

## Parent Presentation

David Bouchard - *Order of Canada/Senior Editor for Rubicon and Pearson Publishers/Métis Author/Educator/Renowned conference speaker.*

~ Reading - The Ultimate Aboriginal Challenge

Among Métis author/speaker David Bouchard's recent keynotes are the IRA and the Circle of Light, Ontario's largest and most prestigious Aboriginal Conference. The author of *The Gift of Reading* and *For the Love of Reading* has become Canada's leading authority in aboriginal literacy.

Aboriginal people are the fastest growing segment of Canadian society and have the highest school dropout and suicide rate in North America. They are more "at risk" than any other group in Canada. The author of over fifty books, many in Native languages, was recently named to the Order of Canada. He was a teacher and school administrator for twenty seven years. David Bouchard has come to understand that the ultimate challenge for aboriginal people is to succeed in a system where reading is a pre-requisite. He understands the enormity of the problem and he believes he knows what has to be done.

Bouchard teaches that though all children are entitled to twelve years of education, aboriginal students are being denied that human right. They are being forced to write standardized tests they are unable to pass. They are systematically being forced out of school. Having authored two bestselling books on reading, Bouchard has come to understand that aboriginal students lack two of the three ingredients necessary in order to become readers. He understands the problem and he offers a solution.

"The Aboriginal Education Department for the Surrey School District has sponsored elementary and secondary schools to host Canadian Author and Conference Presenter David Bouchard. David is an inspiring speaker who engages the audience through his personal narrative and pride of his Aboriginal heritage. A quote from a student's journal sums up the message received from David's conference: "I like how David tried to get the audience to get hooked to reading. I started reading yesterday and it was true what he said. If you find a book you like, you will get hooked on reading."

I recommend elementary and secondary schools invite David to their schools and witness his powerful message on the importance of reading through his song, poetry and drumming. The students and staff will truly be inspired by his presentation."

With Respect,  
Gayle Bedard, District Principal,  
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