



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*, AFN Resolution 35/2019, *Additional Funding for First Nations Elementary and Secondary Education*, and AFN Resolution 20/2021, *First Nations Control of Federal Funding in 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 eight REA's that have been signed and concluded, two are near completion, and 70 REA's are underway.

The Sector is working diligently to reform ISC's Supplementary Target Programs including the Education Partnership Program (EPP) and High-Cost Special Education Program (HCESP) to ensure they are honouring the principles of First Nations control of First Nations education and maintaining alignment with K-12 Education Transformation. In December 2021, First Nations-in-Assembly approved AFN Resolution 20/2021, *First Nations Control of Federal Funding in Education*, which strengthened the mandate for the NIEC and the CCOE to lead the reform of supplementary and targeted education programs such as the HCSEP and the EPP.

Throughout 2021, ISC's EPP underwent a review to determine how the program can keep pace with evolving education-related needs and priorities through budget increases, to identify a predictable and sustainable mechanism for funding longstanding successful EPP partnerships and education systems, and to explore how ISC can support successful service transfer of EPP to First Nations' regional management through regionalization. The review's findings highlighted the longstanding funding-related challenges expressed by many First Nations that have signed education agreements, including REAs, and tripartite Memoranda of Understanding for the delivery of education programming and services. Additionally, the review indicated the need for multiyear, stable funding to support First Nations that have longstanding successful partnerships and education systems to carryout long-term planning, regional program administration, implementation of successful initiatives, and maintain and operate their organizations.



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In April 2022, ISC announced that an additional \$25 million has been identified for the 2022-2023 EPP budget, bringing the total budget to \$65 million. In response to the announcement, the NIEC continues to advocate for the CCOE recommended approach to regionalize funding.

Post-Secondary Education & Adult Education

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.

In 2021, the AFN, NIEC and ISC co-developed a Policy Proposal on First Nations-led Local, Regional and Treaty-based Post-Secondary Education Models to be appended to a Memorandum to Cabinet that seeks the policy authority for the Government of Canada and First Nations to negotiate and conclude First Nations PSE Models, to unlock the \$350 million announced in Budget 2021 for adult education, and calls for an immediate additional investment of \$9.34B over five years to support First Nations students, institutions, communities and models. The Policy Proposal was approved by First-Nations-in-Assembly at the Special Chiefs Assembly in December 2021 by way of AFN Resolution 21/2021, *2021 Policy Proposal on First Nations-led Post-Secondary Education Models*.

Furthermore, AFN Resolution 19/2021, *Funding for Post-Secondary Indigenous Institutes and Students* provides and strengthens the mandate for the AFN to call on the Government of Canada to honour its obligations to lifelong learning by providing First Nations post-secondary institutions sufficient core funding support (including funding for buildings and upkeep) and to increase funding available for First Nations post-secondary students.

Education Infrastructure

In February 2022, it was announced that the AFN and ISC co-developed a series of improvements to the government's School Space Accommodation Standards (SSAS), a document that regulates education infrastructure and space in First Nations communities. These new standards will significantly improve the quality and size of First Nations schools with spaces that meet the unique needs of students and families and are designed by First Nations. Notable changes include base school increases to ensure First Nations students have more space than the national average, dedicated space for language and cultural learning, outdoor classrooms, Knowledge Keeper rooms, and itinerant services such as counselling or special education support.



The AFN Languages and Learning Sector has also recently completed the First Nations Education Infrastructure Research Collection, which identifies First Nations school, teacherages and transportation funding needs across Canada. This First Nations led research and approach provides solutions and methodologies for community considerations, highlights the operational gaps, and serves as a reference for achieving equitability in First Nations education infrastructure.

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 by supporting the conclusion of Regional Education Agreements.

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.

Throughout 2022-2023, the Sector anticipates working with First Nations and ISC to determine a multiyear funding approach for First Nations organizations with longstanding successful partnerships and education systems accessing EPP that is more sustainable and predictable. Predictable funding will enable education organizations to plan and implement long-term strategies and better meet the needs of First Nations in their regions.

Post-Secondary Education & Adult Education

The 2021 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 spring 2022. If the Memorandum to Cabinet is approved, the policy authority will be in place to negotiate, conclude and implement local, regional or Treaty-based PSE models. Additionally, the 2021 PSE Policy Proposal calls for:

- An immediate investment of \$661.2M over five years, and \$241.1M annually ongoing to support the implementation of First Nations PSE models;
- An immediate investment of \$25M over five years, and \$4M annually ongoing for technical tables and other regional processes to prepare communities and regions for the



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- negotiation and conclusion of First Nations models;
- The investment of \$350M announced in Budget 2021 for First Nations post-secondary education to be unlocked;
- An immediate investment of \$8.68B over five years for the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) and the Post-Secondary Partnerships Program (PSPP), as well as an ongoing investment of \$1.89B annually ongoing thereafter; and
- An update of the PSE Terms and Conditions on a co-development basis.

The AFN will continue to advocate for increased funding for First Nations PSE models to ensure the funding available is adequate, predictable, sustainable and equitable and supports First Nations visions of PSE. The AFN will work with First Nations and ISC towards a supplementary budget ask for Summer 2022.

Education Infrastructure

To further address the deficiencies in space for education infrastructure, the AFN is committed to addressing the long-term changes to the SSAS, including increasing enrollment projections to ten years, improving inclusive education space, and reviewing storage space.

The AFN continues to work on the First Nations Education Infrastructure Investment Process Position Paper which seeks reform, transparency and more First Nations control in major capital decision making processes. It is anticipated that a Resolution will be drafted for consideration by First Nations-in-Assembly which will include supporting the ability to include major capital in transformative education agreements.

To provide further research and resources for First Nations, the Sector is anticipating the completion of a climate resiliency and sustainability terms of reference that will assist First Nations in building better schools by the end of 2022.