

BCTEA Progress Update – June 2020

Introduction

The *BC Tripartite Education Agreement: Supporting First Nation Student Success* (BCTEA), signed in July 2018 by the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), the B.C. Ministry of Education (the Ministry), Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), and witnessed by the First Nations Schools Association (FNSA), is intended to promote systemic shifts and collective efforts to support improved educational outcomes for all First Nation students in British Columbia, regardless of where they live or are enrolled in school.

The purpose of BCTEA Progress Updates are to inform, raise awareness, and build capacity among the signatories and K-12 education partners on BCTEA-related activities and commitments. Key dates and contact information pertaining to specific initiatives are also provided. BCTEA Progress Updates will be sent three times per year.

For additional BCTEA resources, including the full Agreement, please visit www.fnesc.ca/bctea.

COVID-19 Response

FNESC, the Ministry, and ISC (the Parties), are working to address the unique and evolving needs of First Nation students in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Collectively, our goal is to ensure equitable outcomes and learning opportunities through collaboration with First Nations and the delivery of enhanced language and culture programs. FNESC participates on ministerial committees and is actively engaged in discussions about resources for continuous learning, the partial restart of in-person learning, and September start-up. The provincial [Safe and Healthy Schools website](#) has updated information on the BC Education Restart Plan and health and safety protocols for the K-12 setting.

The Parties continue to meet on a frequent basis to support and advance BCTEA initiatives. Though the pandemic presents no shortage of challenges, our working relationship and governance structures provide the foundation for a strong and coordinated approach toward meaningful education for First Nation students.

B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act

In November 2019, British Columbia (B.C.) passed the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act \(DRIPA\)](#), becoming the first province in Canada to pass legislation implementing the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UN Declaration). This legislation recognizes the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples and requires the alignment of provincial laws with the internationally recognized standards of the UN Declaration. The legislation also involves the development of an action plan and regular reporting to monitor progress.

DRIPA provides an opportunity to further transform education in B.C., requiring government to take all measures necessary to ensure B.C. laws are consistent with the UN Declaration. In the spirit of collaborative partnership and the government-to-government relationship between the Province and First Nations, we are working to significantly improve outcomes for First Nation students. Areas being considered include

- Recognizing and honouring traditional territories
- Establishing structures and processes for shared-decision making
- Maintaining an active Indigenous Education Council
- Signing and implementing effective Local Education Agreements (LEAs)
- Implementing Language Programs in partnership with First Nations
- Creating locally-developed Board Authorized courses in partnership with First Nations
- Incorporating First Nations culture into school ceremonies in partnership with local First Nations

Jointly Convened Annual Meeting

In October 2019, the Ministry and FNEC co-hosted the inaugural Jointly Convened Annual Meeting (JCAM), to bring together Superintendents and Chairs of Indigenous Education Councils to discuss initiatives supporting the success of First Nation students in BC public schools. Key agenda topics included the transportation needs of First Nation students living on reserve, Local Education Agreements (LEAs), and the newly instituted sixth professional learning day focusing on Indigenous student success. Chief Dr. Robert Joseph, an ambassador for Reconciliation Canada and a Hereditary Chief of the Gwawaenuk First Nation, delivered an inspiring keynote address. [Follow-up materials](#) with ideas for professional development and further information on the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* are available.

Planning for the 2020 JCAM is underway, and due to the Provincial Health Officer's order, this year's meeting will take place in a virtual setting across two half-day sessions. Superintendents and Chairs of Indigenous Education Councils are advised to save the following dates: **November 17 and November 18, 2020.**

Professional Learning Day with an Indigenous Focus

Beginning in the 2019/2020 school year and continuing each year up to 2022/2023, school districts are required to provide an [Indigenous-focused professional learning day](#) to all teachers in B.C. public schools. The purpose of the day is to prioritize Indigenous student achievement and to further integrate Indigenous worldviews and perspectives into learning environments. The importance of professional development is closely related to the recently adopted ninth standard of [The Professional Standards of BC Educators](#):

Educators respect and value the history of First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Canada and the impact of the past on the present and the future. Educators contribute towards truth, reconciliation and healing. Educators foster a deeper understanding of ways of knowing and being, histories, and cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

We encourage school districts to connect with First Nations in planning and designing professional learning opportunities to ensure they respect and embody the culture, value, and traditions of local rightsholders.

We look forward to hearing what was accomplished in the first year of the Indigenous-focused professional learning day and expect to see further dedication to this initiative in future years. To share your ideas and experiences, please contact Educ.IndigenousEducation@gov.bc.ca.

First Nations Student Count: Nominal Roll, 1701 and Joint Verification

The First Nations Nominal Roll is the registry of elementary and secondary students eligible to be funded by ISC. Therefore, it is important that students are captured correctly. The Joint Verification Process (JVP) provides an opportunity for First Nations and school districts to jointly review the Nominal Roll enrollment of on-reserve elementary and secondary students attending public schools. First Nations and school districts are encouraged to review last year's Joint Verification Process outlined in Appendix I of the Nominal Roll Instructions to discuss how the Nominal Roll can be effectively completed.

Considerations that may assist in developing a Joint Verification Process include

- What were the successes in completing the 2019/2020 JVP that you would like to continue?
- What opportunities are there to provide a more effective JVP?
- What communication methods work best in jointly reviewing the Nominal Roll?
- Who are the appropriate individuals to be involved in the process?
- Do both parties have the same list of students?
- Is the student information accurate?

To request a copy of the Nominal Roll instructions, please contact Indigenous Services Canada BC Region Education program at aadnc.bceducation.aandc@canada.ca.

FNESC and ISC are planning to provide webinars to First Nations to address common Nominal Roll policy and system related questions. The Ministry of Education is exploring options to ensure the consistency of information between First Nations and school districts. More information on this topic will be provided in the coming months.

First Nations Educational Outcome Improvement Teams

Under [section 4.16 of BCTEA](#), B.C. committed to “undertake a program to build capacity to improve outcomes for First Nation Students within school districts, with a priority on those school districts having consistently low outcomes for First Nation Students.” Through the First Nations Educational Outcome Improvement Team (FNEOIT) program, Outcome Teams comprised of Ministry of Education and FNESC representatives engage with school districts to develop plans to improve First Nation student outcomes. The tripartite FNEOIT Advisory Committee has developed a process document, including reporting templates, to guide the Outcome Team's work with districts.

Engagement with school districts began in 2018/2019 with District 57 (Prince George). In 2019/2020, Outcome Teams continued with District 57 and began engagement with District 63 (Saanich) and District

79 (Cowichan Valley). Due to COVID-19, visits from Outcome Teams were temporarily suspended, but as of May, reengagement is underway. See the October 18, 2019 [FNEOIT Communique](#) for further details.

For questions or additional information about this initiative, please contact Denise Augustine, Ministry of Education, Denise.Augustine@gov.bc.ca.

Transportation

The Parties have become increasingly aware of concerns regarding the transportation of First Nation students living on reserve who attend B.C. public schools. Transportation issues impede the ability of First Nation students to actively participate and flourish in public education and the Parties are committed to developing and implementing effective measures to address existing concerns ([BCTEA, Schedule G](#)).

In 2018/2019 and 2019/2020, boards of education and First Nations were encouraged to work together to determine the transportation needs of First Nation students and to co-develop Joint First Nation Student Transportation Plans. Under an interim approach in 2019/2020 approximately 160 Joint Transportation Plans were assessed.

[As per the tripartite communique distributed on April 15, 2020](#), the submission date for 2020/2021 Joint Transportation Plans is now October 30, 2020. In early summer, the Parties will be releasing the *First Nations Student Transportation Planning and Procedures 2020/2021* document with application guidelines for school districts and First Nations for the 2020/2021 school year. Extracurricular activities have been highlighted as a priority area for transportation services and funds have been allocated to districts accordingly. We look forward to receiving reports on the number of First Nation students participating in extracurricular activities so that we may plan for and achieve increased participation in the coming years.

Boards of education are also expected to engage with First Nations to identify the transportation needs of First Nation students living on reserve and opting to attend in-person classes as schools gradually increase in-class instruction. Collaboration between boards of education and First Nations is necessary to ensure equitable transportation opportunities as we transition back to in-person instruction.

Local Education Agreements

Consistent with our commitment under [BCTEA, Schedule H, Section 2.2.](#), the Parties are working towards identifying new legislation or revisions to legislation, as well as new policies or revisions to existing policies to support the negotiation and implementation of LEAs between First Nations and boards of education. Work underway includes

- Co-development with FNEESC on Guiding Principles underlying LEAs
- Negotiation and review of the current LEA provincial template
- An environmental scan of LEAs in school districts throughout the province
- Compilation of a database of LEAs to use for monitoring and policy decision making
- Consultation on specific issues that arise from school districts with respect to LEAs
- An in-depth quality assessment review of LEAs in the Ministry's database
- Gathering of feedback of how capacity funding for LEAs was used

During the pandemic, it is imperative that boards of education engage First Nation communities and parents to determine and plan for the needs of First Nation students. This is particularly necessary where an LEA is in place, since LEAs set out the terms and conditions for the exchange of tuition for education programs and services for First Nation students. Boards of education should provide for equitable learning opportunities within this context to ensure that all students, including First Nation students, are supported. Boards are also asked to refrain from pressuring First Nations for tuition payment until there is engagement on, or clarity about, continued learning opportunities.

Data and Information Sharing

As per [BCTEA, Schedule I](#), the Parties agree to develop a purposeful approach to data collection, use and sharing with the overarching goal of improving educational outcomes of First Nation students. Districts are encouraged to use data available in the annual [How Are We Doing? Report](#), which has been updated to include a five-year completion rate as well as both September and February enrollment counts for Indigenous students living on- and off-reserve.

In 2020, the Parties are investigating the over-representation of Indigenous students among Adult Dogwood recipients, continuing to improve the *How Are We Doing? Report*, and discussing mechanisms to improve the collection of accurate data concerning the approximately 8,000 First Nation students living on reserve and attending public schools in B.C. Further discussions related to standardized attendance data and the educational outcomes of children and youth in care (CYIC) are anticipated.

Please add BCTEA@gov.bc.ca to your address book or safe sender list so our emails get to your inbox.

Ministry of Education.