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Date: October 19, 2020

Title: 2020/21 Joint First Nation Student Transportation Plan Submissions

A key commitment in the *BC Tripartite Education Agreement: Supporting First Nation Student Success* (BCTEA), is that First Nation Students living on-reserve have access to safe and reliable transportation to and from BC Public Schools. As part of this ongoing commitment, Boards of Education (Boards) and First Nations are required to submit a co-developed 2020/21 Joint First Nation Student Transportation Plan (Joint Plan) to address students' transportation needs. Boards and First Nations may refer to the attached First Nation Students Transportation Planning and Procedures document for the development of their Joint Plan.

Planning in consideration of COVID-19 may require that this year's plans be adjusted to ensure that physical distancing and other health and safety protocols are respected, that planning includes consideration of alternate schedules in cases where students may not be attending face-to-face classes every day, and accommodate various instruction models, including students receiving instruction in First Nations communities.

Canada has provided specific funding to the Province to address these temporary changes. The allocation of the specific federal funding for each school district prioritizes the specific needs of First Nation Students, with detailed reference to transportation. As noted in the communication released on September 18, 2020, in the DM Bulletin, this specific funding will support items such as: additional transportation costs to accommodate new schedules; student and route tracking and planning technology; and, alternate bus transportation strategies. BCTEA Joint Plans for 2020/21 should incorporate this one-time funding.

As this is the second year for the Joint Plan submission, in some cases it may be less time consuming to either update the 2019/20 Joint Plan or to submit a "status quo" plan for the 2020/21 school year. In some cases, a new 2020/21 plan will need to be developed. Regardless of whether the plan is status quo, revised, or created for the first time, all plans need to be co-developed and jointly signed off by both the Board and the First Nation.

The deadline for submission is October 30, 2020. However, the sooner school districts are able to submit signed plan(s), the quicker the Tripartite Transportation Committee will be able to conduct their analysis and transfer funding to support implementation of the plans.

As communicated in March 2020, First Nations and Boards should choose from the following options for submission of 2020/21 school year Joint Plans. School Districts can visit [Ministry of Education School District Reporting Catalogue website](#) and First Nations can visit the [FNESC Website](#) for information and templates related to the 2020/21 Joint Plans.



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- **Option 1: Status Quo Plan Roll Over**

2019/20 Joint Plans that are meeting the needs of the First Nation, where no revisions to services and funding is required for 2020/21, can be rolled over to the 2020/21 school year.

Email a letter to BCTEA@gov.bc.ca indicating agreement to roll over the plan. The email must include signatures of the Chief of the First Nation (or delegate) and Board Chair in addition to operational contacts at both the First Nation and Board.

- **Option 2: Revisions to 2019/20 Joint Plans**

If the 2019/20 Joint Plan **is not** meeting the needs of the First Nation, and revisions to services and funding are required for 2020/21, **resubmit the original plan to BCTEA@gov.bc.ca**, clearly identifying the changes/updates to the original plan. The email must include signatures as outlined in Option 1.

- **Option 3: New Joint Plans**

For Boards / First Nations that did not submit Joint Plans for the 2019/20 school year, please use the appropriate templates at the link referenced above, to prepare 2020/21 submissions.

Submit plans to BCTEA@gov.bc.ca. The email must include signatures as outlined in Option 1.

Boards should plan to maintain existing service levels and billing arrangements for transportation services that were in place in the 2019/20 school year pending approval of funding in the fall. Joint Plans for 2020/21 should be built based on expected transportation needs under the current year's context and incorporate the additional COVID-19 funding. **Any use of Safe Return to Class funds or any other supplementary funds related to COVID-19 should be clearly stated in the transportation plan for transparency while reflecting full transportation costs.**

It is recognized that some Boards and First Nations may have existing Local Education Agreements (LEAs) that address transportation. The Boards and First Nations may agree the existing transportation arrangements meet the needs of First Nation Students and these Submission Requirements, or that the First Nation Student Transportation Plan process requires amendments to their LEA.

The Joint Plans will be reviewed by the Tripartite Transportation Committee that is comprised of representatives of BC, Canada and FNESC. Joint Plans will be supported by a First Nation Student Transportation Fund provided by the Government of Canada and administered by the Ministry. Unused or carried over Transportation funds from 2019/20 will be taken into account when determining 2020/21 Transportation funding levels.

Reporting Reminder

As noted in the Joint Plan approval letters, there are specific reporting requirements for the transportation funding. **The deadline for reporting on the use of 2019/20 extracurricular and to/from funding was September 30, 2020.** If you have not already submitted your funding report, please submit completed reports to BCTEA@gov.bc.ca.



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Please note that the focus is on operating costs associated with First Nation Student transportation needs and services. If transportation capital implications are identified by the Board and First Nation in their planning process, please clearly outline them in a separate document for further consideration by the Joint Committee and refer to the [2020-21 First Nations Student Transportation Funding Planning and Procedures](#) for further steps. More information will be forthcoming regarding transportation plans for Treaty First Nations and block-funded First Nations. The Parties encourage these groups to continue with the planning processes.

If you have any questions about the attached Submission Requirements or related materials, please contact Denise Evdokimoff at denise.evdokimoff@gov.bc.ca.

Sincerely,

Ministry of Education
First Nations Education Steering Committee
Indigenous Services Canada