



ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
July 9, 10, 11, 2024, Montreal, QC

Resolution no. 52/2024

TITLE:	National School Food Program
SUBJECT:	Education/Health
MOVED BY:	Chief Leroy Denny, Eskasoni First Nation, NS
SECONDED BY:	Chief Roderick Gould Jr., Abegweit First Nation, PE
DECISION	Carried 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.
- v. Article 23: Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

52 – 2024
Page 1 of 3

- B.** On April 16, 2024, the 2024 Federal Budget (Budget 2024) announced the creation of a national school food program which will provide \$1 billion over five years to Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to work with provinces, territories, and Indigenous partners to expand access to school food programs.
- C.** Budget 2024 further proposed to provide \$62.9 million over three years, starting in 2024-25, to renew and expand the Local Food Infrastructure Fund to support community organizations across Canada to invest in local food infrastructure, with priority to be given to Indigenous and Black communities.
- D.** The Government of Canada has a shameful past when it comes to providing school-based nutrition to First Nations students, including the implementation of Residential Schools which included food insecurity, malnutrition, and government-sanctioned nutritional experiments performed on an already malnourished population.
- E.** The history of colonization, residential schools, and the imposition of federal and provincial laws and policies have had devastating consequences on First Nations children and families, their languages, education, and social structures.
- F.** First Nations living on-reserve face the highest levels of food insecurity, along with several unique challenges such as poverty, community remoteness, high food costs, access to traditional and healthy foods, and household income.
- G.** In 2010, First Nations-in-Assembly endorsed the updated policy paper now known as First Nations Control of First Nations Education (FNCFNE), which reinforces the need for restoration of First Nations governance, cultural, linguistic, economic, and social traditions in education.
- H.** The National School Food Program must ensure that these calls are respected, and that First Nations jurisdiction and implementation of school food programming and harvesting is a pillar in the national framework.
- I.** School food programming and the development of an associated national framework with First Nations input will play a crucial role in the holistic development of First Nations children by addressing their nutritional needs and contributing to their educational success, long-term health, and cultural identity.
- J.** The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) *Closing the Infrastructure Gap by 2030* report estimates that the capital cost requirement to close the gap for First Nations schools is \$6.276 billion, which includes deficiencies and needs in school cafeteria and kitchens.

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

- 1.** Reaffirm First Nations Inherent and Treaty rights to education.
- 2.** Reaffirm that jurisdiction over First Nations education, including the National School Food Program, remains with each First Nation.
- 3.** Affirm that all First Nations schools should receive funding through the National School Food Program and investments should support both existing food programs and start-up costs for new programs.

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4. Support the rights holder, First Nations leadership, the Chiefs Committee on Education, the National Indian Education Council, and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Languages and Learning and Health Sectors to co-develop any national guidelines or authorities that support local and regional approaches in the National School Food Program.
5. Call on the Government of Canada to ensure all First Nations and First Nations education authorities are allocated funding directly and that they are not required to apply or seek funds from the National School Food Program through charitable organizations, external non-Indigenous organizations, or provincial and territorial governments.
6. Call on the Government of Canada to respect First Nations food sovereignty in the development of the National School Food Program, including the development and implementation of local and regional harvesting practices.
7. Call on the Government of Canada to ensure First Nations students receive at minimum, provincial/territorial comparable funding for their school food programs in addition to Budget 2024 investments.
8. Affirm that the National School Food Program and future co-development must not detract or hinder First Nations or regions from advancing their own school food programs or food sovereignty initiatives.

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52 – 2024
Page 3 of 3