



First Nations Education Steering Committee

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New teacher certification requirements benefit Aboriginal learners

West Vancouver – The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) commends the British Columbia College of Teachers (BCCT) for its passing of new regulations that will require all applicants for certification as a teacher in BC to receive specialized training in teaching Aboriginal education and special needs.

“We are optimistic that these new teacher certification requirements will have a positive impact in classrooms throughout the province - for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and educators,” said Tyrone McNeil, President of FNESC. “We continue to support any new initiatives that can help teachers create welcoming, relevant environments for First Nations learners and promote respectful shared cultural understandings.”

In 2009-2010, 50.4% of Aboriginal students completed high school, and there hasn’t been a significant improvement in Aboriginal student completion rates in the past five years, according to data from the BC Ministry of Education. In addition, Aboriginal students are proportionately over-represented in all special education categories, with the exception of gifted, meaning that special education training for teachers is a key concern of Aboriginal communities and parents. The BCCT’s new regulations are a positive example of the systemic change needed to improve outcomes for First Nations learners.

“The BCCT has demonstrated leadership among the K-12 Education Partners, and we look forward to continuing to work with all of our Partners to address First Nations student achievement,” said McNeil.

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The First Nations Education Steering Committee (www.fnesc.ca) is an independent society committed to improving education for all First Nations learners in BC. It is directed by representatives of First Nations communities.

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