



First Nations Education Infrastructure Research Collection

This fact sheet provides an overview of the key findings from the *First Nations Education Infrastructure Capital and Operations and Maintenance Needs Assessment* and the *First Nations Education Transportation Assessment: 2026 Update*. These assessments provide a thorough and detailed analysis that makes the case for closing the gap in First Nations education infrastructure.

1 First Nations Education Infrastructure Capital Needs

- The *First Nations Education Infrastructure Capital and Operations and Maintenance Needs Assessment, 2026* identifies the capital needs for 395 First Nations schools and 1,222 teacherages across Canada over a 20-year planning period.
- The Assessment compares Canada's standards for First Nations schools with government-collected data, including nominal roll information, geographic location, grade ranges, general condition rating (GCR), operations and maintenance (O&M) ratings, and inspection dates.
- The report demonstrates that **\$19.03 billion** in capital funding will be needed over the next 20 years to bring existing First Nations schools and teacherages into alignment with Canada's standards, including:
 - **\$16.8 billion** in capital funding for schools.
 - **\$2.2 billion** in capital funding for teacherages.
- More than half of First Nations schools are considered inadequate by Canada's own standards; 227 First Nations schools are considered overcrowded, and 77 require immediate replacement.
 - This represents an increase since 2021, when 202 schools were considered overcrowded, and 56 required immediate replacement.
- Canada has not allocated any funding for First Nations education capital since 2024. The 2024 federal budget allocated \$545.1 million toward First Nations education capital, which provided funding for only 23 capital projects.

227
schools are
overcrowded



77 schools require
immediate
replacement

\$7.1B
over 5 years



Required Funding: Within the overall amount, First Nations will require \$7.1 billion in capital funding over the next five years to plan, construct, and/or expand schools and teacherages on reserve.



2 First Nations Education Infrastructure Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Needs



- The *First Nations Education Infrastructure O&M Needs Assessment* details the total annual O&M funding required for 395 First Nations schools and 1,222 teacherages across Canada over a 20-year planning period.
- The methodology includes unit costs for various O&M components, such as repair and maintenance, preventative maintenance, general facility maintenance, heating, electricity, and insurance.
- These unit costs were referenced against the school drawings and actual expenses of First Nations schools to develop an O&M cost estimate generator for First Nations education facilities.
- The report demonstrates that the current annual O&M requirement for First Nations schools across Canada is **\$550.2 million**. This includes:
 - An estimated **\$418.6 million** for schools
 - An estimated **\$131.7 million** for teacherages
- Inadequate O&M supports cause infrastructure assets to deteriorate more quickly, preventing them from reaching their maximum potential lifecycle. As a result, First Nations often incur capital costs more quickly.
- Inadequate maintenance can also create health and safety hazards, undermining First Nations' ability to provide safe and healthy school and teacherage environments for their staff and students.



\$550.2M
annually

Required Funding: Over the next five years, First Nations will require \$2.2 billion to operate and maintain existing schools and teacherages on reserve.



3 First Nations Education Transportation

- The AFN *First Nations Education Transportation Assessment: 2026 Update* outlines the costs of providing student transportation services, highlights key operational differences between First Nations and provincial school jurisdictions, and proposes a cost model tailored to the unique needs and circumstances of First Nations across Canada.
- Overall, First Nations encounter higher transportation costs than provincial jurisdictions due to low population density, long bus routes, small student populations, the geography of school jurisdictions, poor quality roads, and the size and scope of transportation operations.
- Because of poor road quality and lack of access to routine maintenance, First Nations school buses have only half the expected lifespan of buses in provincial jurisdictions.
- Introducing provincially comparable funding formulas has done little to address these gaps. For example, a **funding shortfall of 67%** remained for First Nations education transportation in Alberta after provincially comparable funding was introduced.
- Many First Nations rely on proposal-based programs to address funding gaps in education transportation. However, changes to Jordan's Principle in February 2025 have resulted in First Nations not receiving the funds they require to provide transportation for their students.
- The report includes a calculator that First Nations can use to estimate their own transportation costs based on their unique circumstances.



**\$110,000-
\$142,000**

per bus for First Nations with road access



**Up to
\$250,000**

per bus for First Nations without road access

Required Funding: In the next five years, First Nations will require \$1.52 billion to replace aging school buses.