



Sub-Committee Members 1998-1999

Aboriginal Languages Sub-Committee

Sandra Martin (Chair)	Wet'suwet'en Nation
Barbara Barltrop	Nanoose First Nation
Theresa Dennis	Okanagan Nation
Beverly Frank	St'at'imc
Joan Gentles	Tsilhqot'in
Sadie Harris	Gitskan Nation
Marianne Ignace	Secwepemc
Deborah Jacobs	Squamish Nation
Mona Jules	Secwepemc
Debbie Leighton-Stephens	Tsimshian Tribal Council
Marilyn Napoleon	St'at'imc
Nancy Nyce	Haisla Nation
Gwen Point	Sto:lo Nation
Deborah Page	National Language Committee-Technical Rep.
Conrad Vanderkamp	Saanich Indian School Board
Lisa Wells	Kwakiutl

Adult Secondary Education Sub-Committee

Gwen Phillips	Ktunaxa Nation
Chief Nathan Matthew	Chiefs Action Committee
Margery McRae	Chiefs Action Committee
Barbara Barltrop	Nanoose First Nation
Jacqui Dennis	Ass. of Aboriginal Post-Secondary Institutes
Nancy Nyce	Haisla Nation

Post-Secondary Education Sub-Committee

Barbara White(Chair)	Nanaimo First Nation
Richard Band	Squamish Nation
Theresa Dennis	Okanagan Nation
Pauline Goertzen	Broman Lake Band
Susan Hale	Lower Post First Nation
Brenda Leighton	Metlakatla Band
Monty Palmantier	Lake Babine Nation
Derek Payne	Sto:lo Nation
Gail Russ	Skidegate Band Council
Sandra Thronson	St. Mary's Indian Band

Special Needs Education Sub-Committee

Chief Nathan Matthew	Chiefs Action Committee
Barbara White	Nanaimo First Nation
Conrad Vanderkamp	Saanich Indian School Board

Message from the Acting Chair

1998-1999 was another year of tremendous growth for the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC). The Steering Committee has continued to take on many new and important activities, and we have worked hard to meet the expectations and needs of First Nations throughout the province.

I believe that the success achieved by FNESC is a reflection of the commitment shown by all of the members of the Steering Committee and Sub-Committees, who have always maintained a strong focus on the provision of quality education to all First Nations learners in British Columbia. FNESC has also received tremendous support from the members of the Chiefs Action Committee, whose leadership and dedication to First Nations learners has contributed immensely to the work completed.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the people who have attended the workshops, regional sessions, and conferences organized by FNESC. The thoughtful suggestions, information, and enthusiasm shared through those gatherings has provided the FNESC with much needed guidance and encouragement.

We look forward to continuing our efforts in the upcoming year, and we welcome all those interested in promoting and celebrating First Nations education to join us in working for First Nations learners.

Sandra Martin, FNESC Acting Chair

Message from the Executive Director

This past year has been another exciting one for the staff of the FNESC. We have continued to enjoy the leadership and support we have received from the members of the Chiefs Action Committee, Steering Committee, and Sub-Committees. We also appreciate the many people who have taken the time to share with us their comments about the many FNESC activities and programs. The feedback provided has allowed us to strengthen our efforts to undertake initiatives that will assist First Nations in addressing education issues.

It has been very rewarding to work with people so committed to First Nations education, and to participate in some of the very positive changes that are taking place throughout the province. Throughout the past year, we have maintained our efforts to facilitate effective and meaningful research, communications, and information sharing initiatives, and we have also worked closely with First Nations and the federal and provincial governments to establish cooperative relationships that will allow us all to better meet the needs of First Nations learners.

We now look forward to another year, which we are certain will provide a continued opportunity to share our ideas and support. We hope that you find this Annual Report informative and useful, and we look forward to your suggestions about our ongoing and future activities.

Christa Williams, FNESC Executive Director



Introduction

The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) has now completed its seventh exciting year of work. Established in May, 1992 by participants at a Provincial First Nations Education Conference held at the Vancouver Friendship Centre, the FNESC was mandated to:

facilitate discussion about education matters affecting First Nations in BC by disseminating information and soliciting input from First Nations.

In order to address that mandate, the FNESC continued to undertake a variety of initiatives in 1998/1999 aimed generally at promoting First Nations control of quality education programs and systems for First Nations learners.

Twenty-five First Nations education technicians from throughout British Columbia provide overall direction for the Committee's activities. The work of FNESC is also supported by a BC Chiefs Action Committee (CAC). A list of the current members of the FNESC and the CAC is included in Appendix One.



General Activities

The activities identified for a provincial education organization, and those undertaken by FNESC on an ongoing basis, include:

- Facilitate **communication** (newsletter, policy updates, etc.).
- Provide **liaison** for First Nations with government and other agencies.
- Coordinate **information sharing**, to enable First Nations to do more with less money for education, as education demands increase while funding diminishes.
- Coordinate **provincial conferences, regional workshops and information workshops** to increase communication and support amongst First Nations communities.
- Conduct **research** on broad topics to support First Nations education initiatives (Aboriginal Language programs, legal aspects of control and jurisdiction, Best Practices in First Nations education, gathering data regarding First Nations education for use by First Nations educators). This includes the work of the various subcommittees.
- Undertake some **policy discussions**, with explicit direction from, consultation and communication with First Nations communities themselves.
- Provide a forum for a **united First Nations voice**.
- Serve as a **clearinghouse for information resources and models** for First Nations education activities.
- Provide **administrative and technical support** to ensure First Nations control and administration of First Nations education programs such as the youth initiatives.
- Provide **support for First Nations involved in the treaty process**.



FNESC Members

Chair

Gwen Phillips Ktunaxa Nation

Vice Chair

Sandra Martin Wet'suwet'en Nation

Members

Charlene Alfred NAMGIS First Nation
 Jim Angus Kispiox Nation
 Barbara Barltrop Nanoose First Nation
 Theresa Dennis Okanagan Nation
 Marlene Erickson Carrier Sekani Tribal Council
 Cecilia Harris Penelakut Indian Band
 Marion Hunt Kwakwilt District Council
 Deborah Jacobs Squamish Nation
 Brenda Leighton Metlakatla Band
 Jacob McKay Nisga'a Nation
 Nancy Nyce Haisla Nation
 Monty Palmantier Lake Babine Nation
 Derek Payne Sto:lo Nation
 Wilma Robinson Nuxalk Nation
 Gail Russ Skidegate First Nation
 Conrad Vanderkamp Saanich Indian School Board
 Sandra Victor Cheam Indian Band
 Barbara White Nanaimo First Nations

Chiefs Action Committee

Chief Nathan Matthew
 Chief Ron Ignace
 Margery McRae



appendix one

Liaison with the Provincial and Federal Governments

FNESC has continued to meet with the federal and provincial governments on an ongoing basis to discuss a variety of policy issues related to First Nations education. The issues considered include such things as targeted funding, special needs education, local education agreements, and Aboriginal languages. Summaries of meetings were distributed to First Nations in BC.

Meetings with provincial and federal representatives are generally intended to foster cooperative relationships to ensure that the needs of First Nations learners are better understood and addressed. In 1998-1999, an exciting step in this regard included the development and signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), involving all partners involved with the education of First Nations students in BC, including FNESC, the First Nations Schools Association, the Department of Indian Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the BC Teachers' Federation, the BC School Trustees' Association, the BC Principals and Vice Principals Association, and the BC College of Teachers.

The Memorandum of Understanding reads:

We, the undersigned, acknowledge that Aboriginal learners are not experiencing school success in British Columbia. We state our intention to work together within the mandates of our respective organizations to improve school success for Aboriginal learners in British Columbia.

Support to the First Nations Schools Association

Last year, FNESC was pleased to be able to continue to provide support to the First Nations Schools Association (FNSA). The FNSA is a non-partisan organization which attempts to provide support to First Nations schools to assist them with the provision of quality education to all learners. 1998-1999 represented the third year of operations for the FNSA, and throughout the year the FNSA and FNESC worked cooperatively to implement a number of programs and activities in such areas as capacity building for First Nations schools, special education, school governance, school evaluation, and parental and community involvement in schools. A 1998-1999 FNSA Annual Report is available.

Support to the Indian Studies Support Program

1998-1999 also represented the second year in which FNESC provided administrative support to the Indian Studies Support Program (ISSP). The ISSP Committee makes recommendations to the Department of Indian Affairs regarding the distribution of funding for post-secondary programs for First Nations learners. The FNESC assists the ISSP Committee with sharing information and maintaining records to support the funding distribution process.

Administration of Youth Initiatives

In 1998-1999, the FNESC, in cooperation with the FNSA, again agreed to administer four programs for First Nations youth with funding provided by the Department of Indian Affairs. The Summer Science and Technology Camp Initiative, the Summer Student Career Placement Program, the Cooperative Education Program, and the Youth Work Experience Program provided tremendous opportunities for youth throughout BC, and reports outlining the results of the four programs are available through the FNESC office.



summary of work

- Regional Workshops
- Provincial Conference
- FNESC Sub-committees
- Adult Secondary Education
- Aboriginal Languages
- Special Needs Education
- Post-Secondary Education
- Education and Treaties
- Liaison with Governments
- First Nations Schools Association
- Indian Studies Support Program
- Administration of Youth Initiatives

The following section describes in more detail the activities undertaken by the FNESC in 1998 - 1999.



Regional Workshops

For the fifth continuous year, the FNESC organized a series of regional workshops throughout the province in the fall of 1998. The purpose of those workshops is to report on the work of the Steering Committee, and gather input and advice about ongoing and future activities. The regional sessions also allow participants to network and communicate with one another, addressing the critical need for a sharing of information, support, and inspiration.

This year, regional sessions were held in Campbell River, Cranbrook, Kamloops, Kitimat, Lillooet, Nanaimo, Osoyoos, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Vancouver, and Williams Lake. The sessions included input from over 150 people from throughout the province. A summary of regional sessions is available through the FNESC office.

Provincial Conference

The FNESC also facilitates a sharing of information and ideas at the provincial level by organizing an annual provincial conference on First Nations education. This year, the Conference took place in Whistler, BC on November 8th and 9th, 1998. The *Nexw7aý (Transitions) – Fourth Annual Conference on Aboriginal Education* was, for the first time, co-sponsored by FNESC and the BC Ministry of Education, representing an important opportunity to bring together people with a variety of experiences and perspectives.

The *Nexw7aý Conference* was a tremendous success, with almost 600 people participating in a number of plenary and workshop sessions. The Conference included many highlights. Two keynote addresses were delivered, one by John Kim Bell, founder of the Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, and a second by Drew Hayden Taylor, an Ojibway playwright. A panel presentation included presentations from students, an educator, and an Elder, who spoke to the Conference theme of transitions.

A second panel considered ways to improve the public education system's service to First Nations learners and contribution to cross-cultural understanding. That panel included Grand Chief Ed John, First Nations Summit Task Group; Don Avison, Deputy Minister, BC Ministry of Education; Kit Krieger, President of the BC Teachers' Federation; Carole James, President of the BC School Trustees' Association; John Rizutti, President of the BC Principals and Vice Principals Association; and Louise Burgart, President of the BC School Superintendents' Association. In addition, Grand Chief Ed John, First Nations Summit Task Group, and the Honourable Paul Ramsey, BC Minister of Education, took part in a presentation on the need for cooperation and mutual respect in order to ensure that all learners have access to an appropriate and effective education.

The *Nexw7aý Conference* provided an excellent opportunity for a variety of people to come together to share their information and energy. It was also an important example of the cooperative relationship needed to build an appropriate and effective education system.

FNESC Sub-Committees

The FNESC is assisted in its work by people who participate on a number of sub-committees. A list of Sub-Committee members of 1998-1999 is included in Appendix Two. Sub-Committee membership is currently under review, and there will be an opportunity for other interested individuals to participate with the Sub-Committees in 1999/2000. The activities undertaken by the Sub-Committees in the past year are described on the following pages.

Adult Secondary Education

For several years, an Adult Secondary Education Sub-Committee has been involved in discussions with the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) regarding its adult education funding policy. Throughout 1998-1999, the FNESC continued to assist communities in terms of difficulties with the implementation of the existing policy, and to provide information to support the design of programs that are both eligible for funding and successful in meeting the needs of students.

In 1998-1999, the Adult Secondary Education Sub-Committee also undertook a major research project to collect information about existing First Nations adult education programs, as well as current and projected needs in this area. That information is intended to inform ongoing discussions between the FNESC and DIA regarding the development of an adult education policy that better reflects the experiences and realities of First Nations communities. That project is scheduled to be completed by July, 1999, and the results will be distributed to all First Nations in BC.

Aboriginal Languages

The Aboriginal Languages Sub-Committee successfully initiated a number of important activities in 1998-1999. Those activities focused primarily on furthering the work undertaken last year in the Aboriginal Language Teacher Training Program Project Phase I. That project began a consideration of issues associated with the design and implementation of effective training for Aboriginal Language teachers. In 1998-1999, the ideas raised in that investigation were discussed with the BC College of Teachers, and cooperative arrangements for delivering and accrediting a relevant program are now near completion. In addition, funding was accessed for further research and pilot projects to prepare for Aboriginal Language Teacher Training Programs. Those projects will include work by 9 communities to consider their needs in this area, as well as 10 Summer Institutes for individuals interested in developing their Aboriginal Language Teaching skills. The results of those pilot projects will be compiled by the Fall of 1999. It is also hoped that the negotiations with the BCCT regarding an accredited Aboriginal Language Teacher Training Program will be completed in the fall of 1999.

Special Needs Education

The Special Needs Education Sub-Committee has continued to pursue a number of activities to support First Nations schools in the area of special education. In 1997, FNESC, in cooperation with the First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) and the BC Aboriginal Network on Disabilities Society (BCANDS), presented a proposal for special education funding to DIA. *None Left Behind: A Proposal for Action* requested critically needed resources to allow First Nations communities and schools to develop and implement programs and services desperately needed to support all learners, regardless of their needs.

In 1998-1999, the FNESC and the FNSA acquired funding to undertake interim steps to support the eventual negotiation and implementation of the *None Left Behind Proposal for Action*.

In order to support a request for adequate special education funding for First Nations schools, a province-wide research project is now underway to determine the extent of special needs in First Nations schools in BC. This research involves the completion of psycho-educational assessments of a sample of students throughout the province, including the development of individual education plans for those students. Following the study's completion in June, 1999, the BC Chiefs Action Committee

intends to jointly present the study results to DIA headquarters to support ongoing negotiations for special education funding.

In addition to that research, FNESC also organized workshops held in eleven First Nations communities to consider several issues related with special education. Participants at those workshops considered possible ways to collectively prepare materials and share resources. A draft series of informational pamphlets, *Talking About Special Education Volumes 1 - 4* were presented as an example of possible collective efforts. Based upon the positive response to that pamphlet series, FNESC will continue to consider future initiatives to provide much needed support in the area of special education.

The regional workshops also included a discussion of possible ways to share any resources accessed as a result of ongoing negotiations. A list of possible options resulted from those discussions, which was presented at the Annual General Meeting of the First Nations Schools Association in April, 1999. As a result, the FNESC and the FNSA are now better prepared for the implementation of the *None Left Behind Proposal for Action*.

In addition, a video highlighting the critical issues associated with special education in First Nations schools was produced in 1998-1999. That video includes footage from First Nations schools demonstrating some of the successful initiatives taking place, and the critical need for support for existing and new programs and services. The video is available on loan from the FNESC office, for use at conferences, workshops, and a variety of meetings to increase an understanding of this important issue.

The Special Needs Education Sub-Committee will continue to pursue ways to provide support for this crucial area, and to work to ensure that all learners have every opportunity to achieve their unique goals.

Post-Secondary Education

The Post-Secondary Education Sub-Committee continued to work throughout 1998-1999 to monitor national developments in the area of post-secondary education. Last year, the Assembly of First Nations undertook a literature review to highlight some of the critical issues associated with post-secondary education, and has indicated that follow-up activities will be undertaken in response to the findings of that review. FNESC will continue to participate in discussions about work in this area, and to focus on issues affecting First Nations learners interested in pursuing a post-secondary education.

Education and Treaties

In order to assist with the promotion of First Nations control of First Nations education, FNESC has worked to provide assistance to First Nations involved in treaty negotiations whenever possible. In 1997, FNESC produced *Building Strong Communities Through Education and Treaties: A Discussion Paper*. That document is intended to outline several issues associated with the definition and implementation of governance over education.

In 1998-1999, FNESC facilitated a consideration of a key issue related to treaties – the overlap and possible integration of service areas affecting First Nations children and youth. To initiate that work, FNESC organized meetings of provincial level First Nations organizations working in areas such as education, health, child welfare, and child care. Those meetings provided an opportunity to discuss existing initiatives and potential cooperative efforts. Last year, FNESC also produced a report highlighting existing legislation related to each of the social service areas. That report will now be expanded and distributed to all First Nations in the province. FNESC is committed to continuing its work in the area of integrating services, and to examining other important issues related to education governance.

