



UAKN  
Urban Aboriginal  
Knowledge Network

RCdU  
Réseau de connaissances des  
Autochtones en milieu urbain

## RESEARCH PROJECT SUMMARY Prairie Research Centre

### **Name of Project:**

Exploring Culturally Responsive School Governance for Aboriginal Students Success in Saskatoon

### **Research Start-up Summary and Abstract:**

This research is intended to advance community-identified educational, organizational and governance needs and aspirations of the Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC). Saskatoon is currently home to the largest number of STC off- reserve members, including approximately 1,000 school age children who constitute the fastest -growing demographic within the city's schools. Despite some progress, these and other Aboriginal children still benefit the least from publicly funded education as provided by the city's two school divisions (Merasty et al, 2013). Given the close relationship between educational attainment and other measures of wellbeing, achieving more equitable educational outcomes for STC learners attending Saskatoon schools is currently one of the most compelling concerns of STC leadership and parents.

### **Engagement objectives:**

Emerging from the research literature it revealed that there are systemic changes within Saskatoon schools that are necessary to ensure that Aboriginal learners (including STC children) benefit equitably from K-12 education. Additionally these changes require the creation of innovative governance structures which will foster greater Aboriginal parental involvement in, and control over, their children's education in order to be effective. By consulting with STC urban band members and other stakeholders the research will explore educational governance structures within the city as they impact the educational experiences of members of STC First Nations.

The **goal** of our research is to identify mutually desirable, culturally-responsive innovations in educational governance and administration in Saskatoon. The study will be guided by the following research questions: **1.**What governance structures are currently in place at the school and divisional levels in Saskatoon? **2.** In your opinion how do these arrangements impact STC parental involvement and student achievement within Saskatoon schools? **3.** What legislation, policy, structures or mechanisms do you deem necessary and appropriate to operationalize STC educational jurisdiction in the Saskatoon context? **4** How might Indigenous consensual decision making processes and principles be synthesized with Western organizational theory to forge mutually desirable, culturally responsive innovations in educational governance and administration in Saskatoon? **5** How might these governance mechanisms be utilized to advance more equitable educational outcomes for STC and other Aboriginal students in Saskatoon schools?

**Name of Principal Investigator:**

Dr. Michael Cottrell, Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan

**Collaborating Friendship Centre and/or other urban Aboriginal organization:**

Saskatoon Tribal Council

**Main contact:**

Dr Michael Cottrell  
Department of Educational Administration  
University of Saskatchewan  
[Michael.cottrell@usask.ca](mailto:Michael.cottrell@usask.ca)