

FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

First Nations Control of First Nations Education (FNCNE) is a strategic policy framework by and for First Nations to assume their rightful responsibility to direct and make decisions regarding all matters related to First Nations' learning. First Nations peoples understand that learning is a formal and informal, instinctive, and experiential lifelong journey, encompassing early childhood learning, elementary and secondary school, post-secondary education (PSE), adult learning and career, vocational and technical training.

The primary role of holistically balanced First Nations learning systems is to transmit First Nations ancestral languages, traditions, cultures, economic frameworks and histories, while at the same time preparing and making accessible to the learner the support and tools that will allow them to achieve their full individual potential in any setting they choose. This process is essential to actualizing an individual's success in society and providing a strong foundation for empowering proud First Nations people who are fully able to contribute to the development of their families, clans, communities and nations.



1. languages, values, traditions and knowledge
2. Build and sustain First Nation capacity and institutional development so as to deliver a wide spectrum of quality programs and services across the learning continuum

3. Implement First Nations control of First Nations education

Each of the primary objectives is supported by strategic recommendations that are linked to clearly articulated outcomes and deliverables that can be realistically achieved through the full and complete implementation of the policy framework. The implementation of the FNCNE policy framework, however, is dependent upon the initiative of federal, provincial, territorial and First Nations governments to work cooperatively, collaboratively and in good faith to resolve the crisis of First Nations' education in Canada.

First Nations peoples are now calling on you, as a representative of the Canadian people, to support the realization of this fundamental goal.

What are First Nations requesting?

1. Broad political support for any forthcoming legislation or private member motions that support adequate resources and funding for First Nations education
2. Supports for First Nations languages that are comparable to those provided to French and other languages across Canada
3. Solid legislative and financial frameworks for post-secondary education, early childhood education, primary and secondary school, language immersion, school systems and mutual accountability
4. Broad political support and action towards the full implementation of First Nations control of First Nations education

Addressing The Education Crisis

September 2010

First Nations Youth Denied

Internationally Canada is seen as an example of freedom and tolerance, ensuring its citizens are treated with equality regardless of status.

in replacing this diminishing workforce, but only if they are provided with the necessary skills and education.

Education Gap

The Auditor General of Canada has found that a significant education gap exists between First Nations and the Canadian population as a whole and, rather than decreasing, the time estimated to close that gap continues to increase.

Educated and employed First Nations youth contribute to the economy, pay taxes and increase productivity.

Empowered with a strong educational foundation, First Nations will contribute greatly to and jointly share in the economic prosperity of this country. It all starts with a solid education – a simple solution indeed!

Research has shown that closing the education gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples would add \$71 billion to Canada's GDP by 2017.

Investing in First Nations education is an investment in Canada's Future

Inequitable Funding

The Federal government established and sustains a two-tier system of education funding that has arbitrarily established the value of educating First Nations youth as being 25-50% below that of other Canadian youth. This type of

In addition, Statistics Canada has predicted that Canada will face a labour shortage by 2017 as baby-boomers retire and there are fewer workers to replace them.

Fortunately, First Nation youth represent a competitive advantage for Canada

CALL TO ACTION ON EDUCATION - 2010

In order for the First Nations' education crisis to be effectively addressed, First Nations need:

1. Respect for First Nation treaty and Aboriginal rights and reconciliation with federal and provincial education acts
2. An education guarantee
3. Sustainable statutory funding arrangements
4. The establishment of First Nations education systems
5. Support for the development of a culture of learning with linkages to the public and private sectors



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Education not Incarceration

Simply put, investing in the education of First Nations youth makes sense. The expression 'open a school - close a jail' applies particularly to our population. First Nations youth are already hugely disproportionately represented in the prison population. Investments in education are critical to reversing this trend and will generate significant savings over the longer term.

The Supreme Court of Canada in R. v. Gladue [1999] stated that the over-representation of Aboriginal peoples at all levels of the criminal justice system was a "staggering injustice."

- The **incarceration rate** of Aboriginal people in Canada is 1,024 per 100,000 prisoners – almost 9 times the incarceration rate for non-Aboriginal people, which is 117 per 100,000 people.
- Contrary to myths of free education for First Nations in Canada, every year more than 3,000 qualified First Nations high school graduates are **denied access to post-secondary education** due to a lack of funding.
- In 2008-09, the Indian Affairs Post-Secondary Support Program provided approximately **\$13,273 in post-secondary funding per year**

First Nations Languages and Culture

In 1996, UNESCO stated that "Canada's Aboriginal languages are among the most endangered in the world."

Unfortunately, Canada continues to fail to take its responsibility seriously to do its utmost to preserve, promote and protect Indigenous languages. Currently, Canadian Heritage funding agreements dictate that First Nations focus on "recording" the deaths of our languages rather than supporting programs to preserve First Nations languages by increasing fluency in our schools and communities.

If this indefensible policy is allowed to continue, Aboriginal languages will no longer be "the most endangered in the world". They will be extinct!

per First Nations student – far lower than the actual annual costs for an undergraduate degree, which were approximately \$19,588 per year or \$80,498 for a four-year degree.

- On average the incarceration of an Aboriginal woman in a federal prison **costs between \$175,000 to over \$250,000 per year** for a segregated maximum security unit.
- The new crime bill will continue disproportionate incarceration of First Nations peoples and perpetuate the "**staggering injustice**" while failing to address root causes, such as a **lack of investment in First Nations education** by the federal government and a lack of supports to address the inter-generational effects of colonization, federal policies of assimilation and residential schools.

Members of Parliament and Senators have a fiduciary responsibility to exercise due diligence and explore cost benefit analyses before they spend taxpayer dollars. Investing in First Nations incarceration over education is of no benefit to First Nations or Canadian tax payers.

SUPPORT FROM REPORTS OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA

1986 Report of the Auditor General of Canada

The relevant sections of the Indian Act under which education to Indians is provided do not define education or provide any direction for its delivery. This means there is no firm basis on which a coherent and consistent policy on education can be formulated.... The Department of Indian Affairs should develop clear policies and procedures for transferring control of education to Indian organizations.

1988 Report of the Auditor General of Canada

In the absence of enabling legislation... [Indian Affairs] obligations are not defined and therefore it cannot be held accountable to Parliament

2000 Report of the Auditor General of Canada

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada cannot demonstrate that it meets its stated objective to assist First Nations students living on reserves in achieving their educational needs and aspirations.

2002 December Report of the Auditor General of Canada

First Nations reporting requirements established by federal government organizations are a significant burden.... We estimated that at least 168 reports are required annually by the four federal organizations that provided the most funding for major federal programs.... We found overlap and duplication among the required reports. With the exception of some financial reports, limited use is being made of the reports by the federal organizations sampled....

2004 November Report of the Auditor General of Canada

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, in consultation with First Nations, should immediately develop and implement a comprehensive strategy and action plan, with targets, to close the education gap. It should also report progress to Parliament and to First Nations on a timely basis.

First Nations Successes

Since 1972 many successes have been realized through First Nations advocacy, administration and political pressure, often independently without federal government support. These successes include the development and implementation of progressive First Nations pedagogies for use in First Nations primary and secondary schools, and the development of a limited number of locally controlled early childhood education and preschool programs that feed into the K-12 programs.

The majority of these schools provide local language and culture programs that encompass the First Nations' vision of lifelong learning and are holistic, high quality, linguistic and culturally-based, and have shown to result in demonstrable and dramatic improvements in First Nations education outcomes. These success rates have also led to many First Nations pedagogies being shared with provincial jurisdictions.

In addition to elementary school successes, First Nations have developed 45 locally controlled Indigenous Institutes of Higher Learning that provide a full range of programs from adult education to graduate degrees, with over 10,000 learners enrolled each year. First Nations have also developed high quality advanced certification processes for instructors, programs and facilities that are First Nations administered.

First Nations educational successes also include a growing number of highly educated First Nations people who have chosen to work in the education field as certified teaching personnel, counselors, education specialists, school administrators, education authorities, scholars, university professors, college presidents and deans.

All of these positive changes have been the result of the dedication and hard work of First Nations educators and leaders and the systems they have worked tirelessly to develop.

Other First Nations Successes

- 0 First Nations elementary and secondary schools in 1972 to over 500 schools in 2010
- First Nations schools educate over 71,000 students per year, or 60% of all First Nations students attending school nationally
- Approximately 33,000 First Nations students are currently enrolled in post-secondary institutions, compared to only 3 enrolled in the early 1960s
- Over 4,000 First Nations students graduate annually from post-secondary institutes
- Over 80% of First Nations youth value the ability to speak their language

It has been a long struggle to achieve this much... imagine what would be possible with Canada's collaboration and cooperation!

FIRST STEPS TO ADDRESSING THE EDUCATION CRISIS:

The following initiatives must be undertaken to address chronic education issues with First Nations schools and ensure that First Nations children and youth receive an equitable education opportunity and are fully engaged, proud and successful learners:

1. Invest in Schools

Many First Nations schools need to be replaced, renovated or built in order to address sub-standard, unhealthy and unsafe school environments and infrastructure, including:

- overcrowding, extreme mould, high carbon dioxide levels, sewage fumes, frozen pipes, unheated portables, too many portables, and a lack of gymnasiums, libraries, and computer labs

2. Establish an Education Guarantee

First Nations have been in a federally imposed recession for the last 3 decades due to a 2% cap on funding. This outdated and unjustifiable funding formula provides:

- \$0 for libraries
- \$0 for computers, software and teacher training
- \$0 for First Nations data management systems
- \$0 for 2nd & 3rd level services, including school boards, governance and education research
- \$0 for endangered languages in most provinces
- \$0 for principals, directors, pedagogical support, or the development of culturally-appropriate curricula

3. Ensure comparable and equitable resources for First Nations schools

- Provincial schools receive between 25-50% more funding in total per student than First Nations schools
- A First Nations child's education, in terms of tuition, is funded between \$2,000 to \$3,000 less on average than a non-First Nations child in a nearby provincial school
- First Nations Comprehensive Education Systems are not funded adequately as compared to Provincial Systems

If First Nations are to achieve graduation rates similar to Canadians, then First Nations schools must be provided the resources to provide a comparable education!