

The background features a series of horizontal brushstrokes in various shades of blue and teal, creating a textured, artistic effect. The strokes are layered and have soft, feathered edges, set against a light, off-white background.

Working with Elders

Who is an Elder

- Elders are men or women in an Indigenous community who carries knowledge and the understanding of traditional ways of knowing,
- They carry knowledge pertaining to oral traditions and teaching that have been passed down over generations,
- Elders work to ensure the transfer of traditional Indigenous knowledge across generations,
- Elder's earn the title from working with another Elder to learn the ways of knowing,
- A community often looks to the Elder for guidance,
- Elders act as the bridge between the Indigenous community and schools.

The Services Elders offer in Sask Schools

As listed by Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division (SRPSD):

- Start special events through prayer,
- Describe, teach and or perform traditional ceremonies,
- Share traditional ways of knowing
- Share spiritual advice,
- Demonstrate traditional art and additional practices.

As listed by the Regina Catholic Schools Handbook:

- Aid students in developing a positive identity of Indigenous peoples,
- Providing students with social supports from a traditional perspective,
- Promoting cultural awareness in schools,
- Provide schools with Indigenous ways of knowing.



Prior to inviting an Elder

Submit a request form,

Determine what age group the Elder is comfortable teaching,

Consider what you would like the Elder to present,

Be specific on what guidance you as an educator is requesting, is it spiritual or traditional knowledge,

Reach out to community members to find an Elder with knowledge that would be appropriate for the classroom,

Tobacco must be offered to the Elder

Phrases to use when stating a request courtesy of Regina Catholic Schools:

“We would like to have a good meeting for the benefit of all school children”

“I would be honoured to benefit from your advice and guidance”

“We would be honoured if you would visit our classroom to share your knowledge on”

Protocol

Protocols vary from community to community. These include:

- **Honorarium/ Gift**
 - School gifts,
 - Travel expenses may vary from region to region ex. SRPSD honorariums are 75\$ for a half day and 150\$ for a full day.
- **Food**
 - The Elder is first to be served followed by students and so forth,
 - Inquire about dietary needs.
- **Broadcloth**
 - Also known as “print”,
 - Offered along with tobacco,
 - **Normally offered in a pipe or sweat lodge ceremony,**
 - Speak to the Elder prior to the event to ensure the broadcloth is correct.

Offering Tobacco

Tobacco is used in Indigenous culture in a variety of ways including the use as a sacred medicine,

Tobacco is a gift that represents understanding between both parties,

Tobacco is offered as a gift to ask for an Elder's assistance in a particular event or guidance,

If the tobacco is accepted the two parties can proceed and must follow through on the agreement,

Some Métis elders may not accept tobacco, always ask!



Additional Resources

- Elder Protocol and Guidelines (University of Alberta):

<https://www.ualberta.ca/provost/media-library/office-of-the-provost-and-vice-president/indigenous-files/elderprotocol.pdf>

- Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre (SICC):

<https://sicc.sk.ca/>

- Walking Together First Nations, Métis and Inuit Perspectives in Curriculum (Alberta website):

<https://www.learnalberta.ca/content/aswt/elders/#connections-elders-in-classroom-video>

- University of Regina Tobacco Protocol

<https://www.uregina.ca/indigenization/resources/tobacco.html>