What is the history of this issue and how does it impact First Nations?

#  K-12 Education

# The Languages and Learning Sector (the Sector) continues to make impactful strides toward First Nations control of First Nations education and K-12 Education Transformation supported by Assembly First Nations (AFN) Resolution 65/2017*, New Interim Funding Approach for First Nation Education*, and AFN Resolution 35/2019, *Additional Funding for First Nations Elementary and Secondary Education.* The goal of K-12 Education Transformation is to ensure opportunities are created for Treaty-based, regional, and/or local education partnerships to address the needs of students, schools, and First Nations through regional education approaches and funding models that provide more sufficient, predictable, and sustainable funding. This offers First Nations the opportunity to develop their own local, regional and/or Treaty based education agreements that identify the funding required to implement their vision of First Nations control over education.

# Post-Secondary Education & Adult Education

In 2018, First Nations highlighted the need for additional supports in First Nations post-secondary education, and adult education in the First Nations Post-Secondary Policy Proposal. AFN Resolution 48/2018, *First Nations Post-Secondary Education Policy Proposal*, called for immediate investments in the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP), Post-Secondary Partnerships Program (PSPP), First Nations PSE Engagement costs, and phased-in costs for First Nations transitional funding to support returning to school and learners requiring bridging or upgrading programming to access post-secondary education (PSE). Budget 2019 announced $7.5M over three years for First Nations to engage and develop their First Nations-led local, regional, and Treaty-based post-secondary education models. A new policy authority is required for First Nations to negotiate and conclude these models.

In December 2020, First Nations-in-Assembly ratified Resolution 21/2020, *First Nations-led Local, Regional and Treaty-based Post-Secondary Education Models,* which directs the Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE), National Indian Education Council (NIEC), and the AFN to collaborate with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to co-develop a Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Policy Proposal, which will supplement a Memorandum to Cabinet to obtain authority for Canada to negotiate with First Nations to conclude First Nations-led local, regional and Treaty-based PSE models.

**Education Infrastructure**

AFN Resolution 34/2019, *First Nations Education Infrastructure Review,* supports the work of the CCOE, NIEC and AFN to engage in a federal education infrastructure policy and program review. The review will seek improvements that respect the inherent and Treaty right to education and advance First Nations control of First Nations education and regulation of First Nations education.

How has the AFN’s recent advocacy affected this area?

# K-12 Education

The Sector continues to advocate for regionalization and decentralization of ISC programs to create opportunities for quality and culturally relevant education for First Nations children.

The Sector is also continuing their work on supporting First Nations negotiating their Regional Education Agreements (REA). There are currently seven REA’s that have been signed and concluded, three are near completion, and 46 REA’s are underway.

The Sector is working diligently to ensure reform to the ISC’s Supplementary Target Programs including the Education Partnership Program (EPP) and High-Cost Special Education Program (HCESP) are honouring the principles of First Nations control of First Nations education and maintaining alignment with K-12 Education Transformation.

The EPP is currently undergoing a review to ensure the program keeps pace with evolving education-related needs and priorities of First Nations. The review will also seek avenues to provide more stable and predictable funding and support successful service transfer of EPP through regionalization.

# Post-Secondary Education & Adult Education

# The AFN, NIEC, CCOE and ISC have held ongoing engagement sessions with First Nations to inform the co-development of the draft PSE Policy Proposal: First Nations-led, local, regional and/or Treaty-based Post-Secondary Education Models (PSE Policy Proposal). On September 28 and 29, 2021, the Sector hosted the AFN PSE Forum: First Nations-led Local, Regional and Treaty-Based Models. The event gathered experts in the field to review and discuss the co-developed draft PSE Policy Proposal for supporting First Nations PSE Models, and to receive an overview of the work underway on the First Nations Post-Secondary Institutions Costing Analysis. The event hosted discussions to seek feedback, comments, and questions from First Nations delegates to inform the drafting process and to ensure a strong First Nations voice within the document.

# Budget 2021 committed $350 million over five years, starting in 2021-22, to expand access to adult education by supporting First Nations students who wish to return to school and attain their secondary school diploma, or upgrade in preparation for post-secondary education. The PSE Policy Proposal will provide program authorities to distribute the funding to First Nations based on their preferred model.

# Education Infrastructure

# The Sector continues to reform education infrastructure and the deficiencies identified by the CCOE and the NIEC. The CCOE has successfully negotiated improvements to ISC’s *School Space Accommodation Standards* (SSAS), which increased First Nations school sizes beyond the national standard and added new school spaces for future builds including language and culture rooms, knowledge keeper offices, counselling spaces, and outdoor classrooms.

# In response to the new SSAS, the First Nations Education Capital Needs Assessment was updated. The capital needs for schools are $3.8 billion over five years and $11.1 billion over twenty years, and the capital needs for teacherages are $977 million over five years and 1.5 billion over twenty years.

Where do we hope to go in the future?

# K-12 Education

The Sector is dedicated to ensuring the 2021 federal investments of $1.2 billion for K-12 education will meet the needs of all First Nations education programs and uphold First Nations' control of First Nations education.

Throughout 2021-2022, the Sector will continue to collaborate with the NIEC, CCOE, and First Nations to ensure that ISC's Supplementary Targeted Programs are responsive to First Nations' needs and support First Nations control over education. This includes additional work on the High-Cost Special Education program to ensure additional investments and that gaps are closed while ensuring First Nations have appropriate resources to identify their special education needs.

The Sector will also advocate for increased investments and multi-year funding to secure sustainable and predictable EPP funding for education systems. Increased investments for EPP will enable education organizations to plan and implement long-term strategies and better meet the needs of First Nations in their regions. Along with obtaining additional funding, the Sector will continue to advocate for regionalization to support the successful service transfer of EPP to First Nations’ regional management.

# Post-Secondary Education & Adult Education

# First Nations-in-Assembly will be presented with the co-developed PSE Policy Proposal at the Special Chiefs Assembly in December 2021. The key decision items in the PSE Policy Proposal are to:

# approve the policy authority for ISCto negotiate, conclude and fully implement First Nations-led local, regional, and Treaty-based post-secondary education models;

# allocate investments for additional investments with gradual implementation for First Nations-led local, regional, and Treaty-based post-secondary education models;

# provide funding for ongoing technical tables to prepare communities and regions for the final negotiation and conclusion of the agreement;

# implement interim funding until First Nations-led local, regional, and Treaty-based post-secondary education models are negotiated, concluded, and implemented; and

# expand and co-develop the Post-Secondary Education Terms and Conditions including provisions for PSSSP and PSPP.

# If approved by First Nations-in-Assembly, the PSE Policy Proposal will be appended to a Memorandum to Cabinet and inform a Treasury Board submission, that is anticipated to be put forward for approval by Cabinet before April 2022. The Sector will work closely and diligently with ISC to ensure the Memorandum to Cabinet and Treasury Board submission reflects the perspectives, concerns, and priorities made by First Nations.

# The Sector will ensure that adult education is considered as authorities are created. Furthermore, the Sector will work to advocate for the ongoing needs in adult education, and work with First Nations to identify the funding needs.

# Education Infrastructure

To further address the deficiencies in funding for education infrastructure and support reform for education infrastructure investments, the Sector is committed to addressing the long-term changes to the SSAS, including increasing enrollment projections to ten years, improving special education space, and reviewing storage space.

A national assessment to identify the actual transportation costs in comparison to current education funding formulas is currently underway. This assessment will provide an examination of regional variations in transportation and provide a costing model through a report to support First Nations in their education formula negotiations. This report is expected to become available winter 2022.

Moreover, the School Priority Ranking Framework (SPRF), will be reviewed by the Sector and NIEC to ensure First Nations are involved in the priority ranking decisions and ensure a regional approach. This review of the SPRF will also ensure there is a transparent decision-making process that adheres to First Nations control of their education.