



Quality Education A Right.

NEWSLETTER OF THE FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE

FNESC CELEBRATES NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN ITS ABORIGINAL TEACHER EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

FNESC is very pleased to announce an exciting new development in its efforts to address Aboriginal teacher education issues.

A new ATEC Coordinator has been hired, and the approval of a significant funding proposal will now allow for the coordination of bridging programs for aspiring teacher education students!

For the past three years, an Aboriginal Teacher Education Consortium (ATEC) has been working to increase the number of Aboriginal teachers in BC.

ATEC includes representatives of FNESC, the FNSA, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), the BC Ministry of Education (MoE), the BC Teachers' Federation, the BC College of Teachers, the BC School Trustees Association, the BC Principals and Vice Principals Association, as well as the teacher education programs that operate in BC.

ATEC has been working to address the need for greater representation of Aboriginal teachers in the public education system and First Nations schools in BC.

ATEC began its efforts by producing promotional materials for students, parents, and educational personnel to increase the interest of Aboriginal secondary students in the teaching profession, and to encourage course selections that will allow them to access teacher education opportunities.

In order to advance their goals even further, a new ATEC Coordinator, John Chenoweth, has now been hired to work with FNESC and the other ATEC partners. John is a member of the Upper Nicola Indian Band, and he has worked as a teacher and vice principal in the Merritt area for many years.

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Participants at Seventh Generation Club Gala

SEVENTH GENERATION CLUB GALA

Our third annual Seventh Generation Club Gala Evening took place on the evening of April 24, 2003, and it was a memorable event.

George Leach and Sandy Scofield delivered powerful musical performances, and bidding at the silent auction was fierce.

All proceeds from the event will be used to support the Seventh Generation Club, an initiative that encourages First Nations students to stay in

school, make healthy life choices, and contribute to their communities in a positive way. Over 6000 First Nations students in both First Nations and public schools in BC belong to the Club.

We are very appreciative of everyone who attended the Gala and donated auction items.



INDIAN AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA ANNOUNCES NEW FUNDING FOR FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS

FNESC is pleased to announce that the first few months of 2002 brought several much anticipated announcements regarding funding for First Nations schools.

In January, the federal government finally released the new funding for special education services in First Nations schools. That funding reflects years of efforts to bring attention to the critical need for more resources in this area, which included a cooperative Treasury Board submission by First Nations and INAC officials.

In December 2001, the federal government announced that \$30 million would be provided for two years for First Nations school students with special needs. Following that announcement, INAC and First Nations representatives worked for almost a year to define the accountability measures that would accompany the funding, which was at long last released to First Nations schools in January, 2003!

In addition to the special education funding, INAC recently released \$500,000 to assist First Nations schools in enhancing their library and learning resources.

That funding was administered by FNESC and the FNSEA, and it was used to bulk purchase magazine subscriptions, children's books, and parent resources. The collective purchase of those materials allowed First Nations schools to obtain the much needed materials at substantially lower costs.

In March 2003, INAC also announced that an additional \$3 million will be provided to First Nations schools in BC through the nominal roll formula. That increase in core funding reflects detailed research by FNESC which demonstrates that significantly less funding is provided by INAC for First Nations schools than is provided for public schools through the BC MoE.

FNESC used those research results as a foundation for its funding lobbying efforts, and the staff and Board members of FNESC are extremely pleased that INAC has begun to address the funding discrepancy with the new \$3 million for First Nations schools.

ATEC ACTIVITIES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

One of John's major new responsibilities will be the organization of bridging programs to help interested Aboriginal candidates obtain the courses required to enter teacher education programs. Funding for that work is now available following a successful proposal to the federal government. More information about that work will be distributed soon.

The long-term goals of ATEC still include the establishment of satellite teacher education programs. The intention of the satellite programs is to increase access to teacher education pro-

grams by hosting them in First Nations communities. John Chenoweth and the ATEC members will be working toward accessing funding for such programs within the upcoming years.

This year, the ATEC members also have been discussing plans to examine issues of teacher retention, including ways to mentor and support new teachers in their challenging early years in the profession.

Anyone requiring more information about the ATEC initiatives is welcome to contact John at jchenoweth@sd58.bc.ca

ANNOUNCING NEW WORKSHOPS ON CAREER PLANNING FOR FIRST NATIONS STUDENTS

Three workshops will be held for people who work to assist First Nations students in establishing career goals and planning relevant education paths. Two additional workshops will be organized specifically for First Nations students in grade 10 and above.

Workshops for Education Workers

May 23, 2003 Terrace, BC
May 29, 2003 Vancouver, BC
May 30, 2003 Kamloops, BC

Workshops for First Nations Students

May 24, 2003 Terrace, BC
May 31, 2003 Kamloops, BC

Please call the FNESC office for more details.

JURISDICTION DISCUSSIONS MOVE AHEAD WITH THE SUPPORT OF FIRST NATIONS IN BC

Almost ten years ago, when First Nations representatives first established FNEESC, among the many goals for the new organization was the promotion of First Nations jurisdiction for education. Since that time, FNEESC has endeavoured to support First Nations in building their education capacity and increasing their control and involvement in education decision-making.

In 2000/2001, FNEESC coordinated a number of regional meetings to facilitate specific discussions about the progress being achieved in terms of First Nations control of First Nations education. At those meetings, participants were asked about their perspectives of jurisdiction issues, and they were asked whether FNEESC should continue undertaking efforts in this area.

The participants at the jurisdiction meetings expressed unanimous support for a continued exploration of jurisdiction issues by FNEESC, in close consultation with First Nations leaders and community members. When that response was shared with the FNEESC Board of Directors and First Nations Chiefs in BC, FNEESC was provided a clear mandate to pursue its

jurisdiction efforts.

Followed that direction, FNEESC began participating in negotiations with federal and provincial government officials regarding ways to advance First Nations jurisdiction. A Chiefs Committee was formed to advise the FNEESC negotiators throughout that process.

Last summer, the tripartite discussions resulted in a draft Memorandum of Agreement, which outlines a legislative framework that would allow First Nations in BC to implement their jurisdiction for education. According to the draft agreement, First Nations would have the ability to opt in or opt out of the proposed legislation, according to their unique needs and perspectives.

First Nations that choose to opt in to the framework would create community education authorities. Those authorities would have the ability to undertake a range of education initiatives, such as the creation of a First Nations school, and/or mechanisms for greater decision-making in the public education system. Through the legislation, efforts in each of those areas would be legally recognized and protected.

FNEESC remains committed to having any agreement reflect the notion of lifelong learning, with the goal of ensuring that the proposed legislation encompasses education from the level of early childhood through to post-secondary. FNEESC efforts to promote that perspective with the government negotiators are still ongoing.

The agreement under discussion is not intended to replace the treaty process, self-government discussions, or any other negotiations that are occurring between First Nations and/or the federal or provincial governments. The legislation is intended to represent an interim measure, as a way to protect First Nations interests while other agreements are being negotiated.

Overall, the negotiations taking place are founded upon the notion of authority and jurisdiction remaining with First Nations communities. The Community Education Authorities will govern education decision-making, and the structure of those authorities will be at the discretion of each First Nation that chooses to participate. Through the legislation, communities will be able to delegate some aspects of their control to a central, pro-

vincial-level First Nations education organization. However, the delegation of any powers to a collective organization will be entirely optional.

At the 2002 regional sessions, FNEESC representatives shared detailed information about the draft agreement and the proposed legislative framework, and everyone in attendance at the meetings was asked for their feedback. Along with several useful specific suggestions, unanimous support for the proposed framework was expressed at the regional sessions.

Many crucial aspects of the jurisdiction negotiations have yet to be finalized, including the funding component. The FNEESC negotiators are determined that no agreement will exist without adequate funding levels.

FNEESC will continue to provide updates about this issue as the discussions progress, and First Nations leaders and educators will be provided ample opportunity to provide input before any agreement is completed.





FNESC'S NEW INVOLVEMENT WITH THE FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLNET PROGRAM

This Fall, FNESC and the FNSA took on a new area of responsibility following a successful application to become the Regional Management Organization (RMO) for the BC First Nations SchoolNet Program.

First Nations SchoolNet is an Industry Canada funded program intended to build the technological capacity of First Nations schools. That work involves distributing computers and software, as well as ensuring that all First Nations schools are connected to the internet.

Phillip Djwa, the new SchoolNet Coordinator, is now working with an Advisory Committee to finalize a workplan for the 2003/2004 school year. In the meantime, FNESC is busy sending computers to schools with the most pressing technological requirements.

Once the critical needs of First Nations schools have been addressed, possibilities will be explored for expanding the SchoolNet initiative to include First Nations communities. More information about that possibility will be shared within the coming months.

TACKLING RACISM IN A PROACTIVE WAY

The Education Partners Group Anti-Racism Sub-Committee believes that the racism experienced by First Nations students must be addressed.

Accordingly, the Sub-Committee has been actively engaged in efforts to raise awareness about racism issues and broaden partnerships to protect First Nations students from its effects.

This year, funding from Heritage Canada and the Vancouver Foundation has allowed for significant advances in these efforts. An Anti-Racism Toolkit was created for use in facilitating meaningful discussions about discrimination in classrooms throughout the province.

Two new staff people are also working with FNESC - Nora Greenway, Anti-Racism Coordinator, and Eric Wong, Anti-Racism Officer (see page 7 for more information). Nora and Eric are anxious to visit communities and schools to facilitate in-service and meetings aimed at building partnerships to minimize the impact of racism in BC. Anyone requiring further information is welcome to contact the FNESC office.

A NEW SUPPORT HANDBOOK FOR MEMBERS OF FIRST NATIONS BOARDS

FNESC is very pleased to announce the availability of a new resource for members of First Nations Boards.

Dr. Larry Thomas is well known to people who have attended the Speakers Series Board Training Workshops he facilitated on behalf of FNESC and the FNSA throughout the past several years.

Participants in those workshops responded very positively to the training Dr. Thomas provided, and many people recommended that the presented information should be made available in written form. The participants also suggested that the information shared by Dr. Thomas would relate very well to all First Nations Boards, not just those dealing with education issues.

Based upon that feedback, Dr. Thomas agreed to develop a Handbook for First Nations Boards. To assist him with that work, an Advisory Committee was established that included representatives of a variety of First Nations social service providers, including schools, health care organizations, child care centres, and child protection agencies.

Throughout the past year, the Advisory Committee and

Dr. Thomas met several times to discuss the information needs of First Nations controlled Boards.

The results of that work are now available in the Handbook for First Nations Boards. That Handbook includes suggestions about the appropriate focus for Board efforts, which is governance, vision building, and strategic planning, rather than day-to-day operations.

The Handbook for First Nations Boards also shares information about indicators of non-profit Board effectiveness, policy development, budgeting, advocacy responsibilities, the organization of effective meetings, and relations between the Board and the Executive Director.

Dr. Thomas presented the First Nations Board Handbook in three Speakers Series Workshops this spring. Copies of the Handbook were also sent to all First Nations schools and communities, and to other First Nations service agencies. Additional copies are available through the FNESC office for anyone interested. Please contact Patti for more details.

AN UPDATE ON FNE SC STAFF WHO ARE WE AND WHAT DO WE DO?

At the 2002 Regional Sessions, it was recommended that FNE SC provide an update on the people who work in the office and the responsibilities of each staff person.

As requested, we are very pleased to include in this issue of the newsletter an update about our staff, and who you can contact with questions about specific programs.

Christa Williams **Executive Director**

Christa Williams, FNE SC Executive Director, is a member of the Lytton First Nation . Christa has been with FNE SC almost nine years. Christa has responsibility for the overall operation of FNE SC, including financial and personnel management, as well as assisting the FNE SC Board in determining the overall direction of the organization.

Christa attends all meetings of the Tripartite Education Committee, the Education Partners Group, and she works with the Aboriginal Languages Sub-Committee.

Christa is also centrally involved in the ongoing jurisdiction discussions, work-

ing as technical support to the Chiefs' advisory group and to the FNE SC negotiators. Christa would be pleased to share more information about that initiative upon request.

Christa can also be found at all FNE SC conferences and the majority of the annual regional sessions, and she is committed to participating in ongoing consultations with First Nations regarding overall FNE SC activities.

Barbara Kavanagh **Director of Research and** **First Nations Schools**

Barbara Kavanagh has been working with FNE SC for the past six years, and she has primary responsibility for the organization's research and policy development. Barbara is also responsible for preparing many of the FNE SC funding proposals, and she writes for the Seventh Generation Club and the First Nations Parents Club.

Barbara works closely with the First Nations Schools Association (FN SA) Board of Directors, and she is also responsible for the administration of the First Nations Schools Assessment project.

Barbara is working closely with the newly developed Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association, and she provides administrative support to the Indian Studies Support Program Committee. Barbara would be pleased to provide further information about any of those initiatives at any time.

Derek Payne **Program Manager**

Derek Payne, a member of the Sto:lo Nation, became the Program Manager for FNE SC approximately two years ago. Since that time, Derek has been working to assist First Nations communities and schools in taking advantage of FNE SC's funding programs.

Derek is responsible for the overall management of the youth programs and the Gathering Strength program. Derek is always willing to answer questions about funding program application processes, and he would be happy to provide support in meeting reporting requirements.

In addition, Derek helps with the organization of the annual speaker's series, and Derek can be contacted for more details about workshops dates and locations.

Jennifer White **Communications Officer**

Jennifer White has been the communications officer for FNE SC since 2000. In that role, Jennifer has responsibility for a number of FNE SC initiatives.

Jennifer promotes the work of FNE SC with the media, and she also assists with the design of a range of promotional materials. Jennifer helps to organize numerous FNE SC special events and conferences, and she also provides support to the various Education Partners Working Groups.

Jan Haugen **Executive Assistant**

Jan, a member of the Lytton First Nation, has been with FNE SC for just over one year. Jan, who is the Executive Assistant, supports the activities of the FNE SC Board, including the organization and recording of their meetings.

Jan provides direct support to Christa Williams, Executive Director. She also helps to coordinate the annual regional sessions, and she is very involved in FNE SC's communications efforts and conference arrangements.

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FNESC STAFF UPDATE CONT.

April Smith
Finance Clerk

Everyone receiving cheques for funding programs and travel reimbursements can thank FNESC's Finance Clerk, April Smith, for her hard work. April, a member of the Lower Similkameen First Nation, has been assisting with FNESC's finances for almost six years, and she also assists with the organization of FNESC conferences and special events.

Roz Bodwell Office Clerk

Roz Bodwell plays a key role in maintaining the day-to-day operations of the Seventh Generation Club. Anyone wanting to enroll students in the Club or learn more about any Seventh Generation Club activities is welcome to contact Roz at any time. Roz also maintains the FNESC office computer systems, and she has been assisting with the implementation of the new SchoolNet program.

Marie Natrall Secretary

Marie Natrall, a member of the Squamish Nation, recently became a Secretary with FNESC, and she is now working to support of numerous FNESC activities through information distribution and office organizational tasks. Specifically, Marie is helping to organize the speaker's series workshops and she also assists with the administration of the youth and Gathering Strength programs. Marie would be happy to answer questions about those initiatives.

Phillip Djwa SchoolNet Coordinator

Phillip Djwa has been involved with FNESC for several years, as he originally designed and maintained the FNESC, FNSA, and Seventh Generation Club web sites.

Phillip is now working full-time for FNESC, with responsibility for the management of the SchoolNet program. SchoolNet is intended to build the technological capacity of First Nations schools, and Phillip would be happy to discuss the new initiatives with anyone interested.

John Chenoweth ATEC Coordinator

John Chenoweth, who is profiled on the first page of this newsletter, recently became the ATEC Coordinator. Although John continues to be employed with School District 58, but a significant portion of his time is now dedicated to his work with FNESC.

In his new role with FNESC, John will be assisting the Education Partners Group with their efforts to promote interest in teaching careers amongst Aboriginal people, assisting aspiring teachers in accessing the education they need to pursue their career goals.

Patti Yamamoto Information Officer

Patti Yamamoto is a new FNESC staff person who is helping with the organization of the resource library as well as handling publication requests. If anyone would like further information about the resources available through FNESC, please feel free to contact Patti at any time.

Special Education Team

Kelly Kitchen Special Education Manager

As the FNESC Special Education Manager, Kelly oversees the overall implementation of FNESC's special education programming. That work involves assisting First Nations schools in developing workplans and accessing and reporting on their funding.

Kelly also coordinates the special education professional development activities of FNESC, and she coordinates the overall schedules for the special education team, which includes organizing the school visits by FNESC special education staff.

Larissa Schrader Speech and Language Pathologist

Throughout the past school year, Larissa Schrader, a Speech and Language Pathologist, has been very busy visiting First Nations schools throughout the province to assist with the identification of students with special needs, as well as the development of programs and services to meet their needs. Any schools requiring Speech and Language



FNESC STAFF UPDATE CONTINUED

Pathologist services are encouraged to contact Kelly Kitchen to discuss Larissa's availability.

Madeline Pohlmann Special Education Resource Teacher

Madeline Pohlmann, a very experienced Special Education Teacher, has also been travelling throughout BC to assist First Nations schools in the area of special education. Madeline is available to help with student assessments, Individual Education Plan development, follow-up services for students with special needs, as well as in-service training for school staff. Kelly Kitchen at the FNESC office can help with requests for Madeline's assistance.

Karen Horner Special Education Resource Line Coordinator

Many people are familiar with Karen Horner, the Coordinator of the Special Education Resource Line. Through that toll-free telephone service, Karen is available to assist educators, parents, and community members with information and advice regarding special education matters. Karen can be reached toll-free at 1-877-547-1919.

Barb O'Neil Special Education Team Secretary

For the past year, Barb O'Neil has been providing very capable secretarial support to the entire Special Education Team, assisting them in organizing the incoming workplans and reports, and helping with the extensive travel arrangements for the school visits.

Barb has also been providing technical support for the work of the Indian Studies Support Program Committee, including the challenging job of organizing the incoming proposals and responding to requests for guideline packages.

Anti-Racism Staff

Nora Greenway Anti-Racism Coordinator

FNESC is very honoured to have hired Nora Greenway, an Elder with the St'at'imc Nation, as the new Anti-Racism Coordinator. Nora is well known throughout the province for her long-term devotion to First Nations education, and specifically to efforts to combat racism in the education system.

In her new position with FNESC, Nora will be assisting the Education Partners Anti-Racism Working Group.

Nora is available to assist with workshop development and facilitation, awareness raising, student support activities, as well as conflict resolution in the event of contentious meetings or relationships.

Eric Wong Anti-Racism Officer

Last year, Eric Wong developed the extremely popular Anti-Racism Toolkit, which is intended to foster meaningful classroom discussions about discrimination and the effects of racism.

FNESC is very pleased that Eric's new employment with FNESC means that he is available to provide in-service training on the implementation of the Anti-Racism Toolkit. Eric is also available to assist school staff in any other ways that will help them to address racism and ensure that First Nations students are supported in effective ways.

Thanks from the Staff

The FNESC staff would like to thank the FNESC Board and First Nations for their ongoing support. All of the people working for FNESC would be happy to provide whatever assistance they can at any time.



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