

Social Studies/Native Studies Survey Summary 2008

The following summary of the 2008 SS/NS Divisional Survey by the SS/NS Department is based on the statistical analysis completed by Adele Ledoux in September 2008. (32 out of 42 schools reported).

A. Organization

1. The vast majority of schools report that they follow the provincial guidelines concerning the teaching of SS in our schools from Gr. 1-12. According to the 2006 report, only 54% of the schools were following the provincial guidelines in Grades 9-12, but this percentage has now risen to 91%.

2./3. SS/NS is an agenda item 28% of the time at staff meetings and sectional meetings, which is an improvement over 2006, when it was at 23% and 14% respectively. As we have indicated in previous reports, SS/NS appears less of a priority at the classroom level, possibly due to the fact that there are no consultants or designated support staff in any of the division's five areas.

7. 8. 9. The administration of the school is placing less emphasis on SS/NS in its regular meetings with the library specialists (decline from 43% to 25%). About half the schools report that library specialists promote SS/NS themes in staff meetings, which is consistent with previous surveys. Library specialists appear to be giving greater attention to updating maps and atlases – up 12% from 2006 to 78%. SS/NS is of greater significance in meetings between the school committee and administration – up from 31% in 2006 to 66% in 2008.

12. Fewer schools, however, have designated someone to create lists of local resource people available to volunteer in the school – down 8% since 2006 to 41%. This may be because 69% (Resources, No. 6) of the schools report that they now have such lists, a rise of 26% since the last survey was conducted in 2006. There is also a corresponding increase in the use of community members (Classroom Activity, No. 3) in classroom instruction (84% as compared to 66% in 2006).

B. Resources

1. There has been a slight increase in the availability of SS/NS materials created by Frontier school Division in our schools (81% as compared to 80% previously). Since extra supplies are available at the Winnipeg Library, this can be remedied easily.

2. Fewer schools are allocating their budget to the purchase of SS/NS materials (91% as compared to 97% on the 2006 survey), but this is not a serious change.

5. 9. Fewer teachers are making use of Interlibrary Loan (56% as compared to 71% in 2006), and there has been a corresponding decline in the use of SS/NS resources from outside the school (from 71% in 2006 to 53% in 2008).

10. *North American Indigenous Games*, which promotes traditional games and activities is still being used in about a third of our divisional schools, although this is a decline from 37% in 2006 to 34% in 2008.

11. This is the first year that a question appeared on the survey about the SS/NS website. 31% reported that they were aware of the site and 18% were making use of its contents in lesson preparation. Since the site is new and there is much to be uploaded on it, we haven't publicized the site; therefore, the current statistics are encouraging.

C. Classroom Activity

2. 97% are reporting that SS/NS is a regular part of instruction. This is down slightly from the 100% reported on the previous survey.

3. Schools are increasingly involving the community in SS/NS classes (84% as compared to 66% in 2006, 58% in 2004 and 41% in 2002).

7. The increase in the visible celebration of heritage in the school is up again from 91% to 94%.

5. 59% of the schools now report that students are being taught to respect and care for heritage sites in the community (up slightly from 54% in 2006). 41%, as opposed to only 23% in 2006, of the schools report that they actually translate that respect and care into action within the community (See "Community Outreach", question 3).

9. In 2006, we included a question on the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in SS/NS activities. In 2008, schools reported increased use of ICT in all areas.

D. All-School Activity

1. There was a drop in the use of grandparents' days, traditional dinners, heritage presentations at the school level from 77% to 60% in the past two years.

2. Community History and Heritage was more visible in the school, up from 66% in 2006 to 78% in 2008.

4. There was a decline from 83% in 2006 to 72% in 2008 in the use of Frontier Games to highlight cultural awareness through square dancing, fiddling, etc.

5. "Heritage fairs" are still being held in only about a third of our schools (31%), up slightly over 2006, when 29% reported holding heritage fairs.

E. Professional Development

1. 72% of schools indicate that they encourage teachers to become involved in SS/NS workshops, which is about the same as in 2006 (71%).
2. The schools reported that 36 teachers were involved in such workshops, which were mostly done on their own at the local level.

F. Community Outreach

1. 2. There was an increase from 71% to 86% in the number of schools involved in community events having a heritage component, with 94% reporting involvement in Remembrance Day observances. However, the question was not clear enough to distinguish between school and community memorials.
3. It is encouraging that more schools (41%) see themselves as important players in the support of community initiatives related to heritage.
8. A new question appeared on this year's survey. It asked if administrators, teachers, and students are using a school-based website as a community outreach strategy. Only 13% are presently doing this, which means that there is more work to be done in this regard.

G. Conclusions

There is much that is encouraging in the survey results. When at one time there were schools that did not teach Social Studies at all, now the vast majority do so. Heritage and cultural awareness are being promoted in most schools, although there are some strategies that are under utilized. For instance, administrators need to do more to help library specialists fulfil their role in promoting books and other media sources related to History and culture, and especially to encourage them (and teachers) to make use of Inter-library loan where feasible. Administrators also need to ensure that teachers instruct students to respect and care for heritage sites, such as graveyards and public buildings/spaces, and to develop a close working relationship with the community, so that students can be actively involved in heritage matters. School-based websites offer another way of interacting with the community. However, all this said, there is much effective work being done by the schools to promote history and culture within the school and community. We have come a long way over the past twenty years.