

Consortium Development and Private Sector Partnerships



Saskatchewan, Canada



Consortium

- Major Changes
 - Online Curriculum
 - Online Content Development
 - Online Teaching and Learning
 - Provincial Network



Consortium

- Critical Factor that required consideration of new management model:
 - Decision to fund these activities from monies provincially targeted for schools.
 - Prior to this time schools paid for resources and Internet access individually



Consortium

- This new approach to funding had major benefits:
 - More equitable access,
 - increased content and
 - engagement of teachers in development of resources and instruction.



Consortium

- Also had some inherent dangers:
 - Responsibility had shifted to province and schools became consumers
 - Danger of demands for more access and services without regard for overall needs
 - Rural schools still didn't have same level of service as urban and could complain
 - Urban schools could complain that funds were being diverted to support small rural schools



Consortium Development

- Saskatchewan has a long history of establishing Cooperatives and Consortia to develop organizations based on consensus building and shared responsibility.
- This new educational environment seemed suited to such an undertaking.



Consortium Development

- Process used:
 - 1999 and 2000 series of meeting with school divisions and stakeholder groups
 - Consensus achieved to establish consortium to guide development of resources, online instruction and support the provincial network



Consortium Structure

- Became a legal entity
- Department provides Director and administrative support
- Committees established made up of school division personnel:
 - Provincial Network
 - Content development
 - e-learning
 - e-business and administration



Consortium

- The committees perceive themselves as problem solvers and supporters and owners of the initiatives rather than consumers without input or control.
- This method of governance does however require a significant amount of time to arrive at sufficient agreement on decisions to proceed with implementation.



Consortium

- Additionally while the consortium is at arms length, the province continues to have a vested interest and is ultimately the funder of the activities.
- The activities of the consortium need to have alignment to provincial goals or at some point the disjoint between government and the consortium will have negative impacts on these important undertaking.



Private Sector Partnerships

- In 1995, the province first established a multimedia development fund
 - a vehicle for seeding private sector partnerships and supporting the development of the new media industry in Saskatchewan.
 - The development of educational resources, software and other products can be an important economic development tool.
- Private sector partnership continue to be important even after the move to server based resources.



Private Sector Partnerships

- Other partnerships have been established
 - Industry organizations partner to provide information regarding their industry
 - Industry needs specialized workers
 - Industry needs to be perceived to be supporting the community.
 - Partnerships can also promote the industry



Private Sector Partnerships

- Telco's and Cable Companies have partnered with schools to insure that the infrastructure is in place to use their services.