

FAIRNESS AND EQUITY

“First Nations children should have equitable access to a level and quality of services comparable with those provided to other children.”

- Auditor General of Canada (May 2008)



CALL TO ACTION ON EDUCATION

- ⇒ **Accountable Education Systems:** First Nations education must be supported by professional accountable institutions, like those provided by provincial school boards and commissions, that deliver 2nd and 3rd level supports, including First Nations language immersion and curriculum.
- ⇒ **First Nations education guarantee:** a secure fiscal framework is needed for funding First Nations education – something enjoyed by every other segment of Canadian society - including legislative frameworks based on real costs, indexation and appropriate treatment for northern and remote communities.
- ⇒ **Support and partnership:** linkages with business, NGOs, the public & private sector are needed to create safe, healthy and modern learning environments and to invest equally in First Nations schools and children.

For more information and to support equal education for All children in Canada please visit: www.afn.ca

Challenges & Opportunities

- ◆ A significant education gap exists between First Nations and the Canadian population:
 - In 2006, 5% of First Nations had a university degree compared to 19% of non-First Nations
 - 50% of First Nations over 25 living on-reserve have not completed high-school
- ◆ closing the education gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples would add \$71 billion to Canada's GDP by 2017.
- ◆ By 2017 Canada will face a labour shortage as baby-boomers retire - Statistics Canada
- ◆ Empowered with the necessary skills and education, First Nations can help to fill this labour gap as our population is increasing rapidly, with 50% being under the age of 25.

First Nations want to contribute to and jointly share in the economic prosperity of this country!

BUT, to achieve this goal...

Our children need safe and healthy schools to LEARN!

- ◆ In 2010, **48 new schools** are needed in First Nations communities nationally, and an additional **29 schools are in need of expansion and major renovations** - Indian Affairs Canada's Capital Infrastructure List
- ◆ Health concerns in First Nations schools include: Overcrowding, extreme mold, high carbon dioxide levels, sewage fumes in school, frozen pipes, unheated portables, students suffering from cold & frost bite, & schools being abandoned despite a lack of alternative infrastructure.



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Some children in Canada are receiving a lower standard of education than others. Why?



- ◆ This child's education tuition is funded between **\$2000 to \$3,000 less** than another child in a nearby provincial school.
- ◆ The Federal government provides this child's school with **\$0** in funding for computers, software and teacher training (yes zero this is not a typo).
- ◆ **88%** of children **do not have access** to early childhood programming in some parts of Canada.
- ◆ **3000** qualified high school graduates are **denied access** to a post-secondary education every year due to a lack of funding, contrary to funding myths.

This is the reality for far too many children across Canada!

WHY?

Every Child has the right to:

- ◆ an education (Art 28)
 - That will allow them to reach their fullest potential in a manner consistent with the development of respect for the child's parents, his/her own cultural identity, language and values (Art 29)
- ◆ assistance for disabled children to ensure a quality education, employment training, and opportunities conducive to achieving the fullest possible individual, cultural and spiritual development (Art 23)
- ◆ A higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity, which the State shall support by every appropriate means (Art 28)

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
(ratified by Canada in December 1991).

Issue: Inequitable Resources

- ◆ A provincial school receives 25%-50% more funding to educate a First Nations' (FN) student compared to a First Nations' school.
- ◆ FN funding has been capped at 2% annually since 1998; Whereas, provincial education funding increases by 6% - 7% on average
 - The untenable First Nations education funding formula does not account for: inflation, indexing, increasing education costs, or the demographic growth of FN.
- ◆ Unlike provincial schools, the federal government provides First Nations schools zero funding for:
 - ⇒ \$0 for libraries
 - ⇒ \$0 for computers, software and teacher training
 - ⇒ \$0 for extracurricular activities
 - ⇒ \$0 for First Nations data management systems
 - ⇒ \$0 for 2nd & 3rd level services (including core funding for special education, school boards, governance & education research)
 - ⇒ \$0 for endangered languages
 - ⇒ \$0 for principals, directors, pedagogical support, and the development of culturally appropriate curricula

First Nations Successes

Through advocacy, administration, political pressure, and autonomous entrepreneurial work First Nations have achieved the following successes in support of First Nations education:

- ◆ Ø First Nations elementary and secondary schools in 1972 to over **500** schools in 2010
- ◆ First Nations schools educate over 71,000 students per year, that amounts to 60% of all First Nations students attending school.
- ◆ Development of a limited number of early childhood education programs in First Nations communities
- ◆ Approximately 33,000 First Nations students enrolled in post-secondary institutions compared to 3 in the early 1960s.
- ◆ Over 4000 First Nations post-secondary graduates annually
- ◆ Over 80% of First Nations youth value the ability to speak their language
- ◆ Over 40 First Nations controlled post-secondary institutions across Canada, with over 10,000 students

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

Upon walking into the Minister of Indian Affairs' office, First Nations youth leader, Shannen Koostachin stated, "one day I dream that my brothers and sisters can go to a school as nice as this."

Sadly, Shannen died in a tragic car accident on May 31, 2010 before her dream could be realized for her community of Attawapiskat First Nation.

Comparing Apples to Oranges:

- ◆ The Federal government asserts that First Nations students receive about the same amount of funding per student (approx \$10,000 each in 2010) as non-First Nations students (approx \$10,262 each in 2006).

This statement is misleading because:
- ◆ It compares 2006 figures to 2010 figures without taking account of:
 - ⇒ inflation or indexing
 - ⇒ demographic growth
 - ⇒ Cost factors specific to First Nations schools and remote/northern locations
- ◆ This calculation includes First Nations students attending provincial and First Nations schools, BUT provincial schools receive between 25% to 50% more funding per student than First Nations schools

For more information on why the Federal governments information and funding figures are inaccurate please visit: www.afn.ca

Education Instead of Incarceration

The over-representation of Aboriginal peoples in the criminal justice system is a "staggering injustice"
- Supreme Court of Canada, *R v Gladue* [1999]

- ◆ The incarceration rate of Aboriginal people in Canada = 1024 per 100,000 prisoners;
 - the incarceration rate for non-Aboriginal people is 9x lower at 117 per 100,000
- ◆ Provincial/Territorial custody costs \$84,225 per year per inmate and Federal custody costs \$147,467 per year per inmate
- ◆ To incarceration a woman in a federal prison costs up to \$175,000 to \$250,000 per year
- ◆ **COMPARATIVELY it costs about \$80,498 for a 4-year post-secondary degree**
- ◆ The new crime bill will continue to 'warehouse' Aboriginal peoples and perpetuate "**staggering injustices**"

Parliamentarian must explore cost-benefit analyses before spending taxpayer dollars. Investing in incarceration over education doesn't benefit First Nations or taxpayers.