



# fnesc Newsletter

*Quality Education: A Right*

**Spring 2005** Issue Highlights: 10th Annual Provincial Conference on  
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Higher Learning Association 4    Education Partners Update 5

## **FNESC Updates Communities**

FNESC enjoyed another successful and informative series of Regional Sessions in 2004. The sessions were conducted between September 20<sup>th</sup> and December 3<sup>rd</sup> and took place in Prince Rupert, Merritt, Lytton, Port Alberni, Campbell River, Brentwood Bay, Williams Lake, Prince George, Cranbrook, Kelowna and Agassiz. The sessions were well attended and updated participants on the following issues.

- Special Education
- SchoolNet
- New Paths for Education
- Youth Employment Strategy Programs
- Schools Assessment Project
- Jurisdiction Negotiations

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## **Maths Plus Science = One Great Conference**

*For 10 years we've been coming together and at these milestones I think it's important to acknowledge the successes we've had along the way, assess where we are and set new priorities.. Certainly we have been embroiled in those activities over the last ten years and we are starting to see some of the fruits of the labour in the increased success of First Nations children in our schools. It's much to your hard work and the work of parents and communities, that we are seeing some very positive change. I think it's important to celebrate those successes along the way, recognizing of course, that we have a lot more hard work to do. In ten years, I think we've*

*done well, and we can look forward to another ten years of hard work and good results.*

**Deborah Jeffrey,  
FNESC President,  
Plenary Presentation**

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Provincial Conference on Aboriginal Education took place on November 6-8<sup>th</sup> 2004 at the Westin Bayshore Resort in Vancouver. The Conference was jointly sponsored by FNESC and the Ministry of Education.

This year's event was launched with motivating keynote presentations by Don Avison, President of the University Presidents Council of British Columbia, and Chief Edward John, Grand Chief of the Tl'azten Nation. Participants were also offered a special welcome by Joan and Roddie Peters of the Musqueam Nation, Rita Haugen of N'lakapamux First Nation, and Louis Schmidt, an Aboriginal Veteran.



*Registration table at the 2004 FNESC Conference*

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The Conference theme of *Math & Science* was a popular one and attracted a number of innovative presenters and panels. Among these was Dr David Leeming of the Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences, and John Mighton, founder of JUMP (Junior Undiscovered Math Prodigies) Math. A panel of Stelat'en youth role models from the Sustainable Living Leadership Program shared their experiences on an ecological journey down the Fraser River, while the Traditional Aboriginal Science Panel from the University of Victoria introduced some of their ground-breaking research projects focusing on the importance of a greater integration of traditional Aboriginal science knowledge into the academic curriculum. The two days of workshops featured a variety of interesting and relevant topics which included traditional plant knowledge in Hartley Bay, Post Secondary Math &

Science bridging, Aboriginal leadership through school trusteeship, preparing students for technology and trades, and the K-7 Science Curriculum.

#### **Live Web casting**

The three day conference involved over 400 participants, and key conference presentations were available for viewing throughout BC thanks to a web casting initiative. FNEESC had previously received feedback from First Nations, through its Regional Sessions, that it was sometimes not possible for First Nations educators and community stakeholders to attend the annual conference. It had been suggested that some of the conference be web cast live via the Internet so that those people who were unable to attend could still enjoy the informative presentations and plenary sessions.

These web casts have now been archived and are available for viewing at <http://www.fnesc.ca/conferences/index.cfm>

### **FNEESC recruits Associate Executive Director**

FNEESC recently filled the newly created role of Associate Executive Director. The successful candidate was an internal appointment of current Research/ Communications Officer, Lee Gardiner. With a strong focus on Human Resources management and administrative experience it is anticipated that Lee will assist Christa Williams, Executive Director, with the 'day to day' running of the ever-growing organization. As issues concerning jurisdiction, federal funding, Aboriginal Post

Secondary education and training and Aboriginal language revitalization escalate, Executive Director, Christa Williams, finds herself with less and less time in the West Vancouver office. "The larger FNEESC becomes and the more work we do in British Columbia, the more its staff and resources are required to be available for input, consultation and participation at a provincial and federal level" says Christa Williams.

The key focus of the new role will be strategic leadership and planning, HR and program management, finance and administration.

Lee joined FNEESC in April 2004. A qualified solicitor, Lee moved to Canada from New Zealand in June 2003. Prior to her relocation, she was Human Resources Manager for a publicly listed company which employed 1100 people in Australia, New Zealand and Fiji. To contact Lee, call 604-925-6087 or email at [leeg@fnesc.ca](mailto:leeg@fnesc.ca).



*Grand Chief Ed John delivers his keynote address*

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## Regional Sessions Update cont'd

- Aboriginal Language Sub-Committee
- First Nations Parents Club
- Education Partners
- Indian Studies Support Program
- Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association
- Post Secondary Sub-Committee

FNESC received good direction and feedback on these issues and will make every effort to act on recommendations from participants in the coming year.

## 2005 Speakers Series

FNESC again offered its successful Speakers Series for 2005, providing reasonably priced professional development opportunities throughout BC. This series of day-long workshops is designed to support the work of all individuals and communities who are striving to provide quality education to First Nations students.

The 2005 workshops included the following.

- **Creating a Learning Environment** – setting the scene for learners, making it safe to learn, and the importance of play.

- **School-wide Behaviour Plan and Code of Conduct** – Strategies for positive behaviour support and designing effective behaviour plans.

- **Dancing with Anger** – David Rattray's well respected and innovative workshop on anger management strategies.

- **Assessing First Nations Language Proficiency** – designed to guide First Nations language teachers through this method of assessing current language proficiency of students through observation, listening and speaking.

- **Recording Aboriginal Language** – back by popular demand – Phillip Djwa showed participants a hands-on approach to recording and archiving Aboriginal Languages.

## Communities Consulted on Jurisdiction

During 2004, FNESC, Canada and the Province of British Columbia (BC) have continued to be engaged in negotiations which will allow First Nations in BC to assume jurisdiction and authority over K-12 on-reserve education for status First Nations learners. The jurisdiction framework that is being negotiated will be optional, allowing each First Nation to determine whether or not to participate in this agreement.

The intent of the negotiations is to reach an agreement on the nature and scope of First Nations jurisdiction and authority. To date, areas of negotiation have included equitable levels of funding for Band schools, equivalency of standards between First Nations and public schools, credentialing, recognition of the certification of First Nations schools, certification of teachers in First Nations Schools, reciprocal tuition agreements, and information sharing.

The key outstanding issue remains the commitment of the federal government to adequately fund the implementation of education jurisdiction. *Continued on page 6*

## Federal Government may scrap plan to tax Aboriginal education

In the Fall Newsletter it was reported that the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) had indicated that there would be a second review of tax exemptions for First Nations students funding. On March 3rd, Canada.Com quoted that a senior government source as follows: "Aboriginal students are the most under-represented in terms of success. There's a wide gap. We're looking to provide every incentive for First Nations students to succeed". The source then went on to say that "To exempt native students, many of whom must beat long odds just to graduate from high school, is "good public policy." Indian Affairs Minister Andy Scott also let it slip that some "good news" on the issue was coming although he did not elaborate.

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## IAHLA hosts 2nd AGM & Conference

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association took place on January 24<sup>th</sup> 2005. The AGM included four professional development workshops on topics which included National Post Secondary Guidelines, Best Practices in Adult Basic Education, Building Partnerships through Affiliation Agreements, and Aboriginal Education Philosophy and Curriculum Development. A keynote address was made by Deborah Hull (pictured with Chairperson Fran Hunt-Jinnouchi), Director of Post-Secondary Education & Industry Training, Ministry of Advanced Education. Ms Hull informed the IAHLA membership of the recent changes in post secondary education and the Ministry's plans in relation to Aboriginal Adult Education.

At this year's AGM, the IAHLA membership approved the implementation of a data collection framework,

which is intended to increase the sharing of information amongst post secondary institutes at a provincial level. The data collected will ideally better inform institutes for program growth, and will assist with collective lobbying for support from the provincial and federal governments.



*Deborah Hull & Fran Hunt- Jinnouchi at the IAHLA AGM 2005*

## Special Education Update

### Newly Announced Funding

The February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2005 federal budget announcement included an increased national commitment of \$120 million of special education funding over five years for First Nations children living on reserve (approximately \$24 million per year). The proportion of this funding that will be allocated to BC has not yet been determined. While this news is positive in that it will

mean increased resources for children with special needs in First Nations schools in BC, the total funding amount still falls short of the unmet special education needs expressed by First Nations in Canada. It is anticipated that lobbying for adequate resources in this area will continue.

### Special Education Resources

Special Education resources are available to all interested individuals, including the Connections Special Education Newsletter and the Special Education list serve. For information about these services or if you would like to receive Connections via email, please contact the Coordinator of the Special Education Resource Line, Lisa Ellis at 1-877-547-1919 or [lisa@fnesc.ca](mailto:lisa@fnesc.ca).

### Don't forget the Special Education Lending Library

This library offers great resources for use by FNSA member schools. If you have any questions, please contact Patti Yamamoto at the FNSA or email her at [pattiy@fnesc.ca](mailto:pattiy@fnesc.ca).

For more information about the Special Education Program, please visit <http://www.fnsc.ca/specialed.htm>.

## Building Partnerships for Aboriginal Language Work

The Aboriginal Language Sub-Committee last met on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2004. Dr Jack Miller, University College of the Cariboo, made a presentation to Sub-Committee members on his benchmarking method of assessing First Nations language proficiency in students. Based on the English language proficiency benchmarks administered by Canadian Immigration, Dr Miller's assessment process measures students' abilities to speak, write, read and listen in a First Nations language. Dr Miller is now working with Chief Atahm School in Adams Lake to develop tests to measure each of the steps in the assessment process.

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The Language Sub-Committee also received a report on the current status of the National Aboriginal Language Taskforce (the Taskforce). The Taskforce is to make recommendations regarding the allocation of \$172.5m in funding that was announced by the federal government in December 2002. FNEESC has been working closely with the First People's Language, Heritage and Culture Council (FPHLCC) to draft a strategic plan for British Columbia (BC) which would encompass the various needs of First Nations in the province. Previous submissions have been made to the Taskforce outlining the unique needs of BC, in particular the high number of language groups and the historically inadequate funding provided to this province. FNEESC and the FPHLCC are working to complete the strategic plan and a draft will be ready for presentation soon.

One exciting initiative of the Aboriginal Language Sub-Committee is the Maori Language Tour 2005. This New Zealand tour, which has been

organized biannually, is a showcase of Maori language initiatives and includes visits to Kohanga Reo (Preschools), Kura Kaupapa (Elementary), Wananga (Tertiary institutes) and stays on local Marae. The 2005 tour will include attendance at the World Indigenous People's Conference on Education (WIPCE) in Hamilton. WIPCE is an international gathering of educators, researchers and students to share inspirational ideas and practices. For more information on the Maori Language Tour, email [maoritour@fnesc.ca](mailto:maoritour@fnesc.ca).

## Education Partners Update

In fall 2004, the BC Education Partners group distributed its inaugural newsletter. The BC Education Partners include FNEESC, FNSA, UBCIC, Ministry of Education, BC Teachers Federation, BC Principals and Vice-Principals Association, BC School

Superintendents, BC College of Teachers, BC School Trustees Association, BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Council, and Indian & Northern Affairs Canada.

The introductory newsletter provides an overview of the Education Partners and progress to date on the key priorities identified by the Education Partners at their inception. These priorities include Aboriginal teacher recruitment and retention, employment equity, and anti-racism.

### 1. Preparing Aboriginal students for teaching careers

Since the formation of the Education Partners group, a number of highly effective bridging programs have been implemented to offer post secondary preparation to Aboriginal people interested in teaching as a career. These programs were made possible by the Aboriginal Teacher Education Consortium (ATEC), which grew from an Education Partners Working Group. The goal of this working group is to increase the number of

Aboriginal teachers working in British Columbia.

### 2. Addressing the shortage of Aboriginal Teachers

The Employment Equity Working Group is a sub-committee of the Education Partners group. This group is currently drafting an Aboriginal Employment Equity Toolkit to assist in the goal of increasing the number of Aboriginal teachers in BC schools. It is estimated that there are 350-400 Aboriginal teachers currently teaching in BC. To ensure that the number of teachers is representative of the percentage of Aboriginal students in the BC public school system, it has been necessary to examine existing barriers, recruitment and retention practices within that system. The Toolkit is intended to assist school districts in developing employment equity strategies to break down some of the systemic barriers that prohibit the employment of Aboriginal teachers, with the goal of increasing the number of Aboriginal staff.

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## Communities Consulted on Jurisdiction

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This issue has caused some delay in the negotiation process, but work is continuing to determine the actual costs of implementing jurisdiction.

In December 2004, the tripartite negotiation team conducted a two day consultation forum in Vancouver to update First Nations on the progress of the jurisdiction negotiations. A presentation was made on the proposed Governance framework, which showed participants what jurisdiction might look like within a BC First Nation.

The proposed Governance structure outlined the relationship between a First Nation Band Council and a proposed Community Education Authority. The Community Education Authority would be accountable to the First Nations Band Council, and could be appointed or elected by the community. It could include individuals with special skills and experience, and would have the authority to make laws regarding such matters as student and parental rights, personnel,

and finance. The powers of the Community Education Authority would be determined by the First Nation Band Council.

The Community Education Authorities would be aided in their work by a proposed Central Education Authority. This would be an Authority representative of all BC First Nations assuming jurisdiction, and it would be delegated some collective powers such as curriculum development, teacher certification, and school certification.

At the conclusion of the December consultation workshop, participants were divided into working groups to reflect on the following questions.

- 1. What powers should be given to the Central Education Authority (CEA)? (e.g. Teacher Certification, Standards, School Certification)**
- 2. How will a First Nation know when it is ready to assume jurisdiction? What are the readiness factors?**
- 3. What happens if jurisdiction goes wrong within a First Nation? What consequences will result?**

Generally the feedback suggested that a Central Education Authority would appropriately take on the powers of teacher/school certification and standard setting. This delegation of power, however, would be under the proviso that the Central Education Authority must be First Nations driven, representative of all participating First Nations, and operate according to terms of reference that are approved by all First Nations.

Key factors for determining a First Nations' readiness to assume jurisdiction included appropriate federal resourcing, an on-reserve school, an informed community and council, the capacity and infrastructure to handle the administration of jurisdiction, a governing community body, and the 'political will' to be successful.

Negotiations are continuing, with all parties wishing to conclude a mutually acceptable agreement as soon as possible. FNEESC looks forward to sharing more

information about the jurisdiction negotiations as it becomes available.

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### 3. Anti-Racism Initiatives

Anti-racism work in BC is actively supported by the Anti Racism Working Group, a sub-committee of the Education Partners group. Over recent years, an Anti-Racism Toolkit has been developed and a training workshop developed to complement that toolkit.

Recently, the toolkit has been adapted for use by Anti-Racism youth facilitators from around BC, and for an elementary school audience.

## PHOTOS FROM THE NOVEMBER 2004 10TH ANNUAL PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE ON ABORIGINAL EDUCATION



*Don Avison, TUPC*



*Dancers at the Banquet Dinner*



*Keynote Speakers, Don Avison & Grand Chief Ed John*

The new toolkit will be launched at the upcoming First Nations Schools Association Conference in April (for more information see [www.fnsa.ca](http://www.fnsa.ca)).



*Trish Rosborough, Ministry of Education, Aboriginal Education Enhancements Branch*



*Conference participants*

The toolkit will also be shared in workshops next year.

### Important Program Contacts

Program staff can be reached at the FNEESC office  
1-877-422-3672.

#### **Youth Employment Strategy Programs, New Paths for Education Online at [www.fnesc.ca](http://www.fnesc.ca) “Programs”**

Derek Payne, Program Administrator [derekp@fnesc.ca](mailto:derekp@fnesc.ca)  
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#### **First Nations SchoolNet, Online at [www.fnesc.ca](http://www.fnesc.ca) “Programs”**

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#### **Special Education, Online at [www.fnsa.ca/specialed.htm](http://www.fnsa.ca/specialed.htm)**

Kelly Kitchen, Special Education Manager [kellyk@fnesc.ca](mailto:kellyk@fnesc.ca)  
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FNESC Newsletter - Quality Education: A Right is the newsletter of the First Nations Education Steering Committee. It is intended as a forum for sharing information on First Nations education resources, research and strategies.

The newsletter is mailed to interested organizations and government agencies.

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