



fnesc Newsletter

Quality Education: A Right

July 2006



First Nations in BC Achieve Education Jurisdiction

Since publication of the 1973 paper "Indian Control of Indian Education" by the National Indian Brotherhood, First Nations have been calling for recognition of their jurisdiction over the education of their people. The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) has pursued this goal on behalf of BC First Nations through negotiations with the federal and provincial governments that have spanned the past six years.

On July 5th those efforts were realized as we celebrated the signing of an agreement recognizing the law-making authority of First Nations over education in on-reserve K-12 schools. This recognition means that First Nations parents and communities can have the right and the responsibility to determine how their children are educated and to determine the content of that education. It is anticipated that phase of jurisdiction will serve as a tool for achieving increased educational success for First Nations learners. *See the next page for background information and the FNESC Jurisdiction weblink.*

Milestones of the previous year laid the groundwork for this important event, including the Transformative Change Accord reached with the BC government, the Kelowna Accord achieved at the First Ministers Meeting in November of 2005, and the initialling of a package of major jurisdiction



On July 5th, 2006, representatives of First Nations and the federal and provincial governments signed an agreement in recognition of the right of First Nations peoples to make decisions about the education of their learners. The celebration of this achievement was held at Xweme'Ich'stn Estimxawtxw School, North Vancouver. **Above:** Peter Jacobs, emcee.

What is Jurisdiction?	2
Consultations Happening for the First Nations Education Policy Framework	3
Young Seventh Generation Club Members Tell Us What the Club Means to Them	4
Dates to Remember for the YES and New Paths Programs	5
FNESA Update	6
Anti-Racism Leaders Network Established	6
Request for Post-Secondary Data	7
Events Calendar and the 2006 Regional Sessions Schedule	7
FNESC Board, 2006	8

agreements in Kelowna on the eve of the federal election call.

There are several highlights to the governing powers over First Nations schools that First Nations will assume under a BC-First Nation Education Jurisdiction Agreement:

- Teacher certification
- School certification
- Establishment of curriculum and examination standards

For the last two years, First Nations, through the First Nations Schools Association (FNESA), have been certifying First Nations schools according to a process that was determined by First Nations and the schools themselves. The process is a rigorous one and it includes an external review component. With the signing of these agreements and the legislation that will follow, this certification process will be formally recognized by both the federal and provincial governments.

In addition to those powers noted above, students at First Nations schools that have been certified through this process

See page 2...

Literacy & Literature in Aboriginal Education

Plans are underway for the **12th Annual Provincial Conference on Aboriginal Education**, happening at the Westin Bayshore, Vancouver, from December 7-9, 2006.

An *Aboriginal Voices in Literature* evening is scheduled for December 7th. The conference workshops and plenary sessions will happen on December 8-9th.

The conference hosts are the First Nations Education Steering Committee, the BC Ministry of Education, with new partners the Métis Provincial Council of BC and the United Native Nations Society.

A **registration kit and information booth / vendor booth application form** will be available at www.fnesc.ca in September 2006.

Also, watch for news about the **7th Generation Club Gala Evening**, happening on December 8th.

will also be eligible to grant the Dogwood Graduation Certificate as well as the graduation certificate of the First Nation.

To date, more than forty BC First Nations have indicated their interest in participating in jurisdiction, which exceeds the twelve required to proceed.

Meetings in the spring of 2006 brought representatives from those interested First Nations together for a series of planning and capacity building meetings. Jurisdiction meetings will continue through the summer and fall as those interested First Nations work toward implementation.

FNESC extends its appreciation to all of those who have made this accomplishment possible.

Jurisdiction Online

Visit the new Jurisdiction webpage on the FNESC website for...

- Frequently asked questions
- PowerPoint presentations on jurisdiction
- News
- Templates
- Information on how to participate
- And more!

To get there, go to www.fnesc.ca and click on the link to **First Nations Jurisdiction Over Education**. For more information about how to join in this process, email jurisdiction@fnesc.ca

FNESC worked with First Nations community representatives to create a brochure for First Nations communities that want to learn more about education jurisdiction. Here are some excerpts from that brochure...

What is Jurisdiction?

Jurisdiction is a legal term that refers to law-making power. In this phase of jurisdiction, First Nations communities who opt-in will have jurisdiction for K-12 on-reserve schools in BC. This community-based authority will be recognized by both the federal and provincial governments. First Nations who do not participate will not be adversely affected.

Some of the benefits of jurisdiction are the opportunities to:

- Set higher curriculum and teacher standards
- Use more flexible and appropriate teaching methods
- Create culturally relevant learning environments
- Teach language, culture, and community values
- Academically prepare students for post-secondary through higher standards
- Develop community capacity around education

What changes?

- Our right to make decisions in education will be formally recognized and resourced
- We will control curriculum, school and teacher standards
- We can grant our own graduation certificates, as well as the Dogwood certificate
- We have our own system of K-12 education
- First Nations languages may now be recognized as a second language credit
- We are no longer under the Indian Act for K-12 on-reserve education (sections 114-122 only)

How to Begin

A First Nation can choose to join the jurisdiction process at any time. Regular meetings are taking place for First Nations who have submitted a Letter of Intent and/or Band Council Resolution. Those meetings are used to share information and jointly plan the next stages in the jurisdiction process. For information about how to join in this process, email jurisdiction@fnesc.ca

Briefly, First Nations who choose to participate in jurisdiction take the following steps:

- 1.** Submit a Letter of Intent and a Band Council Resolution to the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC)
- 2.** Sign a jurisdiction agreement and funding agreement with the federal government
- 3.** Work to develop community capacity and negotiate agreements over the 36-month transition period
- 4.** Have the agreements ratified by the community

Upon completing those steps, the First Nation becomes a **“Participating First Nation”**

First Nations Advise About INAC Education Policy Framework

In May of 2006, FNEESC was invited to provide input on behalf of the BC region in the development of a national First Nation Education Policy Framework (EPF). This framework is intended to provide the foundation for the development of future INAC First Nation education policies and programs for the next ten years.

INAC's First Nation EPF is intended to outline guiding principles, vision, goals, expected outcomes and strategic directions that support First Nation control over First Nation education

FNEESC organized a consultation meeting on June 8, 2006 that was attended by 28 representatives of BC First Nations.

Participants identified the following themes as priority areas that need to be considered in the EPF design. They are not the final recommendations (which are still being developed) but they are preliminary considerations.

Regional Diversity - The EPF must be flexible to account for the regional cultural and geographical diversity across Canada and within BC.

Jurisdiction of Education - The EPF will need to be founded on the premise that First Nations are moving toward jurisdiction over education and jurisdiction over all aspects of their lives.

Lifelong Learning - The EPF must recognize that learning is a lifelong process, and that it includes items beyond formal academic instruction, such as elders' teachings, language instruction, and traditional knowledge.

Community vs. Individual - The EPF needs to situate education as part of the larger picture of community and individual wellness.

Participants also identified the themes of Comparability, Recognition/Inclusion of Elders, Community Experts and Students, Healing, Jurisdictional Challenges, and Resourcing.

FNEESC looks forward to hosting a wider provincial consultation on August 28, 2006 to develop these ideas and to gain further input.



FNEESC Executive (left to right): Monty Palmantier, Treasurer, Lake Babine Nation; Deborah Jeffrey, President, Tsimshian Tribal Council; Nathan Matthew, Strategic Action Committee, North Thompson Indian Band; Christa Williams, Executive Director, Lytton First Nation; Tyrone McNeil, Vice-President, Sto:lo Nation Tribal Council & Seabird Island Band



Images from the Gathering Our Voices Aboriginal Youth Conference, Kamloops, March 2006. FNEESC and the FNSA contributed to this event by delivering technology workshops through the First Nations SchoolNet Program.



Eugene St. Joseph Elementary School, the First Nations Education Steering Committee, and the First Nations Schools Association jointly hosted the 3rd Annual First Nations Parents Conference from May 25 to 26th in Vancouver. The conference, which was attended by 130 parents and guardians from across the province, featured several workshops, a question and answer period with the Minister of Education, Shirley Bond, and the sharing of the new "Lighter Side of Parenting" booklet of humorous stories from parents..



The Historica Foundation is a partner in the Seventh Generation Club and Historica has supported First Nations schools and local provincial schools to come together to partner in presenting heritage fairs. **Above:** Students act out historical skits. **Below:** Stephanie, from Seabird Island Community School, presents her display about her grandmother's life on the west coast.



Asking Kids: What Does the Seventh Generation Club Mean to You?

Dan George, of Four Directions Management Services Ltd., interviewed young Seventh Generation Club members from around BC to learn what they like about the Club and to gain ideas for future Club newsletters and activities.

Dan visited six schools where the Seventh Generation Club is active:

- Kispiox School, Kispiox
- John Field School, Hazelton
- Moricetown School, Moricetown
- Britannia Elementary School, Vancouver
- Chehalis Community School, Chehalis
- Seabird Island Community School, Seabird Island

Below is a sample of the feedback he received from some Club members on the question: *What does the Seventh Generation Club mean to you?*

Culture – Members stated the importance of the cultural foundation of the Club, and its relationship to self-identity and improved self-esteem. The term "Respect" was used most often by respondents.

Canucks – Members referenced the Canucks players, televised games and Club prizes from the Canucks as being very important to them.

Fun – The prizes/trips/contests component of the Club is very important, allowing Members to 'compete' alongside their peers for recognition and prizes.

Teamwork – The notion that "Together we are Stronger" was evidenced at all of the schools participating in the site-visits. Being associated with a 'Club' or 'Team' that provides children with a broader sense of community was important.

Learning – The Club daytimers and newsletters were seen as valuable resources and aids to organized learning for Club members.

Physical Activity – Almost every sport was identified with the Seventh Generation Club members with the overwhelming choice being hockey. The Annual Sports Day and ribbon prizes promoted a sense of healthy, active living.

Thanks to all of the students who participated!



Mike Gouchie, in performance at last year's Seventh Generation Club Gala

Gala Evening Celebrates Work of the Club

If you will be coming to Vancouver for the 12th Annual Provincial Conference on Aboriginal Education on December 7-9, consider taking in the sights, tastes and sounds of this year's Seventh Generation Club Gala and Benefit Auction. Like the Conference, the December 8th Gala will be taking place at The Westin Bayshore near Stanley Park.

The Gala is the Club's major celebration and fund-raising event of the year, and it will feature a large silent auction of art, sports memorabilia, activity packages, and many other items.

We are currently lining up guest speakers and we are eagerly anticipating the return of the talented Aboriginal Women's Ensemble (now known as M'Girl).

For nearly nine years the First Nations Schools Association has coordinated the Club with the help of local teachers across British Columbia and the Club partners: BC Hydro, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the Vancouver Canucks, The Historica Foundation, and Health Canada. The Club has been a positive force in students' lives by demonstrating ways to set positive goals, study hard in school, and practice healthy choices. Over 7000 students are members of the Club.

Discounted tickets are available for Conference attendees. For tickets or to donate auction items, please call 1-877-422-3672 or email gala@fnesc.ca. Visit the Gala webpage by going to www.fnesc.ca and following the link to the Gala.

First Nations Youth
Employment Strategy
(YES) Programs

**2006/2007
IMPORTANT DATE
REMINDERS**

See this schedule and more program
information online at:
www.fnesc.ca/programs/program_youth.php

**STUDENT SUMMER
EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM**

Letter of Intent - June 16, 2006
Final Report - Sept. 8, 2006

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
PROGRAM**

Proposal - June 9, 2006
Final Report - Sept. 15, 2006

**CAREER PROMOTION &
AWARENESS PROGRAM**

Proposal - June 16, 2006
Interim Report - Dec. 8, 2006
Final Report - Mar. 23, 2007

**YOUTH WORK EXPERIENCE
PROGRAM**

Proposal - June 23, 2006
Interim Report - Dec. 15, 2006
Final Report - Mar. 23, 2007

**FNESC and FNSA
Program Update**

FNESC and the First Nations Schools Association cooperatively administer several programs for First Nations schools and communities including the First Nations Youth Employment Strategy Programs, and New Paths for Education.

Information about the programs is online at www.fnesc.ca - click on the link in the header to Programs



Last summer, the Fort Nelson First Nation hosted a hands-on science and technology presentation delivered by Elephant Thoughts, and made possible through the Science and Technology Program administered by FNESC and the FNSA. The students participated in cooperative games and challenges, and most importantly, they learned that science was fun!



Through a partnership with ArtStarts, FNESC and the FNSA were able to grant 24 First Nations schools Artists in Education grants in the 2005/2006 school year. Schools used those grants to bring a total of 30 artists into the schools to work with students in such diverse areas as visual arts, music, dance, storytelling, carving, theatre, drum-making, canoe-building, and basketry. At Gitwinksihlkw Elementary School, students from worked with a local artist to create a new school mural.



Program Contacts

Youth Employment Strategy
Programs and
New Paths for Education
www.fnesc.ca/Programs
Derek Payne, Program Administrator
derekp@fnesc.ca

Special Education
www.fnsa.ca/specialed.htm
Kelly Kitchen, Special Ed. Manager
kellyk@fnesc.ca
Lisa Ellis, Resource Line Coordinator
1.877.547.1919 lisae@fnesc.ca

SchoolNet
www.fnesc.bc.ca/schoolnet/index.php
Dayna Anderson
daynaa@fnesc.ca

The Youth Work Experience (YWE) Program, one of the four programs within the First Nations Youth Employment Strategy, has given many young people a good start. Participants in the program are youth who live on-reserve and are out-of-school, unemployed, or underemployed. The YWE Program offers opportunities for mentored work experience, but in a supportive and encouraging environment, giving youth a valuable opportunity to gain workplace skills and encouraging them to return to school for higher learning.

Below are a sampling of comments from youth who participated in the program.

"I helped to organize an Avian Flu workshop and prepare a PowerPoint presentation which I had fun doing. Working in the health field has taught me a lot and I enjoyed working as part of a team. I have gained many skills and enjoyed my six-month work experience." (Participant)

"The program activities covered were estuary travel, compass work, risk-management, boat and motor repairs, and maintenance. The program was way more beneficial than I anticipated. The program prepared me mentally and physically to start and outdoor guiding business. The instructor was a very knowledgeable outdoorsman." (Participant)

"I worked as an Administrative Assistant and the benefit of participating in this program was that I learned many administrative tasks. I am enrolled in two online courses in Microsoft Excel 2003 and Computer Skills for the Workplace. I learned many excellent skills to have for employment in the future. I was very satisfied with all of the YWE Program activities, such as daycare services while I attend the program." (Participant)

First Nations Schools Association Update

FNESC provides administrative support to the First Nations Schools Association (FNSA), which is a non-profit, charitable body directed by representatives of First Nations schools in BC.

FNESC and the FNSA work together to administer the Youth Employment Strategy Programs and the New Paths for Education Programs, and they collaborate on many other initiatives.

Here are some examples of the FNSA's recent work and news:

- Four teacher competency workshops, facilitated by the BC College of Teachers, have been completed with 33 schools participating.
- Approximately 14 schools will be taking part in the FNSA Schools Assessment process in 2006/2007.
- *A Handbook for Teachers Who are New To First Nations Schools* has been developed and it is currently being distributed.
- The FNSA Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Conference took place in April, 2006, and it involved important planning to inform the FNSA's work over the next years in the areas of special education, school systems, data and measures, education jurisdiction, and school innovations.
- The FNSA is working with the First Nations Inuit Health Branch to deliver Youth Suicide Prevention Programs in First Nations schools. To date, newsletters for students and parents have been prepared and a Teacher Focus Group has met to review curriculum for implementation in First Nations schools.
- 29 schools participated in the School Measures and Data Collection Project in Year 2 and the results were shared at the FNSA AGM.

Learning About Language Revitalization in Aotearoa

Many Aboriginal people worldwide view New Zealand as a frontrunner in the work of Aboriginal language revitalization. In order to see and learn from those efforts first hand, a group of twenty First Nations educators and two FNESC staff members, journeyed to Aotearoa, (New Zealand) on a 14-day tour in November of 2005. This is the second Maori Language Study Tour FNESC has coordinated and it was intended to help BC educators implement similar strategies in BC First Nations schools and communities.

The participants visited Maori language immersion schools, spoke with educators, and were warmly introduced to many elements of Maori culture including maraes (sacred meeting houses) and the powhiri (the welcoming ceremony to a marae). Many also participated in the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education (WIPCE), attended by over 3000 indigenous people from around the world.

When asked about learnings on the study tour, here were a few of the replies:

"Just do it', that's how the Maori did it"

"It takes time and patience to achieve what

you want to do in your language schools. So, have patience!"

"I've gained optimism..."

"Language and culture and education must be in accord for indigenous people to excel in growth and development"

"Teach language through song and dance"

"Be passionate about language and culture, persevere and be unwavering..."



Visits to schools and language nests were highlights of the trip for many participants in the FNESC Maori Language Study Tour.

Anti-Racism Leadership Network Established

One of the major challenges of FNESC's work in the area of addressing racism in the education system, has been how to deliver anti-racism support where it is needed – in communities and schools across the province – and how to sustain the support long-term. In the spring of 2006, a major step was made toward meeting this challenge with the forging of a new network of anti-racism leaders, representing communities across the province.

Eighteen individuals, many of them support workers, teachers, and counselors took part in a 4-day training session in Vancouver this March, where they honed their skills in workshop facilitation and design and explored some of the main themes in anti-racism education. The training was led by June Williams, former coordinator of the BCTF Program Against Racism, and Nora Greenway, former FNESC Anti-Racism Officer, with FNESC's Anti-Racism Consultant, Eric Wong, providing a workshop on how to intervene

effectively in racism incidents.

The participants in the network expressed their willingness to share resources and continue their professional development in the field. Each participant has committed to delivering at least two anti-racism presentations locally over the next year and FNESC will coordinate that process.

The Anti-Racism Leadership Network appreciates the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage, which made the training possible, and the support of the BC Aboriginal Education Partners Anti-Racism Working Group.

If you would like to receive the bi-monthly email bulletin of the Anti-Racism Network or to share success stories from your school or community in the area of anti-racism, please email jenniferw@fnesc.ca.

Help us build a strong network to counter racism!

Please Help FNEsc Gather the Post-Secondary Data!

There has been strong anecdotal evidence that many First Nations communities are finding it increasingly challenging to fund students for post-secondary education under the existing Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) funding process. The FNEsc Post-Secondary Subcommittee has been working with BC First Nations communities to build a strong business case for increased post-secondary funding and for post-secondary funding policy change.

The following two projects are designed to build an accurate picture of the First Nations post-secondary situation in BC and to inform the National Post-Secondary Education Review.

Deferred Post-Secondary Students Data Collection Project

The Post-Secondary Subcommittee is working to gather accurate information from First Nations communities about the number of students in the BC Region who have been:

- Deferred or wait listed
- Under-funded
- Wanting to take ineligible programs (i.e. trades training)

The Subcommittee drafted a Deferred

Student Data Collection Form that all First Nations have been asked to submit. The data will be compiled into a provincial summary to develop an accurate picture for the BC Region.

Aggregate Data Collection Project

The Subcommittee and INAC representatives discussed the importance of collecting data on all funded post-secondary students, completion rates and wait lists. INAC has the data, but it has indicated that it cannot share the data with FNEsc unless it receives permission from First Nations.

The Subcommittee is interested in gathering INAC provincial-level post-secondary education data, not individual Band data. Accurate collective data will assist us in presenting a true picture of the need for post-secondary education funding in BC.

To support the project, Bands are asked to consider passing a Band Council Resolution to allow INAC to release the requested aggregate data to FNEsc.

If you have not already received the Deferred Student Data Collection Form or BCR template, you can download those resources from www.fnesc.ca/about/about_postsecscommittee.php or email karenbr@fnesc.ca.

IAHLA Data Project Results Are In

The Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) conducted a large-scale survey in 2005 and twenty-one First Nations post-secondary and adult education institutes were eligible to participate. Here are just a few of the findings, which were shared at the IAHLA Annual General Meeting this spring:

- 49% of the schools had been in existence for 20 years or more
- student enrollment was up 5% over the previous year, and almost half of the institutes anticipated increased enrolment in the coming year
- 53% reported a decrease in funding levels compared to last year
- 53% of the respondents are recognized by Private Career Training Institutes Agency.

The report is online at www.fnesc.bc.ca/iahla/research.php. For more IAHLA news, see *IAHLA Highlights* - the new electronic newsletter of the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association. Email karenbr@fnesc.ca to subscribe.

EVENTS CALENDAR

For further details about upcoming workshops and conferences, visit the FNEsc website at www.fnesc.bc.ca/conferences/index.php

FNEsc/FNSA Regional Sessions

These meetings are an opportunity to learn about FNEsc/FNSA and Ministry of Education activities, discuss local and provincial education matters, and set direction for the work of FNEsc and the FNSA in the coming year. Registration information is online at www.fnesc.ca/conferences/index.php

Prince Rupert, September 26 & 27

Lytton, October 10 & 11

Kamloops, October 12 & 13

Port Alberni, October 24 & 25

Prince George, October 24 & 25

Nanaimo, October 26 & 27

Williams Lake, October 26 & 27

Cranbrook, November 6 & 7

Kelowna, November 13 & 14

Campbell River, November 20 & 21

Lower Mainland, November 27 & 28

Jurisdiction Meeting for First Nations who have submitted a Letter of Intent. September 21st & 22nd, 2006. Location Marriott Residence Inn, Vancouver

Annual Provincial Conference on Aboriginal Education, Literature and Literacy, Westin Bayshore - Vancouver, December 7-9, 2006

Seventh Generation Club Gala and Benefit Auction, Westin Bayshore - Vancouver, December 8, 2006

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FNESC and its Partners Online

First Nations Education Steering Committee: www.fnesc.ca

First Nations Schools Association: www.fnsa.ca

Seventh Generation Club: www.seventhgenerationclub.com



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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 and emailed to interested individuals, organizations and government agencies.

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Metlakatla First Nation
Kamloops Indian Band
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Ahousaht First Nation
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Nadleh Whuten Band Council
Nisga'a Nation
Williams Lake Indian Band
Musqueam Indian Band
Quatsino Band Council
Carrier Sekani Tribal Council
Boston Bar First Nation
Komox Nation
Tahltan Band Council
Campbell River Indian Band
Kwadacha Band
Skidegate Band
Gitsegukla Band
Mamallikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em Band
Kitselas Band Council
Kwakiutl District Council
Gwa'sala-'Nakawaxda'xw Council
Kyah Weget Education Society
Kitsumkalum Band Council
Soda Creek Indian Band
Neskonlith Indian Band
Cheam Indian Band
Tlatlasikwala First Nation
Tzaeachten First Nation
Sto:lo Shxwa:y Village
Snu Ney Muxw Education Council
Skwah First Nation
Kitamaat Village Council
Nuxalk Education Authority
Gitwangak Education Society