

Inquiry question:

What is a band school and how do they operate?

Band school findings:

Through my research, I found out that a First Nations band school is typically a school that is on a reserve, which is controlled by First Nations as well they often don't operate within a school district system. Since they aren't operated within a school district system, it made me question who they are governed by. As I continued to do my research I learnt that instead of being directly governed by the BC Ministry of Education, a local School District, or the School Act, they are under the authority of the First Nation they serve, and every First Nation is controlled by a Chief and Council (Kavanagh, 2006). For example, a band school that is on a reserve in BC would be governed by their chief, unless they have chosen to register as an Independent School, in which case they must follow the Independent School Act.

Once I got a better understanding of what First Nation band schools were and how they operated, I decided to explore a bit around their teaching practices. Through this, I found that each band school is different depending on the First Nations. I found that these schools work closely with their community in order to promote connectedness between the school and community. Through this research, I also discovered that First Nation band schools are underfunded and often don't have the extra funding needed for special Ed or resources (Kavanagh, 2006). Although these schools focus on creating a school environment that is close to home, nurturing, caring, and reflective of First Nations students' culture, values, and traditions they are also mandated to empathize and promote academics (Kavanagh, 2006).

Informed teaching practices:

From doing this research I started to think about how this could inform my teaching practices. Show the importance of other cultures by incorporating their knowledge, languages, and traditions into classroom lessons. Some things that teachers can do are increase awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal peoples' cultures in the non-Aboriginal settings, build relationships - connect with students – show warmth, caring, sensitivity, humor, trust and high expectations for students, includes parents in the learnings of their children (Kavanagh, 2006). Whether I am working at a First Nation band school on a reserve or in the public school system with First Nation students, I believe that I can take some of these learnings into the schools that I work in.

Resources:

- <http://www.fnsa.ca/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Teaching-in-a-FN-School1.pdf>
- http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/2_-_fact_sheet_-_funding_first_nations_schools.pdf
- http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2013/aadnc-aandc/R5-11-2009-eng.pdf
- <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100033676/1100100033677>
<http://www.avenirfuture.com/pdf/First%20Draft%20of%20Summary%20Document%20for%20Cost%20Drivers.pdf>