

Issue Update

Education Infrastructure

History

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Resolution 34/2019, *First Nations Education Infrastructure Review*, supports the work of the Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE), National Indian Education Council (NIEC) and AFN to engage in a federal education infrastructure policy and program review. The review ensures improvements to education infrastructure with respect to First Nations Inherent and Treaty rights to education and advances First Nations control of First Nations education.

In 2022, AFN Resolution 46/2022, *Education Infrastructure Capital Reform*, was passed, which supports a new co-development process to improve how First Nations receive capital for education infrastructure. The Resolution indicates that the AFN, CCOE, and NIEC will lead a co-development process that creates new authorities and reform that ensure First Nations can include capital into their existing or new education agreements.

AFN's recent advocacy

On April 1, 2023, the newly co-developed School Space Accommodation Standards (SSAS) were implemented across Canada, which ensures all new First Nations school builds or renovations will result in First Nations students having the most space per student compared to the rest of Canada. The SSAS is the national standard that regulates education infrastructure development on-reserve and now includes several improvements since the last amendments made in 2021. These improvements include alleviating enrollment pressures by designing schools with the largest design horizon in Canada, reforming inclusive education space allocations, and ensuring First Nations adult learners are incorporated during the design phase. The implementation of these new standards completes a year-long co-development process with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).

Next Steps

With the most advanced school standards in Canada, the AFN is advocating for greater investments in education infrastructure to build these schools, including First Nations schools in the Yukon and Northwest Territories. With no new funding for First Nations schools in the 2023 federal budget, the gap in education infrastructure will continue to widen over the already estimated \$4.7 billion gap.

Since Resolution 46, 2022, passed, the AFN Languages and Learning Sector has been working to develop a reform plan that amends various authorities to include major education infrastructure capital into Regional Education Agreements. Official correspondence has been sent to Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Service Canada, seeking further co-development and formal commitments to proceed with these priorities.

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Issue Update

First Nations Languages Funding Model

History

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Resolutions 10/2021, *Support for the co-development of a distinctions-based Indigenous Languages Funding Model*, and 17/2022, *Support for the First Nations Languages Funding Model*, supports the Chiefs Committee on Languages (CCOL) AFN, and Technical Committee on Languages (TCOL) on the development and implementation of a First Nations Languages Funding Model.

AFN's recent advocacy

Over the past year, the AFN has been working with the TCOL, CCOL and the Department of Canadian Heritage (DCH) on the development and implementation of an interim First Nations Languages Funding Model, which includes revising the First Nations Regional Allocation Formula for Indigenous Languages Component (ILC) funding starting in 2023-24. The new allocation formula will ensure First Nations regions receive equitable funding of the existing financial commitments from the Government of Canada.

In support of the development and implementation of the First Nations Languages Funding Model, the AFN also completed *Revitalizing First Nations Languages: A Costing Analysis*. This report identifies the costs for First Nations language, reaching approximately \$2 billion annually for language initiatives outside of schools. The analysis was used to inform part of the AFN's 2023 pre-budget submission. While Budget 2023 did not provide any new funding for language revitalization, the AFN will continue to use these estimates in advocacy efforts for increased funding for languages.

Finally, on March 29, 2023, the CCOL recommended an interim Revised Regional Allocation Formula based on several factors, including the number of languages, population, language vitality, number of First Nations, and remoteness. This allocation formula addresses First Nations concerns regarding an equitable funding approach and will be brought forward through a new resolution for First Nations-in-Assembly to consider at the upcoming Annual General Assembly.

Next Steps

The Languages and Learning Sector will continue to support the implementation and strengthening of the Indigenous Languages Act (ILA), including through engagement in the upcoming Parliamentary Review of the Act. The Sector is also prioritizing enhanced budget advocacy, including new Pre-Budget Submission amendments for the 2024 federal budget to ensure annual funding to First Nations supports the full implementation of language revitalization.