

Assembly of First Nations

50 O'Connor Street, Suite 200
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L2
Telephone: (613) 241-6789 Fax: (613) 241-5808
www.afn.ca



Assemblée des Premières Nations

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Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L2
Téléphone: (613) 241-6789 Télécopieur: (613) 241-5808
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ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
September 3-4-5, 2025, Winnipeg, MB

Resolution no. 27/2025

TITLE: Support for a Revised First Nations Control of First Nations Education Policy

SUBJECT: Education

MOVED BY: Tyrone McNeil, Proxy, Sq'ewlets (Scowlitz) First Nation, BC

SECONDED BY: Chief Lisa Robinson, Wolf Lake First Nation, QC

DECISION Approved by the AFN Executive Committee by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A.** The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) states:
- i. Article 14(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
 - ii. Article 14(2): Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.
 - iii. Article 14(3): States shall, in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for Indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.
 - iv. Article 19: States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the Indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.
- B.** First Nations have Inherent and Treaty rights regarding education, and the Government of Canada must uphold and honour the inherent authority of First Nations to exercise control over their education.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

27 – 2025

Page 1 of 3

- C. Education is a fundamental human right. For First Nations, this right is uniquely situated within a framework of Inherent rights as Indigenous Peoples that are constitutionally protected under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.
- D. In 1972, First Nations in Canada endorsed the policy of *Indian Control of Indian Education* (ICIE), which advanced an education approach premised on parental and local control and was affirmed by the Minister of Indian Affairs in 1973.
- E. In July 2009, First Nations endorsed the development of an updated policy paper through Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Resolution 13/2009, *A Revised Indian Control of Indian Education Policy 2009*, reflecting First Nation control and jurisdiction of all aspects of lifelong learning, including language, culture and values.
- F. In December 2009, First Nations adopted, in principle, the new national First Nations education policy as *First Nations Control of First Nations Education* (FNCFNE), through AFN Resolution 37/2009, *First Nations Control of First Nations Education*, with the support of the Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE) and the National Indian Education Council (NIEC).
- G. In July 2010, First Nations endorsed and ratified the updated *First Nations Control of First Nations Education (2010)* through AFN Resolution 12/2010, *First Nations' Control of First Nations Education*, as a core policy position on First Nations education.
- H. The FNCFNE policy document is a key resource for holding Canada accountable to First Nations' educational priorities. Given the recent 2025 federal election and the appointment of a new Minister for Indigenous Services Canada, a revised version of FNCFNE will reflect First Nations' current circumstances and highlight First Nations' educational advancements, emphasizing the foundational principles of First Nations' rights to educational self-determination.
- I. Significant policy changes have changed the landscape of First Nations education in the last 15 years since the 2010 FNCFNE update. In accordance with AFN Resolution 65/2017, *New Interim Funding Approach for First Nations Education*, AFN Resolution 20/2021, *First Nations Control of Federal Funding* and, the *Policy Proposal: Transforming First Nations Elementary and Secondary Education, 2017*, the Government of Canada is required to work directly with First Nations to ensure that education funding approaches are agreed upon and reflect the diverse needs and circumstances of First Nations learners, schools, communities, and education organizations.
- J. The underlying principles outlined in ICIE remain as relevant today as they were affirmed 52 years ago. The updates to FNCFNE will be instrumental in reaffirming the principles of ICIE and FNCFNE and continuing to affirm that First Nations education remains an essential priority.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the First Nations-in-Assembly:

1. Support the ongoing development of a revised version of the 2010 *First Nations Control of First Nations Education* (FNCFNE) policy paper to reflect the significant advancements in First Nations educational self-determination since 2010. This revision should reaffirm the core principles of *Indian Control of Indian Education* (ICIE) policy and the Inherent and Treaty rights of First Nations to education.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

27 – 2025

Page 2 of 3

2. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Languages and Learning Sector to take direction from the Chiefs Committee on Education and the National Indian Education Council to revise the FNCFNE document in preparation for First Nations' consideration at the Annual General Assembly in July 2026. The revisions will include the following:
 - a. A description of policy changes and important strides in First Nations educational self-determination since 2010, including the *Policy Proposal: Transforming First Nations Elementary and Secondary Education, 2017* and transformative education agreements.
 - b. Stronger references to ICIE articulating chronic underfunding, sub-standard educational facilities, and the necessity of post-secondary education in the job market.
 - c. Updated statistics to replace outdated numerical figures and accurately reflect current circumstances, including updating the secondary education attainment rate.
 - d. Minor organizational and rhetorical changes to strengthen the overall messaging of the document.
 - e. Improved graphics for an updated appearance.
3. Affirm that this resolution is not meant to, and shall not, be interpreted to diminish, limit, impact or supersede the ability of a First Nation to exercise their inherent jurisdictions, to exercise and fulfill their rights and authorities under Treaties, regional models, or to engage in their unique relationship with Canada.

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27 – 2025
Page 3 of 3