



BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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BCAFN 17th ANNUAL SPECIAL CHIEFS MEETING
March 3 & 4, 2021
Online via Zoom

Resolution 04/2021

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR FNEC TO DEVELOP A BC SPECIFIC MODEL FOR CAPITAL FUNDING
FOR FIRST NATION SCHOOLS AND TEACHERAGES

MOVED BY: KUKPI7 WAYNE CHRISTIAN, SPLATSIN

SECONDED BY: CHIEF BYRON LOUIS, OKANAGAN INDIAN BAND

DECISION: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

- A. In May 2019, the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNEC), the Government of BC, and the Government of Canada formally signed the BC Tripartite Education Agreement (BTEA), committing the parties to work together to make systemic shifts to support improved educational outcomes for First Nations students regardless of where they live or attend school, and to contribute to reconciliation in education for First Nations across BC.
- B. BTEA includes annual funding for school operations, including the provision of education, transportation, and routine operations and maintenance (O & M). However, it does not include funding for capital infrastructure projects such as new buildings and/or additions, major repairs and renovations, or teacherages.
- C. The quality of education facilities has important and direct impacts on students' education outcomes, yet First Nations' school facilities have consistently not been adequately funded. A number of studies show that the Government of Canada's approach to funding school infrastructure on-reserve is flawed and, as a result, First Nations in BC often are not able to

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undertake the necessary capital projects for their children, adult learners and communities. For example:

- i. The 2009 Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) study, *Funding Requirement for First Nations Schools in Canada*, which found that ISC's (then INAC) plans for capital expenditures were under-funded by about \$169 million using the PBO's best case scenario.
- ii. The 2013 Parliamentary Budget Office study, *First Nations School Infrastructure Funding Requirements: British Columbia*, which found that the base federal funding for First Nations school infrastructure in BC was \$26 million, but that approximately \$39 million would have been required to sustain the existing footprint of schools that year. The PBO further estimated that the funding requirement for BC First Nations schools could reach \$47 million by 2028-2029.
- iii. The recently concluded Assembly of First Nations (AFN) study, *First Nations Education Infrastructure Capital Needs Assessment Final Report*, which estimates the immediate capital requirements for First Nations schools in Canada to be approximately \$1.5 billion, growing to \$5.07 billion over the next 15 years. This estimate includes costs for additions, new construction, and planning and design costs (excluding the costs of teacherages).
- iv. A 2016 review by ISC, *School Space Accommodation Standards*, which found that First Nations schools offer less space per student than provincial schools.

D. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* states:

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.

(2) Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.

(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.

E. The 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission include:

Action 7: We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

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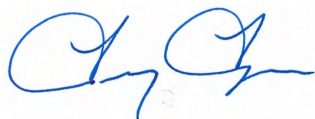
Action 8: We call upon the federal government to eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding for First Nations children being educated on reserves and those First Nations children being educated off reserves.

- F. BCTEA will expire on June 30, 2023. FNEC has consistently indicated the need to advance negotiations of a new capital funding model as part of BCTEA renewal. In preparation, FNEC is committed to exploring an approach that is data-informed and provincially comparable (among all provinces and territories), with specific adaptations to reflect First Nations' needs, and which will:
- a. provide a business case for a separate funding envelope for education capital (schools, seismic upgrades and teacherages) and O&M;
 - b. propose a new flexible funding model with adaptations informed by provincial and territorial models, recognizing the unique circumstances of First Nation schools (e.g. half of First Nations schools in BC have fewer than 50 students); and
 - c. propose funding levels for all aspects of the model and adaptations, including the cost of bringing current facilities up to the new standard and the costs of serving currently under-served communities.
- G. To guide this work, FNEC is working with the First Nations Schools Association and has also established an Advisory Committee that includes First Nation representatives and individuals with specific expertise in school capital issues.
- H. FNEC is seeking access to relevant data from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to inform the business case, but with no success to date.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly fully support the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNEC) in their efforts to develop a proposal for a BC-specific funding model for First Nation school capital; and
2. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call on Indigenous Services Canada to provide relevant data to FNEC to support the development of this proposal.

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