



**first nations education
steering committee**

REGIONAL SESSIONS SUMMARY 2004

**First Nations Education
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INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL BACKGROUND

The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) is a collective organization with a mandate to support First Nations in their efforts to promote quality education for First Nations learners. FNESC has been directed to undertake research, promote communications, disseminate information, facilitate networking, and bring much needed attention to First Nations education issues. FNESC collects and shares up-to-date information about relevant programs, government policies and initiatives, and evolving local, provincial and national education issues that affect First Nations. FNESC works closely with other education stakeholders in British Columbia (BC) to improve success and access for First Nations learners.

A core component of FNESC's activities are the Regional Sessions that are conducted annually throughout the province. These Regional Sessions provide direction for the ongoing efforts of FNESC and provide invaluable feedback on current and planned initiatives. They also allow FNESC to remain responsive and accountable to First Nations communities.

In the fall of 2004, regional sessions were held in Prince Rupert, Merritt, Lytton, Port Alberni, Campbell River, Brentwood Bay, Williams Lake, Prince George, Cranbrook, Kelowna and Agassiz. The purpose of this document is to provide an executive summary of the meetings and an overview of the information that was shared and highlighting the specific input that came from each area.

UPDATE ON THE FNESC BOARD

FNESC membership is composed of First Nations representatives from throughout BC. Each First Nation is eligible to appoint one member to the FNESC Board of Directors. At the time of the 2004 Regional Sessions there were approximately 63 board members. The FNESC Executive is as follows.

President	Deborah Jeffrey, Tsimshian Tribal Council
Vice President	Gwen Point, Sto: lo Nation
Treasurer	Barb White, Snuneymuxw First Nation
Secretary	Jim Angus, Kispiox First Nation

FNESC OVERVIEW FOR 2004

For a comprehensive summary of initiatives, projects and programs discussed at the 2004 Regional Sessions please refer to the Regional Session Discussion Papers 2004 which can be found at www.fnesc.ca.

FNESC/FNSA

- **Special Education**
- **SchoolNet**
- **New Paths for Education**
- **Youth Employment Strategy Program**
- **Post-Secondary Education**
- **Early Childhood Education**
- **Conference Summaries**
- **Tripartite and Education Partners Update**
- **ATEC**
- **Employment Equity**
- **Anti-Racism**
- **Research**
- **FNSA Data Linking Project**
- **FNSA Data Collection Project**
- **Post-Secondary Research**
- **Teacher Salary Survey Results**
- **Band School Funding Update**
- **Seventh Generation Club**
- **Parents Club**
- **Jurisdiction**
- **Aboriginal Language Subcommittee**

INFORMATION SHARING ACTIVITIES

Conferences

Each year FNEESC organizes a number of conferences to promote professional development and to provide networking opportunities. Those events are then discussed annually at the regional sessions for suggestions and feedback.

10th Annual Provincial Education Conference November 6th – November 8th 2004

FNEESC facilitates an annual conference on Aboriginal Education in partnership with the BC Ministry of Education (MoE). The theme of the 2004 conference was 'Math and Science,' and the key objective was to help educators understand how math and science can be integrated into learning in ways that are fun and positive. The Conference highlights included the 'Math Mania' evening, a presentation from the Stelat'en Youth Panel, JUMP Math workshops and plenary session, and an anti-racism panel that included youth participants. For the first time, the Conference plenary presentations and keynote speeches were also web cast to enable people to participate without being present. A full summary of the 2004 conference is available from FNEESC.

Aboriginal Languages Conference July 19th – 21st 2004

The Aboriginal Languages Conference took place in Prince George, and at the event participants were presented with a draft Strategic Plan for BC Aboriginal Languages. The Conference participants provided input and suggestions for the top three priorities for the revitalization of BC Aboriginal Languages. Additionally, participants attended a variety of workshops on language recording and regeneration, and the conference was run simultaneously with a youth technology workshop based on the use of technology in language revitalization efforts.

Newsletters and Communications

In addition to the numerous conferences facilitated each year, FNEESC also distributes a number of newsletters. These include FNEESC, the FNSA, Special Education, the Education Partners, and the Aboriginal Language Sub-Committee newsletters. Additionally FNEESC maintains regular communication to Bands, Tribal Councils, First Nations schools, Education Partners and other interested individuals as required.

Input from Regional Session Participants

It was suggested that conference materials be available on the FNEESC website for those people who are unable to attend or who are watching via web cast. At the Lower Mainland regional session, it was suggested that a listserv would allow more isolated communities to communicate with colleagues through an Internet forum.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO PROMOTE CHANGE

In undertaking all of its activities FNEESC strives to work in partnership with other education stakeholders in an effort to share resources and expertise and to coordinate as effectively as possible. Some of the key FNEESC partnerships are outlined below.

First Nations Schools Association

Since 1997 the First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) and FNEESC have worked closely together on a number of projects to strengthen and support First Nations schools in BC. FNEESC provides administrative support to the FNSA, and together the two organizations offer a range of programs and services to First Nations schools and communities.

The FNSA Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Conference is held every April, and the event includes elections for the FNSA Board of Directors and approval by the FNSA membership of the proposed activities for the upcoming year. Additionally it provides an invaluable opportunity for First Nations educators who work in First Nations schools to come together and discuss issues and concerns and to celebrate successes. The FNSA AGM and Conference also includes a career fair, which provides prospective teachers access to First Nations schools that are recruiting new staff.

Input from Regional Session Participants

In Port Alberni, it was suggested that it is important to be communicating the School Assessment project to other education partners. Participants were assured that this was happening. In Victoria, it was suggested that information around Early Childhood and Headstart is difficult to obtain, and communities want to know more about what is happening in Headstart.

Indian Studies Support Program (ISSP)

For the past six years, FNEESC has provided administrative support to the Indian Studies Support Program (ISSP) Committee. This support has included minute taking, the annual

proposal call management, and correspondence. The ISSP provides funding for First Nations controlled post-secondary programs that are accredited and transferable. ISSP proposal information is distributed to all First Nations and First Nations post-secondary institutes each fall. A committee that includes representatives of First Nations and First Nations post-secondary institutes reviews all of the proposals submitted.

Input from Regional Session Participants

In Prince George it was suggested that sample affiliation agreements be included in the ISSP proposal guidelines handbook.

Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA)

The Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) is in its second year of operation, and its focus is to support Aboriginal institutes and programs which provide adult and higher learning.

IAHLA was created as a service organization to collect and disseminate information and undertake research that will benefit Indigenous adult and higher learning agencies. IAHLA has an administrative agreement with FNEC and the two organizations strive to ensure that a coordinated approach is taken to First Nations Post-Secondary issues.

At the time of the regional sessions, IAHLA was planning its second AGM for January, 2005.

Working With the Federal and Provincial Government and Other Education Organizations

Since 1994, FNEC has been meeting regularly with representatives of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and the BC Ministry of Education (MoE) through a formal Tripartite Committee. Those meetings have provided an opportunity for First Nations and government representatives to share information and reach agreement about proposed education system changes that may affect First Nation learners.

In addition, in 1998 FNEC was a founding member of the Aboriginal Education Partners Group. This group includes some of the most significant stakeholders in the BC education system, including FNEC, the FNSA, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), the MoE, the BC Teachers Federation, the BC College of Teachers, the BC School Trustees Association, the BC Superintendents Association, the BC Confederation Parents Advisory Council, and the BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association. The cooperative efforts of the Education Partners Group have resulted in an effective sharing

of information and the implementation of several important projects aimed at enhancing the success of First Nation learners.

Since coming together, the Education Partners Group has specifically focused its efforts on three issues: Aboriginal teacher recruitment (the ATEC project); employment equity; and anti-racism. To complement those three areas of focus, the Education Partners and Tripartite Education Committee set seven goals, which are updated annually to ensure that continued progress is achieved. Those seven goals include the following.

- Goal #1: To improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal learners in BC in both absolute and comparative terms.
- Goal #2: To improve the school success of Aboriginal learners with special needs.
- Goal #3: To increase collaboration among organizations concerned with the education of Aboriginal learners and to develop joint action plans where appropriate.
- Goal #4: To improve the scope, quality and number of education agreements signed by First Nations and School Districts in British Columbia.
- Goal #5: To increase the involvement of First Nations in decision-making in relation to Aboriginal education.
- Goal #6: To increase knowledge, understanding, and respect for First Nations cultures and histories for all learners and educators in British Columbia.
- Goal #7: To increase the number of Aboriginal educators in the provincial education system.

Aboriginal Teacher Education Consortium (ATEC)

One of the three focus areas of the Aboriginal Education Partners Group is increasing the representation of Aboriginal teachers in the school system. That area is being addressed through the Aboriginal Teacher Education Consortium (ATEC).

At the regional sessions, it was reported that significant progress was made toward ATEC's goals in 2004, including the receipt of \$340,000.00 for bridging programs in BC.

With that funding, ATEC was able to sponsor programs to assist individuals interested in entering teacher education programs in achieving the pre-requisites required for post-secondary entrance. Through a proposal process, four institutes were selected to implement programs during the 2004/2005 academic school year: the University College of the Cariboo, Malaspina University College, Okanagan University/En'owkin Education Centre and University of Northern BC. All of the programs will offer students academic courses including English, Mathematics and Science.

Employment Equity

Aboriginal employment equity in the public education system is the second area of focus for the Aboriginal Education Partners. This topic was chosen to reflect the fact that Aboriginal people are under-represented in the public school system, not only in terms of teachers, but also in other positions such as school administrators, bus drivers, librarians, and specialists. There is a very limited number of Aboriginal staff employed in the public school system in comparison to the population of Aboriginal people in BC and to the population of Aboriginal students enrolled in BC schools. As a result, there are too few role models for Aboriginal students and limited opportunities for all students to learn about Aboriginal cultures and histories. An Employment Equity Working Group comprised of representatives from the Education Partners, work to address this area.

The primary focus of the Employment Equity Working Group is to create an Employment Equity Toolkit that all of the Education Partners can endorse. The goal of the Toolkit is to address questions regarding employment equity in a non-threatening and legally compliant manner. A contractor had been hired to draft the toolkit.

Input from Regional Session Participants

In Victoria, there was some discussion about the recruitment of Aboriginal teachers in the school system. Participants outlined some positive initiatives which are taking place on the island related to the recruitment of Aboriginal teachers in school districts. In Prince George it was suggested that employment equity could also be addressed through enhancement agreements, and that reference to this fact should be included in the Employment Equity Toolkit.

Anti-Racism

The third area of focus selected by the Aboriginal Education Partners Group is anti-racism, and significant effort has been dedicated to that critical issue. At the time of the regional sessions, a two-year Anti-Racism project funded by Heritage Canada had been in effect for nearly two years. The first year of the initiative involved the hiring of an

Anti-Racism officer and an Anti-Racism Consultant, as well as the development of an Anti-Racism Tool Kit. Following the launch of the toolkit, numerous workshops were delivered to assist school representatives in effectively using the materials in classrooms throughout BC.

In addition, anti-racism workshops and presentations were organized in specific settings, such as individual schools, regional teacher and Aboriginal support worker conferences, specific First Nations communities, summer institutes, and conferences. Those sessions were very well attended and the recipients generally responded positively to the opportunities provided.

In 2004, following the retirement of Nora Greenway, a new Anti-Racism Officer was appointed. Consequently there was a focus on mentorship and training to ensure that communities would continue to be serviced by the Anti-Racism Officer in a consistent and effective manner.

A second focus was anti-racism youth leadership, and a training session for BC youth was facilitated in December 2004. The new Anti-Racism Officer is based in Merritt, where a pilot project has been implemented that is intended to result in a Memorandum of Understanding committing all community stakeholders to work together to eliminate racism in the Merritt community. Additionally, the Anti-Racism Officer had completed research on internalized racism, to provide more information about the impacts it has on First Nations people.

Input from Regional Session Participants

In the Lower Mainland it was expressed that an organization chart showing FNEESC's relationship to other partners in the province would be useful.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Since its establishment, one of the critical areas of support offered by FNESC has been research into relevant First Nations education issues. The research undertaken generally has been selected in consultation with First Nations representatives through discussions at the annual regional sessions. In the 2004 regional sessions, the following research project update was provided.

Data Linking Project

In the spring of 2003, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) approached the FNSA and the FNESC to discuss a possible new pilot project for the BC Region. INAC suggested that a partnership be developed, including INAC, the FNSA, FNESC, and the BC Ministry of Education (MoE), to consider the possibility of linking a selection of student records already being collected by INAC and the MoE.

Currently, the present situation exists.

1. While First Nations students are living on reserve, INAC has the ability to track their educational progress, regardless of what schools they attend.
2. While students remain in public schools, the MoE has the ability to track their progress regardless of whether they live on or off reserve.
3. When students move from living on-reserve and attending First Nations schools to living off-reserve and attending public schools, or the reverse, their progress cannot be tracked.

Given that situation, the mobility of students between on and off reserve and between school types limits the ability of any stakeholder to track student progress and establish reliable indicators of First Nations students' progress. The possible new pilot project proposes to address this issue by linking components of the databases maintained by INAC and the MoE, thereby making it possible to track student progress even when they move.

Data Collection Project

At the 2003 FNSA AGM, there was significant discussion regarding a possible project that would investigate issues of school measures and data collection processes. The project was proposed in response to feedback from schools that had participated in the FNSA School Assessment Project. Several people had indicated the need for information

about ways in which First Nations schools can measure student progress and use data to track program and school effectiveness. In addition, several other school representatives had recommended that the FNSA facilitate research on how to appropriately collect and analyze data to enhance school improvement.

At the same time, INAC representatives suggested the need to begin collecting consistent data to demonstrate the success of First Nations schools. The federal government is increasingly interested in receiving information to ensure that First Nations students are being provided quality educational opportunities.

In discussing those issues, the FNSA board agreed that First Nations schools should be proactive in addressing the needs highlighted by school representatives and INAC. They did this in the following ways.

- The FNSA undertook research into the collection, analysis, and use of data to inform school growth and programming.
- The results of that research were shared in four consultation workshops in the fall of 2003. All First Nations schools were invited to send a representative to participate at no cost to the school. At those workshops, possibilities for data collection in First Nations schools and at the provincial level were presented for review and feedback, and a framework for data collection by schools and a sharing of that information at the provincial level was approved.

The FNSA membership approved the FNSA School Measures and Data Collection framework at the AGM in April 2004 for use in a pilot project in the 2004/2005 school year. The results of the pilot project were to be reviewed at the 2005 FNSA AGM for feedback from First Nations schools about possible future directions for the initiative.

Post-Secondary Research

In 2004 various post-secondary research projects were implemented by FNEESC. These included investigations into data and standards, funding for transitional post-secondary education, trades and apprenticeships, and public university collection of First Nations information.

Input from Regional Session Participants

In Prince George it was suggested that FNEESC should hire Aboriginal graduate students to be conducting research rather than paying high cost non-Aboriginal consultants, or at least strive to have contractors work alongside Aboriginal graduate students.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention Project

As a component of research undertaken regarding equitable band school funding, FNEESC undertook research on teacher salaries and remuneration programs in First Nations schools. This project examined the actual salaries and benefits packages received by teachers in First Nations schools in comparison to the public school district in which the First Nations School is situated. The results of the project suggested that there is some discrepancy in salaries being paid in the two systems, and FNEESC and the FNSA will investigate this issue further.

THE NEW PATHS FOR EDUCATION PROGRAM

For several years, many FNEESC and FNSA activities were made possible through the Gathering Strength Program. The Gathering Strength Program was one component of INAC's response to the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. In 2003/2004 the Gathering Strength Program was renamed the New Paths for Education Program. This program continues to be administered by the FNEESC/FNSA.

The four themes for the New Paths funding in 2004/2005 were:

1. Governance and management of education
2. Improving effectiveness of classroom instruction
3. Increasing parent and community participation
4. Aiding with the school-to-work transition

The majority of the New Paths for Education Program funding is distributed directly to First Nations schools and First Nations communities using a formula that provides a 'base' plus per capita amount.

Parental and Community Engagement Program

In 2004/2005, FNEESC and the FNSA received funding from INAC for a new initiative -- Parental and Community Engagement. This funding is intended to encourage parental and community involvement in education programming. To simplify access for First Nations communities and schools, FNEESC amalgamated the application and reporting requirements for this program with the New Paths documentation. At the Regional Sessions, FNEESC representatives emphasized the fact that the two programs were still separate, but that they could be reported on together.

In addition to the grants provided to schools and communities, the 2004/2005 New Paths funding was also used to sponsor a number of collective programs and initiatives, which are outlined in some detail below.

2004 New Paths Collective Activities

Annual Speakers Series Workshops

Since its establishment, Gathering Strength/New Paths funding has been used to sponsor dozens of workshops in locations throughout BC through a Speakers Series. The Speakers Series workshops provided training on a range of issues, including special education, literacy, community-based programs to support young people, board training, and conflict resolution. Parents, teachers, school board members, education workers, and community members all had participated in the annual Speakers Series. Input was sought from participants at the Regional Sessions as to the most appropriate topics and themes for the 2004/2005 Speaker series.

Input from Regional Session Participants

In Prince Rupert, participants recommended Recording Aboriginal Languages workshops, workshops by David Rattray, and they also suggested that more youth should be encouraged to attend Speaker Series workshops. It was also suggested that a workshop for First Nations Education Coordinators on how to assist students with information on trades and non-academic programs would be useful. In the Lower Mainland it was suggested that a workshop be held on COOL Schools.

In Port Alberni it was suggested that an idea for a Speakers Series workshop would be to provide more information on the new graduation requirements. In Port Alberni and the Lower Mainland it was also suggested that a student exchange program might benefit students from urban and remote areas. In Lytton it was suggested that FNEESC create a booklet of good practices around targeted funding, as some communities do not have a clear understanding of what the dollars are intended for.

In Williams Lake it was suggested that a workshop be held on implementing a Parents Club and the resources available to communities. Other topics suggested in Williams Lake included severe behaviour workshops and how to prepare your child for school.

The First Nations Parents Club

One of FNEESC and the FNSA's key Parental and Community Engagement initiatives is the First Nations Parents Club. This initiative involves sponsoring locally-based parents clubs in First Nations communities through the provision of support materials such as newsletters, incentive gifts, a parents' calendar, and books for home-reading and parenting materials. There are now 122 clubs across BC with a membership of approximately 2500 First Nations parents. In 2004, Parental and Community

Engagement funding was used to support the attendance of member parents at the annual BCCPAC Conference annually, to support the salary of an additional Speech and Language Pathologist, and for various collateral pieces and administrative support required for the program.

Input from Regional Session Participants

It was suggested in Merritt that greater communication could have been undertaken to inform parents about the new Dogwood certification requirements and that the Parents Clubs could have been an appropriate vehicle to do this. In Prince Rupert it was suggested that umbrellas, educational puzzles, or recipe boxes could be good incentive prizes for parents. In Lytton it was suggested that parents might need extra training and information for dealing with challenging behaviour and constructive discipline techniques. Workshops for young parents/mothers were also said to be required.

Principal Support Activities

New Paths Program funding was also used to sponsor a Principal Resource Person position with the FNSA and FNEC. The Principal Resource Person works to provide direct, in-school support to First Nations school principals and administrators, and to provide technical support to the FNSA Board of Directors.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES UPDATE

Since 1995, FNEC and the FNSA worked with First Nations representatives to secure special education funding for First Nations schools – work that finally resulted in the December 2001 announcement of new special education funding for First Nations students living on-reserve. This funding was finally released for use in January 2003, and in that year the special education funding available in BC totalled \$3,576,541, representing the new Special Education Program (SEP) funding plus the portion of the Gathering Strength funding dedicated for special education. Of that amount, \$3,130,214 (87.5%) was allocated directly to schools and \$446,327.05 (12.5%) was used for collective, regional-level initiatives. In 2003 FNEC was asked to prepare a national business case for submission to cabinet in October 2004, which would hopefully extend the authorities and increase the level of SEP funding for Canada and BC.

2004/2005 SEP Activities

In 2004/2005 the majority of SEP funds, \$5,575,650, was allocated to First Nations schools for locally relevant programs and services using a base-plus-per-capita formula and a workplan process. A sum of \$1,141,750, or 17% of the total amount, was used for

collective regional-level initiatives. 91% of the total funding was used for direct services to schools and 9% was used for indirect services such as administration, staff positions, travel etc.

In 2003/2004 the FNSA membership approved the holdback of a small percentage of funding (5%) for high cost special needs students. Schools could apply for this funding and the proposals were considered by the Special Education Resources Committee (SERC). The allocation of these funds identified a high level of unmet needs and at the 2004 FNSA AGM in April the FNSA membership agreed to the holdback of 5% for a second year.

A portion of the SEP funds was also used to sponsor professional development opportunities for First Nations school staff in a cost-effective manner. For example, Simon Fraser University (SFU), in conjunction with FNEESC and the FNSA, developed a 2-year graduate diploma/credit certificate called "Supporting Diverse Learners." In response to feedback from schools, FNEESC/FNSA coordinated and delivered five regional workshops that taught participants about the tests used in psycho-educational assessments. FNEESC and the FNSA were also exploring distance education and online course options so participants would be able to continue with their studies during the school year.

Input from Regional Session Participants

In Merritt, participants expressed appreciation of the workplan template as well as the support provided by the toll free resource line. It was suggested that to encourage more parental involvement in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process, there should be specific training provided in Parent Advisory Council (PAC) meetings. In Port Alberni, participants noted a need for professional development for Teacher Assistants on how to deal with special needs students in the classroom. It was suggested that this workshop could be video-conferenced to reach a wider audience. Port Alberni participants also requested further Behaviour workshops in the Speaker Series.

In Prince Rupert, it was commented that early childhood education should follow the same intervention based approach as the FNEESC Special Education Program. It was suggested that this would allow First Nations to get more effective provincial level services and provide for more dollars to go directly to the community. There was a comment made by an Assistant Superintendent that there would be benefit in seeing FNEESC incorporate Early Childhood Education into its mandate. In Victoria feedback was provided that the 'Demystifying Assessments' workshop was extremely helpful and training was requested around the administration of Level B tests. In Lytton and Prince George it was commented that more training around Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) would be beneficial for teachers, school staff, parents, RCMP etc. It was also commented that it would be worthwhile to create strategic plans to support parents with special needs children.

Participants in Lytton also believed that research should be conducted into the link between nutrition and behaviour disorders and that additional funds were required to do vision and hearing assessments at a Headstart level. In Prince George it was suggested that a list of Special Education Resource teachers be formulated and distributed. In the Lower Mainland it was observed that special education training should take place during the school year as well as during the summer.

FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLNET PROGRAM

Funded by Industry Canada, the First Nations SchoolNet program is intended to develop information and communications technology (ICT) in schools through: a) providing connectivity and computers; b) building competencies and capacity; and c) developing IT content. Beginning in December 2002, FNEESC and the FNSA began administering the First Nations SchoolNet program in the BC region.

One of the key focuses of the SchoolNet program is extending connectivity to First Nations schools that have not yet been connected to the Internet. To address that priority, SchoolNet works to identify and remove barriers to Internet access through the distribution of satellite dishes and Internet service provider subsidies.

The regional session participants were also informed that FNEESC and the FNSA are committed to using the SchoolNet program to work towards an adequate number of computers per school, increased software, help desk services, in-school assistance, and support for First Nations schools in developing Aboriginal web-based content. Finally, a portion of the SchoolNet program funding was being used to support Aboriginal Language activities, as described below.

Input from Regional Session Participants

Port Alberni participants requested that the list of software provided to schools be featured on the FNEESC website. In Prince George it was requested that more research and resources be allocated to real time teaching through the Consortium of Online Learning (COOL) schools program. In Williams Lake the length of time it took to receive on-line store purchases was raised.

ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE

At the regional sessions, it was reported that in 2004 the Aboriginal Language Subcommittee had been primarily occupied with providing input, through various mechanisms, to the National Taskforce on Aboriginal Languages. This included providing face to face input at regional sessions and the drafting of a BC Strategic Plan on Aboriginal Language Revitalization.

Development of an Aboriginal Language Lab

In 2004, FNEESC introduced a traveling language lab that can be used by First Nations communities and schools for periods of up to 6 weeks, which allows them to record and archive their language(s) electronically.

Aboriginal Language Conference

It was also noted that an Aboriginal Language Conference, *Language Planning from the Classroom to the Nation* was held on July 19-21, 2004. 135 people attended that event.

To assist with the Language Conference, the BC First Nations SchoolNet program sponsored a two day workshop prior to and during the conference. First Nations youth attended that event, which provided them with training on video making, editing, and computer animation.

Input from Regional Session Participants

In Merritt there was a high level of interest in the language lab and communities were interested to know whether the technology could be purchased. Some discussion also took place around the required record checks which were undertaken by schools for Elders who were participating in the language program and a concern was expressed about material from Elders being recorded and then taken away. The Merritt session congratulated the Lower Nicola Indian Band for allowing the opportunity for all school staff, including board members and janitorial staff, to take language lessons. In Lytton it was suggested that FNEESC could create a template for Elders who are recorded as language resources.

FNEESC POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE

In 2004 the Ministry of Advanced Education provided funding for a FNEESC Post-Secondary Education Coordinator, Karen Bailey-Romanko. The new Coordinator is helping FNEESC to work with INAC BC Region and with First Nations communities to facilitate an easy transition to the new National Post-Secondary Education Program Guidelines, which came into effect on September 1, 2004. In particular, FNEESC is working to support First Nations with the compliance review aspect of those guidelines.

Input from Regional Session Participants

In Prince Rupert, a participant encouraged other attendees to be proactive with regards to the national post-secondary guidelines and to provide any feedback to FNEESC. In

Victoria it was felt that there is a lack of data regarding Trades and Apprenticeship programs.

SEVENTH GENERATION CLUB

The Seventh Generation Club continues to be a very popular FNSA initiative that is focused on encouraging First Nations students to stay-in-school and make healthy life choices. With sponsorship from INAC, Health Canada, BC Hydro, Historica, the Vancouver Canucks, and the FNSA, Club members receive regular newsletters, a school daytimer specifically designed for them, as well as prizes for contests that are based upon participation, attendance and enthusiasm.

At the time of the regional sessions, approximately 7000 First Nations students were enrolled in the Seventh Generation Club. The regional session participants were also told that in 2004/2005, two daytimers were produced - a junior and a senior edition.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY PROGRAM

At each of the regional sessions, the participants were provided a brief update on the youth programs that are funded annually by INAC and administered by FNEESC and the FNSA. The programs have been administered by FNEESC and the FNSA for the past seven years, and First Nations have generally expressed satisfaction with the allocation processes that are now in place.

The 2004/2005 Student Summer Employment Opportunities Program (formerly the Summer Student Career Placement Program) is intended to support opportunities for career-related work experience and training for in-school First Nations students. In 2004/2005, \$851,635 was available for the program, which was allocated through a base-plus-per-capita formula.

The 2004/2005 Science and Technology Program (formerly the Summer Science and Technology Camp Program) was funded in the amount of \$204,822. That program promotes science and technology as a career choice by providing First Nations youth with first-hand experience in various science and technology disciplines.

\$1,042,982 was also available for the Youth Work Experience Program in 2004/2005 – funding that is meant to provide supervised work experience for out-of-school, unemployed or under-employed youth.

Finally, the Career Promotion and Awareness Program supports First Nations on-reserve youth through Cooperative Education Programs for on-reserve First Nations schools. With the \$431,207 available in 2004/2005, 12 of the 31 submitted proposals could be supported.

Input from Regional Session Participants

In Victoria there was some discussion about who was permitted to submit grant proposals and who has the authority to do so. In Victoria, participants also expressed hope that FNEC would be successful in its bid to get INAC to drop the SIN number requirement for the youth programs.

FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

Each year's regional sessions include discussion about the activities of the FNSA, including the Seventh Generation Club and the FNSA support for the New Paths and Youth Programs.

It was reported that the FNSA had again been offered the ArtStarts grants, which allow a number of schools to implement art education initiatives. It was also noted that the FNSA was planning to expand its efforts to support First Nations school principals and administrators. A fulltime Principal Support Person was appointed, and that individual is available to assist First Nations school principals with assessment project preparations and follow-up, as well as any other questions and concerns they might have. Funding was secured for that position until June, 2005.

Other major FNSA activities include the school assessment project and the school measures and data collection initiative, each of which is described below.

The First Nations Schools Assessment Project

The FNSA has worked to develop a school assessment model that reflects the unique needs of First Nations schools in BC. By 2004, over 50 First Nations schools had undertaken the schools assessment process and had generally indicated that the process has been a worthwhile and rewarding experience.

An evaluation of the school assessment project was undertaken in the fall of September 2003, which showed the following.

- 90% of survey respondents felt that the School Assessment process was valuable for school growth.
- 89% of the survey respondents indicated that they were satisfied with Part One of the Assessment template (the overview of the School's Administrative procedures).
- 78% of respondents were satisfied with the School Growth Plan Template.
- 66% of respondents were satisfied with the assistance provided by their mentor.
- 85% of respondents were satisfied with the feedback they received from the External Assessor/Assessment Team.

Certification Component

At the 2004 FNSA AGM, the FNSA membership approved the recommendations of an Advisory Committee regarding the addition of an 'assessment certification' component to the First Nations Schools Assessment Project. The recommendation included making certification an optional process. The certification process was used for the first time at the end of the 2003/2004 school year, and six First Nations schools became certified for the very first time.

Input from Regional Session Participants

In Victoria, participants described the various ways that they handle the schools assessment process. Generally they were very pleased with the process and asked for more information around the certification component. In the Lower Mainland it was suggested that the school assessment process could include challenges of funding infrastructure like school buses, playing fields etc.

SCHOOL MEASURES AND DATA COLLECTION PROJECT

There has been ongoing discussion about issues surrounding school measures and data collection processes in First Nations schools, and in response the FNSA proposed a project to examine ways in which First Nations schools can measure student progress and use data to track program and school effectiveness.

At the 2004 FNSA AGM the FNSA membership approved the use of a School Measures and Data Collection framework for the 2004/2005 school year, which focused on a range of data indicators. The data collection instrument was designed to reflect the uniqueness of First Nations schools and builds upon First Nations perspectives of educational standards.

JURISDICTION PROJECT

One of the key issues discussed at the 2004 regional sessions was the July 24, 2003 signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Respect to First Nations Authority and Jurisdiction over Education. The three parties to that agreement were FNEESC, INAC, and the BC MoE.

The MoU provides a framework for the negotiation of agreements regarding First Nations' exercise of jurisdiction and authority over the education of status, on-reserve students attending on-reserve schools, as well as First Nations' influence on decision-making and accountability processes within the public education system. The MoU is not

legally binding; instead, it is intended to serve as an agenda for future negotiations by those First Nations that choose to participate in jurisdiction discussions.

Two types of Education Authorities are included in the MoU; 1) Community Education Authorities, which would have law making authority with respect to their membership, as well as the ability to delegate aspects of their jurisdiction and authority to 2) a Central Education Authority. The Central Education Authority would be a more regulatory body, comprised of representatives from those First Nations who have assumed jurisdiction. The Central Authority would hold some of the collective responsibility around areas such as certification etc. Potential roles of both the Community Education Authorities and the Central Authority were discussed in some detail at the regional sessions. Some of the other key issues discussed included the following.

- Equitable levels of funding between First Nations schools and public schools
- Equivalency of standards between First Nations schools and public schools
- Credentialing
- Recognition of the certification of First Nations schools by the First Nations Schools Association (FNSEA) or other recognized authority
- Certification of teachers in First Nations schools
- Reciprocal tuition agreements
- Information sharing

Input from Regional Session Participants

In Merritt and in Prince Rupert it was suggested that, with the permission of all parties, there could be benefit for other communities in sharing Local Education Agreements (LEA's) on-line. There was also some discussion around the enforceability of LEA's and the fact that there is currently no penalty mechanism for the breach of agreements. There was general agreement that education needs to be higher on the agenda both provincially, nationally and locally. In Lytton and Prince George more information on LEA's and how they will fit into the jurisdiction model was requested. In Prince George, participants raised the need for a clearer understanding of the line in the MoU that states "More influence in the provincial school system over First Nations learners". At the Lower Mainland Regional Session it was advised that more information and more consultation on jurisdiction is required at a community level.

PRESENTATION FROM THE ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

ENHANCEMENTS BRANCH

The Aboriginal Education Enhancements Branch is responsible for developing policies related to the education of Aboriginal students and for linking together all Ministry programs and funding that have an impact on Aboriginal students. The Branch monitors the performance of Aboriginal students in the BC school system and uses the results to open dialogue and make recommendations that lead to quality improvements in the system, improve results and success rates for students, and make more effective use of funding intended to improve the performance of Aboriginal students.

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION TARGETED FUNDING

The Ministry of Education provides targeted funding for Aboriginal education at \$950.00 per student. The Ministry provides this additional annual funding to enable school districts to deliver enhanced education programs and services for Aboriginal students. These programs and services include language and culture and support to improve academic performance and success of Aboriginal students.

REGIONAL FUNDS

The Ministry of Education also distributes regional funds to support the work of educators in Aboriginal education in school districts in seven regions of the province. These funds support networking, innovative projects, resource sharing, and professional development. Regional groups are a resource for communication between the Ministry and the school districts.

DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

The Ministry of Education has collected data on Aboriginal students since 1994. BC is the only province in Canada collecting comprehensive data on levels of achievement for Aboriginal students. Since 1998, the Ministry of Education has published the report, *How Are We Doing?*, which is presented in a provincial and school district specific format. The provincial report is available on the Ministry website (<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/performance.htm>), and the school district specific reports are sent to the relevant school districts. The provincial data reflects an increase in levels of student completion from 34% in 1997 to 46% in 2003-2004.

ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

The accountability framework focuses on responsibility for the achievement of all students. Enhancement Agreements, Local Education Agreements, accountability contracts, district reviews, Deputy Minister's visits, school planning councils, audits, and

data collection and monitoring are components of the accountability framework for public education in BC.

ENHANCEMENT AGREEMENTS

The Aboriginal Education Enhancements Branch continues to work with Aboriginal communities and local school districts in the development of Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements (EAs). The purpose of EAs is to promote a collaborative framework that can encourage strong and sustained dialogue among all local Aboriginal communities, the relevant school district, and the Ministry of Education. The EAs are inclusive of all Aboriginal learners: on and off reserve, status and non-status, Métis and Inuit. This includes the integration of local Aboriginal perspectives into learning experiences. To date, 14 school districts have developed and signed an EA with their Aboriginal communities.

BC FIRST NATIONS STUDIES (BCFNS) AND TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Ministry of Education has developed a student textbook and a teacher's guide to align with the BC First Nations Studies Integrated Resource Package (IRP). For the first time, Aboriginal people are sharing their histories in their own voice in a BC curricular resource. The BC First Nations Teacher's Guide is available from Government Publication Services, 563 Superior Street, Victoria BC V8W 9V7. Phone (250) 387-6409, Fax (250) 387-1120, Toll free 1-800-663-6105.

SCIENCE RESEARCH

The Ministry of Education is working in partnership with the University of Victoria to conduct a series of research projects to address the under-representation of Aboriginal students in science classes, and the under-representation of Aboriginal people in science related careers. The results of the study will be used to guide teachers, curriculum developers, and program planners to develop culturally sensitive learning experiences, and to support Aboriginal students in educational and career choices.

The Aboriginal Education Enhancements Branch, along with Aboriginal educators, has been involved in integrating Aboriginal content into the K-7 science curriculum. This draft curriculum can be accessed on the following website:

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/drafts>

DEPUTY MINISTER'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

The Deputy Minister's Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Education was established in September 1999 to provide advice to the Deputy Minister on Aboriginal education issues. Meetings are scheduled as necessary to bring together a membership consisting of Aboriginal education professionals from across BC, and to discuss and make recommendations on issues related to policy development, compliance audits, and other matters that affect Aboriginal students in the public education system.

Input from Regional Session Participants

In Merritt, participants discussed whether Aboriginal children should be measured against non-Aboriginal children in the ‘How are we doing’ Report. Participants noted that the public school system was one in which Aboriginal people had no input, and so they considered the question of if the gap was closed, wouldn’t that simply mean that Aboriginal children had better assimilated? General discussion around the long term availability of targeted funding took place, as well as the cultural bias of the Foundation Skills Assessment. There was also an acknowledgement by participants that the public school system lacks some factors which influence First Nations children, such as culture and a sense of belonging.

In Prince Rupert, participants noted that ‘How are we doing’ is the only mechanism which informs First Nations as to whether the public schools are supporting Aboriginal students. Participants asked the Ministry to share the student satisfaction and attitude surveys. It was also suggested that the Ministry break out First Nation school results from the Foundation Skills Assessment tests.

In Victoria, participants asked which Aboriginal students more successfully transitioned to high school, those from First Nations schools or those from public schools. The Ministry representatives confirmed that this data was not currently being collected, but there is progress in the amount and type of information being gathered.

THANKS

FNESC would like to express its sincere appreciation to everyone who participated in the 2004 regional sessions. The feedback and suggestions that were shared are invaluable to FNESC’s efforts to plan programs and services that reflect the needs of First Nations.

List of Regional Session Participants

Campbell River Regional Session

Angie Price	<i>Comox First Nation</i>
Marion Hunt	<i>Kwakiutl Band</i>
Grace Smith	<i>Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw</i>
Catherine Lappe	<i>INAC, BC Region</i>
Pamela Lee Lewis	<i>Wewaikai Nation</i>
Ann Justin	<i>Kyuquot/Checlset First Nation</i>
Len Merriman	<i>T'lisalagi'lakw School</i>
Farrah Florence	<i>Kyuquot/Checlset First Nation</i>
Trish Rosborough	<i>Ministry of Education</i>
C. Thomas	<i>Homalco Indian Band</i>
B. Leo	<i>Homalco Indian Band</i>
Ken Hanuse	<i>Klahoose First Nation</i>
David Hont	<i>Kwakiutl First Nation</i>

Victoria Regional Session

Dawn McGuire-Reeves	<i>Snuneymuxw First Nation</i>
Pam Richmond	<i>School District #62 (Sooke)</i>
Linda Davis	<i>Pauquachin First Nation</i>
Larissa Schrader	<i>FNESC/FNSA</i>
Lisa Ellis	<i>FNESC/FNSA</i>
Glenn Jim	<i>Tseycum First Nation</i>
Allison Flater	<i>BCCPAC</i>
Lola James	<i>Songhees First Nation</i>
Nella Nelson	<i>School District #61</i>
Diane Kirby	<i>Saanich Adult Education Centre</i>
Kerrie MacLean	<i>T'sou-ke First Nation</i>
Glenda Bilinsky	<i>BCCPAC</i>
Shannon Dunn	<i>Saanich Adult Education Centre</i>
Heather Morin	<i>Ministry of Education</i>
Patti Edwards	<i>Nanoose First Nation</i>

Port Alberni Regional Session

Judi Thomas	<i>Ditidaht Community School</i>
David Maher	<i>Ditidaht Community School</i>
Melody Charlie	<i>Ucluelet First Nation</i>
Cam Pinkerton	<i>School District #70</i>
David Dennis	<i>Nuchalnuth Tribal Council</i>

Christa Williams	<i>FNESC</i>
Lee Gardiner	<i>FNESC</i>
Lytton Regional Session	
Brenda Munroe	<i>C.F.N. Education Committee</i>
Keith Zabol	<i>Bonaparte Indian Band</i>
Terrie Davidson	<i>Boothroyd Band</i>
Dineen Manual	<i>FNEC Admin – SD 74</i>
Dolores MacDonald	<i>Pavilion</i>
Gladys Grenier	<i>Lytton First Nation</i>
Judy Hanna	<i>Lytton First Nation</i>
Shawna Campbell	<i>Boothroyd Band</i>
Lillian Saul	<i>Xaxlip Band</i>
Marilyn Napoleon	<i>Lillooet Tribal Council</i>
Dolores O'Donaghey	<i>Boston Bar First Nation</i>
Romana Baxter	<i>Nzen'man/Skuppah</i>
Sally Dunstan	<i>Nzen'man/Lytton First Nation</i>
Theresa Adams	<i>Nzen'man/Lytton First Nation</i>
Alfrede Nelson	<i>Nzen'man/Lytton First Nation</i>
Freda Adams	<i>Lytton Elementary</i>
Edward Charlie	<i>Nlha kapmx</i>
Amy Charlie	<i>Nlha kapmx</i>
Merritt Regional Session	
Sharon Lindley	<i>N'Kwala School</i>
Connie Leonard	<i>Kamloops Indian Band</i>
Jody Delaney	<i>Skeetchestn Indian Band</i>
Opal Charters-Vogt	<i>SD#58</i>
Lucinda Isaac	<i>Lower Nicola Band Ed Coordinator</i>
Charlene McRae	<i>Upper Nicola Band Ed Coordinator</i>
Jamo Howarth	<i>Coldwater School</i>
Deanna Sterling	<i>Lower Nicola Band School</i>
Rose-Linda Archachna	<i>Shackan Band</i>
Mandy Jimmie	<i>Shackan Band</i>
Celia Shakelly	<i>Nooaitch Band</i>
Tim Manuel	<i>UNB</i>
M. Rose McArthur	<i>Interior Indian Friendship Centre</i>
John Chenoweth	<i>SD#5 8</i>
Bob Peacock	<i>SD#58</i>
Clifford Chillihitzia	<i>Upper Nicola Band</i>

Prince Rupert Regional Session

Charlotte Guno	<i>Kitsumkalum Band</i>
Phyllis Clark	<i>Laxgalts'ap Village Government</i>
Louise Daniels	<i>SD#52</i>
Hazel Stewart	<i>SD#52</i>
Collette Angus	<i>Gingolx Village Government</i>
Eva Spencer	<i>SD#52</i>
Debbie Leighton-Stephens	<i>SD#52</i>
Marlene Clifton	<i>SD#52</i>
Pam Groves	<i>SD#52</i>
Roz Greenwood	<i>SD#82</i>
Neal Barton	<i>Gingolx Village Government</i>
Shawn Campbell	<i>Lax Kw'alaams Academy</i>
Trish Rosborough	<i>Ministry of Education</i>
Martha Wilson	<i>Kyah Wiget Education Society</i>
Birdy Markert	<i>SD#54</i>
Pamela Wynn	<i>Lach Klan School</i>
Ernie Hill	<i>Hartley Bay School</i>
Joanne Lewis	<i>Cedar Road AHS</i>
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Joanne Lewis	<i>Cedar Road AHS</i>
Pamela Wynn	<i>Lach Klan School</i>
Ernie Hill	<i>Hartley Bay School</i>
Joanne Lewis	<i>Cedar Road AHS</i>

Prince George Regional Session

Ben Berland	<i>SD#57</i>
Deavlen Bradley	<i>Tsay Keh Dene</i>
Janet Johnson	<i>SD#57</i>
S. Kudagan Anderson	<i>Teen Mothers Alternative</i>
Glenn Morrison	<i>INAC</i>
Emily Faries	<i>INAC</i>

Angela Sanderson	<i>SD 57</i>
Dawn Murphy	<i>Lheidli Tenneh Band</i>
Keith Spencer	<i>SD#28</i>
Valerie Inglis	<i>McLeod Lake Indian Band</i>
Veronica Cassam	<i>Lhooskuz Dene Govt.</i>
Shelley Chipesia	<i>Prophet River First Nation</i>
Priscilla Sagalon	<i>Nak'zadli Band</i>
Mark Prince	<i>Nak'zadli Band</i>
Cici Sterritt	<i>Gitanmaax Band</i>
Alison MacDonald	<i>SD#57</i>
Darleen O'Neill	<i>SD#57</i>
Darlene Louie	<i>Rosie Seymour</i>
Phyllis Jack	<i>Canoe Creek</i>
Michelle Archie	<i>Canim Lake Band</i>
Angela Reynolds	<i>Stellat'en First Nation</i>
Terri Boyd	<i>Red Bluff Dene</i>
Doreen Spence	<i>Métis Provincial Council</i>
Kelowna Regional Session	
Andy Robinson	<i>Nisga'a</i>
Grant Stevens	<i>Vernon SD#22</i>
Darrell John	<i>Shalalth Seton Lake Band</i>
Sky Tom	<i>Seton Lake Band</i>
Cliff Casper	<i>Seton Lake Band</i>
Rosalind Williams	<i>Vernon Friendship Centre</i>
Carol August	<i>George Manual Institute</i>
Tammy Thomas	<i>Neskonlith Band</i>
Jennifer Guscott	<i>INAC, BC Region</i>
Lorraine Ladan	<i>Okanagan Indian Band</i>
Kevin Ned	<i>Okanagan Indian Band</i>
Lower Mainland Regional Session	
Joanne Martin	<i>Soda Creek First Nation</i>
Jeanette Joe	<i>Xit'olacw School</i>
Faye Mitchell	<i>Musqueam Band</i>
Leslie Williams	<i>Sto:Lo Nation</i>
Robert Grenaille	<i>Peters First Nation</i>
Deanna Johnson	<i>Chehalis School</i>
Verna Stager	<i>Mt Currie</i>
Merle Wilson	<i>Tsawwassen First Nation</i>

Dayna Anderson	<i>FNESC</i>
Derek Payne	<i>FNESC</i>
Norma George	<i>Douglas First Nation</i>
Sandra Victor	<i>Cheam First Nation</i>
Nolan Charles	<i>Musqueam</i>
Charlene Point	<i>Squiala</i>
Louise Jimmie	<i>Squiala</i>
Anjeanette Dawson	<i>Squamish Nation</i>
Shelley Bobb	<i>Spuzzum First Nation</i>
Sheradon Roberts	<i>Soowahlie</i>
Ted Cadwaller	<i>Ministry of Education</i>
David Doyle	<i>Stu'ate Lelum</i>
Thelma Wenman	<i>Sto:Lo Nation</i>
Gwen Point	<i>Sto:Lo Nation</i>
Norma George	<i>DFN</i>
James Atebe	<i>Sto:Lo Nation</i>
Tyrone McNeil	<i>Seabird</i>
Kirsten Baker William	<i>Squamish Nation</i>
Cranbrook Regional Session	
Mark Kerwin	Yaqaan Nukiy School
Joe Pierre	St Mary's Indian Band
Janice Alpine	Ktunaxakinbasket Tribal Council
Barbara Hughes	St Mary's Indian Band
Brenda Van Delft	SD#6
Bendina Miller	SD#6
Lou Tedrick	SD#6
Heather Morin	Ministry of Education
Ruth Laurie	FNSA/Okanagan Indian Band
Stephanie Sam	Akisknuk First Nation
Virginia Fisher	Lower Kootenay HeadStart
Kelly Kitchen	FNESC
Star Cardinal	College of the Rockies