trees, rivers, lakes etc. Ona (goodbye)"

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