

FNESC | FNSA *Annual Report 2015/16*





**First Nations Education Steering Committee  
First Nations Schools Association**

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# Opening Comments

*We are very pleased to present the 2015/2016 Annual Report of the BC First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the BC First Nations Schools Association (FNSA).*

*This report is intended to inform First Nations communities, schools, and post-secondary institutes, as well as our many education partners, about the activities being undertaken by FNESC and the FNSA. This document also complements the numerous reports we submit to funding agencies for specific programs, by describing individual projects within the context of our full range of activities.*

*Additionally, in the spirit of reduced reporting requirements for First Nations, this report outlines the explicit performance measures required from FNESC according to the Tripartite Education Framework Agreement, which Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) has agreed to extract and use as necessary.*

## Message from FNEC President: Tyrone McNeil



It is with great pleasure that I present this Annual Report, which I believe illustrates the many positive advancements that have been made in First Nations education in the past two decades. Increasingly, First Nations students are being supported to succeed

in classrooms that acknowledge and value their histories, realities, and unique perspectives, and there has been growing recognition of the need for systemic change.

I am proud of FNEC's leadership role in contributing to the transformations that have been taking place. We are working with our partners to better integrate First Nations content and ways of knowing into classrooms, and we are seeing educators throughout BC use their passion and creativity to better support students. We are learning from one another to collectively consider what we can do as educators, administrators, and advocates to create more equitable systems for our learners.

And it is clear that our efforts are working and progress is being made.

In the past year specifically, we have seen many important advancements in First Nations education, which I believe arose in large part due to the efforts of FNEC and First Nations in BC.

- FNEC welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the Aboriginal Education Review by the Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia, which was conducted to determine whether the Ministry of Education has met its public commitment to close the gaps in educational outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. We now look forward

to working with the Ministry to advance the important recommendations that resulted from the review.

- On February 5, 2016 FNEC celebrated with the BC Ministry of Education the joint announcement of an amendment to the Student Credential order, which will address the disproportionate numbers of First Nations students who have been directed to access the non-graduation Evergreen Certificate.
- On June 19, 2015, I was pleased to join Minister of Education Peter Fassbender in signing a bilateral protocol agreement to help further collaboration to improve the achievement of Aboriginal students in this province.
- We are looking forward to focusing on the continued advancement of our education rights, building on Canada's recent announcement that it is now a full supporter of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Change *is* happening in many positive ways.

FNEC will continue to make use of our resources and the tremendous dedication of our staff to raise awareness about our work and the needs of our students, families, and communities, and we welcome continued cooperation with our many education partners as we move forward in the year ahead.

A blue ink signature of Tyrone McNeil, written in a cursive style.

## Message from FNSA President: Pamela Lee Lewis



On behalf of the FNSA, it is an honour for me to present this Annual Report for 2015/2016. Our organization has supported the vital work being done by First Nations-controlled schools since 1987. During this period of time we have witnessed major growth in our number of schools and students and significant improvements in learning outcomes.

Building on the principle of First Nations control of First Nations education, at the April 2015 Annual General Meeting, after 4 years of work, our membership approved a new First Nations Graduation Certificate. This Certificate is now being promoted with First Nations, parents, education partners and post-secondary institutes to ensure widespread awareness of the new graduation choice.

Throughout the past year, we also have been working with the BC Ministry of Education to make it possible for non-Independent First Nations schools to offer their graduating students the Dogwood Diploma. This opportunity is a meaningful interim solution and long-term complement to our own First Nations Graduation Certificate. We acknowledge the diligent efforts of leaders from First Nations schools that resulted in Sts'ailes Community School for the first time ever in spring 2016, being able to offer the Dogwood Diploma to two students. Sincere congratulations to Sts'ailes Community School for this important accomplishment. FNSA will continue working with the BC Ministry of Education to formalize the process for making this opportunity available to additional schools and students in future years.

Over the past year, FNSA has undertaken research, shared information, organized collective professional development opportunities, supported schools with assessments and data gathering, and taken every

opportunity to celebrate and bring attention to the significant achievements of First Nations schools in BC. Member schools contributed to the INAC led evaluation of the current TEFA, and FNSA also held a special Workshop attended by Authorized and Chief and Council members to identify potential improvements for the next TEFA.

FNSA is most appreciative of the mandate letter that Prime Minister Trudeau sent to the Minister of INAC in which he directed the Ministry to, "Make significant new investments in First Nations education to ensure that First Nations children on reserve receive a quality education while respecting the principle of First Nations control of First Nations education." FNSA is focusing its energy on ensuring that our First Nations schools are positioned to benefit from these investments.

We express our deep appreciation to the Chiefs, Councillors, communities and parents who continue to support the growth of on-reserve educational opportunities. Thank you to the governance and staff of our member schools for their input and direction as the FNSA continues developing and providing the resources and support that enable First Nations schools in BC to offer high quality, culturally relevant, locally based education to First Nations students on reserve. We also thank the dedicated staff who deliver the programs and services to our schools.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "P. Lewis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.







# 1

## Overview of the FNSA and FNEESC

## The First Nations Schools Association

First Nations schools in BC began working together in 1987 and drafted the FNSA's initial constitution and bylaws in 1990, formally incorporating as a non-profit society in 1996 for the purposes of:



- promoting quality education for First Nations learners,
- maximizing resource use to improve the quality of education for First Nations students,
- supporting First Nations schools to develop and implement culturally appropriate, meaningful and quality programs; and
- to provide a forum for networking, communication, and liaison amongst First Nations schools, other educational organizations and government.

Today, almost all of the 128 BC First Nations schools operated by 99 First Nations communities are members of the Association. The FNSA mandate is to promote quality education for First Nation learners on reserve by supporting schools in creating effective, nurturing, and linguistically and culturally appropriate education environments that provide students with a positive foundation in all academic areas.

The FNSA works directly with its constituents and reports to its members at its Annual General Meeting (AGM). The FNSA Board of Directors includes 10 individuals selected at each AGM.

### FNSA Mission

*“The First Nation Schools Association will collaborate with First Nation schools to create nurturing environments that will develop learners’ pride and competence in their First Nations language and heritage and will equip them to realize their full potential, within self-governing First Nations communities.”*

### FNSA Board Members, as of March 2016

<b>Janice Antoine</b> , Coldwater Elementary School & Coldwater Resource Technology School	Secwepemc/St’at’imc/Nlaka’pamux Region
<b>Colleen Austin</b> , ‘Na Aksa Gyilak’yoo School	Tsimshian/Haida/Haisla/Nisga’a Region
<b>Kirsten Barnes</b> , First Nations High School	Gitskan/Wet’suwet’en Region
<b>Michael Derech</b> , ?A’Q’amnik Elementary School	Kootenay/Okanagan Region
<b>Kathi Dickie</b> , Chalo School	Kaska/Dene/Tahltan/Tagish/Inland Tlingit Region
<b>Francine Johnny</b> , Yu Thuy Thut	Nuu-chah-nulth/Coast Salish Region
<b>Reidun Kopp</b> , Shihya School	Secwepemc/St’at’imc/Nlaka’pamux Region
<b>Pamela Lee Lewis</b> , We Wai Kai Daycare/Nursery/Headstart	Kwakwaka’wakw/Heiltsuk/Nuxalk/Oweekeno Region
<b>Monty Palmantier</b> , Fort Babine Elementary School	Tsílqot’in/ Carrier/Sekani Region
<b>Bernice Touchie</b> , Ittatsoo Learning Centre	Nuu-chah-nulth/Coast Salish Region



FNSA Conference 2015,  
Greg Louie, Former FNSA President, Tyrone McNeil FNEC President,  
and Pamela Lee Lewis, FNSA President.



Bilateral Protocol Signing,  
Tyrone McNeil, FNEC President and former Minister of Education,  
Peter Fassbender 2015

## The First Nations Education Steering Committee



The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNEC) was founded in 1992 by participants at a provincial First Nations education conference at the Vancouver Friendship Centre. That visionary group of people determined the need for a First Nations-controlled collective organization focused specifically on advancing quality education for all First Nations learners, and they set out FNEC's commitment to supporting First Nations in their efforts to improve the success of all First Nations students in BC.

FNEC works at the provincial level to provide services in the areas of research, communications, advocacy, program administration and networking. FNEC also strives to share up-to-date information about available programs, government policies and initiatives, and local, provincial and national education issues that affect First Nations learners. In addition, FNEC strives to build partnerships with federal and provincial government agencies and other relevant stakeholders in order to communicate the issues and concerns of BC First Nations and to ensure that they are addressed in a meaningful way.

### *FNEC Mandate*

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

## FNESC Executive Board & Members, as of March 2016

<b>Tyrone McNeil</b> , FNESC President	Stó:lō Tribal Council
<b>Joe Pierre, Jr.</b> , FNESC Vice-President	St. Mary's Indian Band
<b>Jeneen Hunt</b> , FNESC Treasurer	Kwicksutaineuk Ah Kwa Mish First Nation
<b>Barbara Bartrop</b> , FNESC Secretary	Nanoose First Nation
Adams Lake Indian Band .....	Shane Coutlee
Ahousat First Nation .....	Rebecca Atleo
Aitchelitz First Nation .....	Gwen Point
Akisqnuq First Nation .....	Stephanie Sam
Alexis Creek First Nation .....	Lenore Case
Blueberry River First Nations .....	Patricia Greyeyes
Bonaparte Indian Band .....	Nina Minnabarriet
Boothroyd Indian Band .....	Terrie Davidson
Boston Bar First Nation .....	Dolores O'Donaghey
Campbell River Indian Band .....	J. Curtis Wilson
Canoe Creek Indian Band .....	Darlene Louie
Carrier Sekani Tribal Council .....	Marlene Erickson
Cayoos Creek Indian Band .....	Yvonne LaRochelle
Chawathil First Nation .....	Thelma Florence
Cheam Indian Band .....	Sandra Victor
Cheslatta Carrier Nation .....	Chantal Burt
Coldwater Indian Band .....	Janice Antoine
Cowichan Tribes .....	Char Crocker
Da'naxda'xw First Nation .....	Elizabeth Davidson
Dease River First Nation .....	Jody Linklater
Fort Nelson First Nation .....	Kathi Dickie
Gitanmaax Band Council .....	Pansy Wright-Simms
Gitga'at First Nation .....	Ernie Hill
Gitksan Government Commission .....	Monica Simms
Gitsegukla Band Council .....	Randal L. Russell
Gitwangak Band Council .....	Amanda Zettergreen
Gitxaala First Nation .....	Vacant
Glen Vowell Band .....	Jenelle Van Tunen
Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation .....	Grace Smith
Heiltsuk Band .....	Mary Brown
Hesquiaht First Nation .....	Claudette Lucas
Iskut Band Council .....	Jolene Louie
K'ómoks First Nation .....	Charlene Everson
Kispiox Band Council .....	Louy Rabocz
Kitamaat Village Council .....	Nina Shaw
Kitselas Band Council .....	Deborah Moore
Kitsumkalum Band Council .....	Charlotte Guno
Kwadacha Nation .....	Andreas Rohrbach
Kwakiutl Band Council .....	Marion Hunt
Kwakiutl District Council .....	Lisa Anwar
Lake Babine Nation .....	Darren Patrick
Lax Kw'alaams Indian Band .....	Deanna Lisa Green
Lheidli T'enneh Band .....	Jason Morgan
Lillooet Tribal Council .....	Susan James
Lower Kootenay Indian Band .....	Angie Louie
Lower Nicola Indian Band .....	Lynne Charlton
Lower Similkameen Indian Band .....	Lauren Terbasket
Mamaililikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em Band .....	Cynthia Sewid
Metlakatla First Nation .....	Brenda L. Leighton
Morisetown Indian Band .....	Diane Mattson
Musqueam Indian Band .....	Faye Mitchell
Nadleh Whut'en Band .....	Sue Ketlo
Nazko First Nation .....	Vacant
Nee Tahi Buhn Indian Band .....	Julia F. Morris
Neskonlith Indian Band .....	Fay Ginther
Nisga'a Lisims Government .....	Deanna Nyce
Nooaitch Indian Band .....	Kathleen Jumbo
N'Quatqua Band Council .....	Julie Thevarge
Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council .....	Ken Watts
Nuxalk Nation .....	Ian Pootlas
Okanagan Indian Band .....	Coola Louis
Old Massett Village Council .....	Ron Brown Jr.
Osoyoos Indian Band .....	Theresa Gabriel
Pauquachin First Nation .....	Madeline Bartleman
Penelakut Tribe .....	Ragina Sam
Quatsino First Nation .....	Rob Cahill
Saanich Indian School Board .....	Curtis Olsen
Saik'uz First Nation .....	Faith Thomas

Seton Lake Indian Band .....	Phyllis Peters	Tl'azt'en Nation .....	Laurie J. Bizer
Shackan Indian Band .....	Debra Manuel	Tl'etinqox-t'in Government Office .....	Grant Alphonse
Skawahlook First Nation .....	Angie Chapman	Tlowitsis Tribe .....	Emily Aikten
Skeetchestn Indian Band .....	Terry Deneault	Tobacco Plains Indian Band .....	Leanna Gravelle
Skidegate Band Council .....	Marcia Piercy	Ts'kw'aylaxw First Nation .....	Brenda McDonald
Skin Tyee First Nation .....	Adele Gooding	Tsartlip First Nation .....	William Morris
Skwah First Nation .....	Leslie Williams	Tsawout First Nation .....	Kendra Underwood
Snuneymuxw First Nation .....	Nancy Seward	Tsay Keh Dene Band .....	Christian González Becerra
Soda Creek Indian Band .....	Vacant	Tseshah First Nation .....	Maria Gomez
Songhees First Nation .....	Fran L'Hirondelle	Tseycum First Nation .....	Vern Jacks Jr.
Splatsin First Nation .....	Darrell Jones	Tsilhqot'in National Government .....	Sherry Stump
Spuzzum First Nation .....	Nita Bobb	Tzeachten First Nation .....	Melanie Williams
Squamish Nation .....	Jessie Williams	Upper Nicola Band .....	Sharon Lindley
Squiala First Nation .....	Marlene Marasco	We Wai Kai Nation .....	Cindy Inrig
Stellat'en First Nation .....	Angela Reynolds	Wet'suwet'en First Nation .....	Nicole Ogen
Stó:lō Nation .....	Rose Greene	Williams Lake Indian Band .....	Heather McKenzie
Stz'uminus First Nation .....	Tim Harris	Xeni Gwet'in First Nations Govmnt .....	Trina Setah
Tahltan Band Council .....	Isabel Reid	Yakwekwioose First Nation .....	Thelma Wenman
Takla Lake First Nation .....	Dawn George	Yekooche First Nation .....	Rachel Yordy
Taku River Tlingit First Nation .....	Sandra M. Jack	Yunesit'in Government .....	Rosalie Montgomery
Tk'emlups te Secwepemc .....	Viola Thomas		

Number of voting participants at the July 2015 FNEC Annual General Meeting

56



IAHLA Conference 2015



Dr. Cindy Blackstock, FNEC Conference 2015





# 2

## Sharing Information and Working with First Nations Communities, Schools and Other Partners

## BC First Nations Leadership

FNESC and the FNSA continually seek advice and direction from First Nations leadership in BC regarding all significant issues affecting First Nations education. Specifically, FNESC and the FNSA appreciate the ongoing guidance and support provided by the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, the First Nations Summit, the BC Assembly of First Nations, and the First Nations Leadership Council.

Additionally, all FNESC activities are undertaken according to a formal *Declaration and Protocol of Recognition, Support, Cooperation and Coordination Between the First Nations Leadership Council (BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs) and the First Nations Education Steering Committee*. This protocol confirms the close working relationship between FNESC and First Nations leadership in BC and the commitment to a continued positive and proactive relationship.

## FNESC Regional Sessions

FNESC and its education partners annually report on their activities and important First Nations education issues at a series of workshops known as Regional Sessions. These sessions represent a fundamental component of FNESC's efforts to maintain accountability to the 203 First Nations in BC, to discuss emerging issues with a range of education stakeholders and partners, and to facilitate input from community and school representatives. They also fulfill an important function in increasing the capacity of First Nations to address education issues.

The majority (80%) of participants in the 2015/2016 Regional Sessions identified themselves as representing a First Nations community/school, approximately 20% worked in a K-12 public school, and about 4% *also* identified themselves as being associated with a higher learning or adult education agency.

REGIONAL SESSION DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
September 21-22, 2015	Williams Lake	11
October 6-7, 2015	Cranbrook	9
October 13-14, 2015	Prince George	30
October 26-27, 2015	Prince Rupert	22
November 2-3, 2015	Kamloops	24
November 9-10, 2015	Vancouver	27
November 23-24, 2015	Kelowna	13
January 11-12, 2016	Nanaimo	32
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>168</b>



## 2015 FNEsc Annual Aboriginal Education Conference

A key FNEsc information sharing and consultation initiative – the 21<sup>st</sup> FNEsc Annual Aboriginal Education Conference, with the theme of Respect and Reconciliation, took place in November 2015. That event brought together approximately 800 educators and education administrators to share effective practices in Aboriginal education and to promote networking. The event also included a number of very special presentations.

At the November 26th opening evening, participants enjoyed a traditional dance program shared by the Kamkwala! Dancers from Northern Vancouver Island. That professional dance group is composed of staff and students from Port Hardy Secondary School, Eke Me-Xi Learning Centre, North Island Secondary, Kakotlatsi, Eagle View Elementary, Fort Rupert Elementary and Alert Bay School. The wonderful cultural sharing allowed conference guests to witness how students, staff and families are carrying on the rich traditions of the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples.

The Conference also included two celebrations – the first, Minister Peter Fassbender, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development, in recognition of his invaluable contributions when he was Minister of Education, and the second of Dr. Jo-Ann Archibald, University of British Columbia Professor and Associate Dean of Education and Director of the Native Indian Teacher Education Program, recognizing her long-term, outstanding commitment to First Nations education.

The Conference keynote address was provided by Dr. Cindy Blackstock, a member of the Gitksan First Nation who has 25 years of experience in child protection and Indigenous children's rights. Dr. Blackstock is Director of the First Nations Children's Action Research and Education Service (FNCARES) at the University of Alberta, and her promotion of culturally based and evidence informed solutions has been recognized by the Nobel Women's Initiative, the Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, Frontline Defenders, and many others.

Sheila Dodds, Assistant Auditor General of BC, also provided an overview of the Aboriginal Education Review by the Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia, which was conducted to determine whether the Ministry of Education has met its public commitment to close the gaps in educational outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

In addition to those important opportunities, the Conference participants joined in many workshops focused on topics relevant for First Nations education in BC.

- 98% of the 2015 Conference participants who provided feedback indicated that the overall conference experience was excellent or good, and 97% found the overall quality of the workshops excellent or good.

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Number of participants at Annual  
Aboriginal Education Conference

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802



Gold River Secondary School

## 2015 FNSA Conference and Annual General Meeting

Consistent with its commitment to communications and accountability, the FNSA held its 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM) April 16-18 2015 in Vancouver, BC.

That event began with a ceremony to recognize the invaluable contributions of Greg Louie, former FNSA President and long-term member and supporter of the FNSA.

The Conference also featured Kenneth Williams, who inspired the participants with a presentation about school culture and student-focused learning environments.

Additionally, the 2015 FNSA event was complemented by a second FNSA Authorized Representative Meeting the day prior to the Conference and AGM, providing a forum for direct input from FNSA members into the Association's work. That day allowed for informed and thoughtful discussion to guide the FNSA's ongoing efforts and to prepare for decisions at the FNSA AGM, which took place during the Conference.

The participants at the Authorized Representatives meeting provided very useful input about the importance of supporting First Nations schools with teacher recruitment and retention, which is an ongoing concern. The meeting also led to a reiteration of the fundamental role of First Nations language and culture programming in First Nations schools, and emphasized the need for more attention and resources dedicated to this issue. The participants also discussed ways in which to better support special education programming and the school certification process, and the meeting participants highlighted the importance of the FNSA being pro-active in helping to plan for the next phase of the TEFA agreement.

Finally, the FNSA Authorized Representatives Day and the AGM resulted in the exciting new development for First Nations schools in BC – the

approval of the new First Nations Graduation Certificate, which was designed by and for First Nations schools in BC. That Certificate will now be promoted through the ongoing advancement of the First Nations Jurisdiction Agreements as well as other mechanisms, in order to promote increased understandings with First Nations education partners and post-secondary institutions.

- 78% of the participants rated the conference agenda as above average or excellent
- 75% of the participants rated the workshops as above average or excellent

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Number of participants at the April  
2015 FNSA AGM and Conference

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OVER 400



Bella Bella Community School

## 2015 First Nations Languages Conference

Representing its efforts to work directly with First Nations, FNEsc was proud to sponsor the July 16 - 17, 2015 First Nations Languages Conference, *In the Spirit of Sharing*, an event dedicated to supporting First Nations languages to persist and flourish. Held every two years, this conference brings together Elders, teachers, linguists, administrators and many others to learn, share and identify key plans for future efforts.

The 2015 event included a keynote presentation from Jessie Little Doe Baird, project founder of the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project and Vice-Chairwoman of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe in Mashpee, Massachusetts, USA. Jessie has been instrumental in the continued reclamation of the Wampanoag language and she is featured in a documentary that aired on PBS called “We Still Live Here – Âs Nutayuneân.

The Conference also included a celebration of First Nations Language Champions from across BC, who were recognized for their contributions to their languages and the inspiring examples that they set. Specifically, the Conference participants were able to express appreciation to Youth Award recipient Jessica Williams, School Education Award recipient Dolly Sylvester, Community Education Leadership Award recipient Diane Brown, and the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award, Angela Dennis.

## Partnership Efforts with the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association

The Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) was created in 2002 by Aboriginal-controlled adult and post-secondary education institutes in BC. IAHLA is an independent non-profit society directed by a regionally-representative ten-member Board of Directors. IAHLA contracts administrative services from FNEsc, and the two organizations often cooperate on post-secondary matters. IAHLA’s membership includes community-based institutes that offer a range of courses and programs that include: college and university programs leading to certificates, diplomas and degrees; adult education; language instruction; occupation-specific training and upgrading; and life-long learning activities. Working together through IAHLA, Aboriginal institutes are striving to increase recognition of their unique and successful approaches to community-based, culturally-relevant learning, and to raise awareness of their successful efforts to increase opportunities for adult learners.

FNEsc and IAHLA work together on a number of key issues, resulting in more efficient engagement with government and partners that are seeking input from First Nations communities and post-secondary institutes, and avoiding unnecessary overlap of efforts.

More information is available at [www.iahla.ca](http://www.iahla.ca).

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Number of participants at the July 2015  
First Nations Languages Conference

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213

## Support for the First Nations Early Childhood Development Council

Research has shown that high-quality, age-appropriate early childhood education can have a lasting impact and bring enormous future benefits, not only to the children who participate, but also to their communities and to society at large. In fact, connections have been shown between quality early learning opportunities and higher educational achievement throughout K-12, increased graduation rates, and greater success well into adulthood.

Reflecting these understandings, FNEC is pleased to provide administrative support to the First Nations Early Childhood Development Council (FNECDC). The FNECDC was created in 2007, when stakeholders began discussing the need for a provincial BC First Nations early childhood agenda and action plan aimed at improving the well-being of First Nations children from prenatal to six years. On March 24, 2010, representatives from over 40 organizations, including FNEC and the FNSA, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together to improve Early Childhood Development programs and services.

The FNECDC's key accomplishments are highlighted on its web site at [www.fnecdc.ca](http://www.fnecdc.ca).

*Both FNECDC and IAHLA are striving to continue their important efforts, in spite of their serious funding limitations in the past several years.*

## K-12 Aboriginal Education Partners

In 1994, FNEC began meeting regularly with representatives of the federal and provincial governments on a tripartite basis to discuss strategies for working together to improve the success of First Nations learners. Those discussions provided opportunities for FNEC to have valuable input into policy and legislative changes that could affect First Nations education.

Growing from those discussions, in 1998 the original Tripartite Education Committee founded the BC Aboriginal Education Partners Group, which grew to include some of the most significant stakeholders in the BC education system, including FNEC, FNSA, INAC, BC Ministry of Education, BC Teachers' Federation, BC Teacher Regulation Branch, BC School Trustees Association, BC Superintendents Association, the BC Confederation of Parents Advisory Councils, BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, United Native Nations, and BC Métis Nation. In 1999, the organizations signed a Memorandum of Understanding to solidify their partnership.

The Partners are working together to achieve the following goals.

1. Increase collaboration among the partners
2. Increase the number of qualified Aboriginal educators
3. Increase understanding and respect for First Peoples' knowledge, cultures and histories
4. Incorporate Aboriginal perspectives into all education decision-making

FNEC and the FNSA also work with individual Education Partners on specific initiatives, as appropriate.

## Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners

In March 2005, several stakeholders in Aboriginal post-secondary education (PSE) agreed to work together to improve access and success for all Aboriginal post-secondary students in BC, formalizing their commitment in a Memorandum of Understanding. The resulting Aboriginal PSE and Training Partners continue to meet regularly to share information and implement joint strategies, including working to transform post-secondary education in this province by implementing the BC Ministry of Advanced Education's *Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Action Plan: 2020 Vision for the Future*.

Members of the Aboriginal PSE and Training Partners include FNEESC, IAHLA, First Nations Summit, Métis Nation BC, INAC, BC Ministry of Advanced Education, Research Universities Council of BC, BC Association of Institutes and Universities, BC College Presidents, British Columbia Aboriginal Training Employment Alliance Members, BC Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training, BC Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, Service Canada, and BC Ministry of Education.

FNEESC supports the Partners and coordinates their efforts to advance positive changes in Aboriginal PSE in BC, through both the leadership of the Partners Group and through the work of the member organizations.

## Joint Partner Group Meetings

The BC Aboriginal Education Partners Group and the Aboriginal PSE and Training Partners now meet to discuss issues of common concern, identifying and discussing critical issues requiring collective attention.

## Memoranda of Understanding

Overall, FNEESC and the FNSA have established important formal relationships with the following organizations, among many others.

- First Nations Health Authority
- Association of BC Deans of Education
- Representative for Children and Youth
- First Nations Technology Council
- BC K-12 Aboriginal Education Partners Group
- BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners

## Other Information Sharing and Consultation Efforts

In addition to all of the major events and partnerships described above, FNEESC and the FNSA regularly organize information sharing sessions as issues arise, as described throughout the remainder of this report. Further, FNEESC and the FNSA maintain websites and provide regular communication updates in order to share information and ensure that representatives of First Nations communities and schools are informed of relevant and evolving education issues. In particular, a TEFA e-Bulletin updates schools and communities about emerging TEFA-related topics. The organizations also implement media strategies as appropriate to promote more widespread awareness of the education needs of First Nations.





# 3

## Advancement of First Nations Education Agreements in BC



## First Nations Education Jurisdiction Agreements

On July 5, 2006, Canada, BC and FNEC signed an Education Jurisdiction Framework Agreement, which was followed by the passing of enabling legislation by Canada in 2006 and BC in 2007. Since that time, FNEC and First Nations in BC have been working to prepare for the full implementation of the education jurisdiction initiative, and important progress has been achieved as a result.

For example, the jurisdiction agreement reached with the provincial government has created significant benefits. Reflecting a commitment made in the jurisdiction negotiations, in November 2009 the Province of BC and FNEC signed a new Reciprocal Tuition Agreement. According to that important Agreement, the Ministry provides per-pupil funding for students living off-reserve who are enrolled in First Nations schools, and for eligible non-status students living on reserve lands. Additionally, the Province of BC and FNEC have worked together in a positive way to extend provincial cost-effective, bulk purchasing opportunities to First Nations schools, and FNEC has been increasingly involved in the Ministry of Education's consultations and policy development efforts.

Unfortunately, progress in implementing the jurisdiction agreement with Canada was hindered for some time by an inability to finalize the financial component of the arrangement. While negotiation of this important issue was underway, all parties signed an extension of the agreements in 2013 to allow more

time to mutually determine the funding that will accompany jurisdiction.

In 2015, Canada released a new policy paper that suggested the elimination of the barriers that existed. That change, together with the new federal government's focus on Indigenous issues and support for First Nations' control over First Nations education, presents a new opportunity for First Nations to advance the implementation of their jurisdiction over education.

Accordingly, FNEC is now confirming with Negotiating First Nations their continued interest in participating in the education jurisdiction negotiations and is pro-actively supporting continued capacity building initiatives and negotiation supports, such as research on governance costs, ongoing development of a collective First Nations Education Authority, and table meetings with Negotiating and Interested First Nations. FNEC also is developing an education jurisdiction toolkit and is facilitating meetings with both Canada and BC to discuss next steps in negotiations.



Outma Squilx Cultural School



Maaqtusiis Secondary School



## **Tripartite Education Framework Agreement**

Since September 2012, Canada, BC, FNEC and the FNSA have been working together to implement a five-year Tripartite Education Framework Agreement (TEFA), which has the primary purpose of improving achievement rates for First Nation students in BC. TEFA formally recognizes the capacity of First Nations in BC to create and implement a relevant and research-based First Nations education system that will improve student outcomes.

TEFA has resulted in a wide range of very beneficial outcomes, and represents a promising opportunity for true collaboration for the benefit of First Nations learners. For example, the TEFA oversight structures and committees – which involve all three TEFA Parties – have facilitated important discussion about ways to improve outcomes for all First Nations students in BC – regardless of where they attend school.

TEFA provides a flexible funding model for First Nation schools based upon the BC public education funding formula, with specific adaptations to reflect First Nations schools' unique characteristics. A TEFA Funding Handbook and Estimator Tool have been developed to explain the TEFA funding model and to support First Nations community and school administrators in planning and monitoring their finances and budgets. In 2015/2016 seven regional workshops were organized to present the Handbook and provide related training. INAC has also incorporated many aspects of the BC Ministry of Education's Operating Grants Manual into the funding formula for First Nations schools, and FNEC and Canada have made important progress in planning for regular updates and sharing information about TEFA funding.

Under TEFA, First Nations annually submit to FNEC data for eight performance indicators, and each year all TEFA-participating schools have collected and submitted the required information. FNEC has also made significant progress in designing systems to continually improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the data collection processes, resulting in higher quality data over time. In addition, through TEFA there has been important progress in the reporting of data related to on-reserve First Nations students attending public schools in

BC, informing discussions about the needs of these students and possible mechanisms to better support their achievement. The availability of the TEFA data is valuable for program planning and monitoring, and for reporting and maintaining accountability to First Nations leadership, communities, families, as well as INAC. In particular, FNEC has pro-actively supported reporting to parents of students in First Nations schools. To date, the TEFA data has demonstrated some improvements in student achievement, and the preliminary data now available will be better substantiated by trends over a longer period of time.

Additionally, as envisioned in TEFA, FNEC is an active participant in provincial policy discussions, and FNEC and BC are working together to establish beneficial initiatives by sharing resources and expertise and by extending relevant services between the First Nations and public education systems. This Annual Report highlights numerous examples of this commitment being put into action – including the new, milestone recognition of a First Nations non-Independent school for the purpose of granting the Dogwood Diploma in the spring of 2016.

Through TEFA, there have been significant advancements in accountability mechanisms for First Nations education, including ways to address the over-representation of First Nations students leaving school with Evergreen (non-graduation) certificates, enhanced support for local education agreements, and attention to other important components of the Ministry's accountability approach. More information about those initiatives is described in this report.

Finally, TEFA funding for core and second level services provides for programs and services for

First Nations education, including professional development opportunities for teachers in both the provincial and First Nations school systems, curriculum development that relates to students in both systems, implementation of a First Nations’ designed and controlled data management system, programs and services to support meaningful school reviews, and relevant accountability mechanisms. In particular, FNEC and the FNSA have been making significant efforts to support First Nations in reporting annual TEFA performance indicators, including regular reporting to parents.

TEFA is set to expire in 2017, and renewal discussions are now underway. The TEFA Oversight Committee is developing a work plan for TEFA renewal, and the TEFA renewal activities will reflect a commitment to fully engage First Nations and First Nation school representatives in all relevant discussions through regional sessions, provincial meetings, and working groups that will provide direction on specific program areas such as language and culture, transportation, technology, special education, and adult education.

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Number of TEFA Working Group,  
Oversight Committee, and Funding  
Working Group meetings in 2015/2016

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11



Simpco First Nations

## **FNEC / BC Ministry of Education Protocol Agreement**

Building upon the existing TEFA and Jurisdiction Agreements, on June 19, 2015 – on the eve of National Aboriginal Day – Peter Fassbender, Minister of Education, and Tyrone McNeil, President of FNEC, signed the first-ever protocol agreement to help guide continued cooperation for improving educational outcomes for BC’s Aboriginal students. The agreement was signed at the Eslha7an Learning Centre of the Squamish Nation.

The protocol will help the parties collaboratively implement their TEFA responsibilities, formalizing their long-standing bilateral relationship and providing a clear framework for continued joint efforts. The protocol is perceived as being a “living” document, and the parties will attach appendices outlining details for future projects. The protocol is also being complemented by quarterly meetings of FNEC and the Deputy Minister, as well as the development of a joint workplan.

Consistent with that protocol agreement, as well as responding to commitments outlined in TEFA, FNEC is working closely with the Province of BC to better articulate First Nations-specific data in a way that will contribute to relevant accountability mechanisms for student results, such as the collaboratively developed procedure for First Nations to access achievement data specific to their students, even when First Nations have small populations.

FNEC has also been invited to join a number of Ministry of Education committees that are working towards the advancement of the new BC Education Plan. FNEC provided detailed feedback regarding changes to BC curriculum, and FNEC and FNSA representatives participated in many of the curriculum development teams for the BC curriculum redesign. Specifically, FNEC has been a part of the following Ministry and related committees.

- Accountability Framework Review Advisory Group
  - Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Working Group
  - Advisory Group on Provincial Assessment
  - Foundation Skills Assessment Redesign Working Group
  - Competencies Consulting Group
  - Graduation Prototype Committees
  - Ministry of Education Safe Schools Committee
  - Emergency Planning and Preparedness Committee
  - Healthy Schools Committee (First Nations Health Authority)
  - ITA Youth Apprenticeship Review Committee
  - Steering Committee for Massive Online Open Course \ on Indigenous Education (UBC)
  - Cuystwi: Indigenous Youth Wellness Training Advisory Group (Provincial Health Services Authority)
  - Respectful Relationships Advisory Group (Ministry of Justice)
  - Hiring committees for key Aboriginal education positions in the Ministry of Education
- FNESC welcomes all opportunities to contribute to important discussions of education issues.



\*Na Aksa Gyilak'yoo School





# 4

## Programs and Services to Support K4–12 First Nations Education

*Throughout the past two decades, FNEC and the FNSA have been dedicated to developing and implementing a range of programs and services to support First Nations communities and schools in ensuring that the needs of their students are addressed in meaningful ways, as described in the following section.*

## The First Nations Schools Assessment and Certification Process

The FNSA First Nations Schools Certification Process is a five-year cycle of review and follow-up that was created by and for First Nations schools well over a decade ago, and is now recognized as a key component of TEFA and other key agreements related to First Nations education in BC.

In year one of the process, participating schools review all aspects of school operations, including student achievement data and other outcome measures, and survey students, parents, school staff, and other community members to measure their satisfaction with the school's programs. Schools then review all of the information collected and analyze their strengths and areas for improvement, resulting in School Growth Plans that outline intended activities for maintaining successes and addressing areas for growth.

Schools are supported to help ensure that they implement the internal review with fidelity. All schools are invited to an information meeting before year one of the cycle, grants are provided to assist with effective implementation, and a School Assessment Coach is assigned to all participating schools to support all steps of the review.

An external review then completes year one, involving a school visit from an appointed team of individuals who review the findings of the internal review and the School Growth Plan. That team provides suggestions and feedback, and determines whether the school will be certified.

In year two of the cycle, schools begin implementing their School Growth Plans, with funding grants and a School Assessment Coach assigned to support and monitor implementation of the planned activities. Schools subsequently continue to address their goals, before beginning the cycle again.

Interested schools also may request "Certification" by the FNSA, which requires meeting a set of

collectively established standards. Specifically, Certification by the FNSA is based on the external review team's determination that:

- the Internal School Assessment Report has been adequately completed;
- the school situation observed by the External Assessment Team is consistent with the content of the Internal School Assessment Report;
- there is clear evidence that the school is meeting expectations in core programs: Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Science, First Nations Language and Culture Program; and
- the School Growth Plan is appropriate and feasible.

Responses from project participants to a feedback survey in March 2016 showed the following.

- All but two respondents found the completion of the internal review "beneficial" and "very beneficial," and 95% found the data from the surveys "beneficial" and "very beneficial." One respondent commented "we got to see everyone's point of view which was beneficial."
- Of the respondents who worked with an assessment coach, 94% found the experience "beneficial" or "very beneficial."
- 95% of respondents found the external team visit "beneficial" to "very beneficial," with just one "neutral" response. One person commented that



“[the external team’s] assessment was thorough and they provided honest and positive feedback in support of our growth plan and gave us useful suggestions.”

- 90% of respondents reported that they referred to their School Growth Plan “often” or “very often,” with one person commenting that “we are using it continually to achieve our growth plan goals.” Similarly, 90% of respondents reported that they were making “some” or “significant” progress toward their goals. One person commented: “progress is good and well paced. We will achieve our 2016 goals.”

The validity of the assessment process and accompanying certification component has been recognized by a variety of education stakeholders,

and the process has continually evolved over time to ensure that it adequately reflects emerging issues and priorities.

### 2015/2016 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of schools in the school assessment and certification process in 2015/2016	17
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Number of schools that completed the assessment process, including a School Growth Plan, in 2014/2015, and therefore received a Growth Plan Grant in 2015/2016	22
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Total number of schools now Certified by the FNSA	69
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Seabird Island Community School

## The First Nations Schools Professional Growth Process

Established almost a decade ago and now funded through TEFA, the Professional Growth Process (PGP) is intended to ensure appropriate and consistent leadership within First Nations schools in BC. In the PGP, Regional Principals and school-based principals together reflect upon and strengthen the principals' practice. Regional Principals assist school leaders in identifying opportunities to advance their skills in relevant areas identified through observations and collaborative discussions. Regional Principals, as necessary, act as role models for instructional leadership, share supervisory tools and techniques, demonstrate specific skills, mentor principals, recommend professional readings and resources, and help to facilitate networking and professional development opportunities appropriate for each principal's unique needs. The overall goal is to build the capacity of principals to support teachers' instructional abilities and create positive learning environments and high expectations for all.

Sixty-one schools are now participating in the PGP process. Generally, Regional Principals strive to visit participating schools once every six weeks, complemented by remote coaching (that is coaching / mentoring support using real time video and other technology-based approaches) as well as regular contact by telephone and email between visits – all used in order to promote a balance of meaningful in-person contact as well as more cost-effective program implementation.

A survey used to evaluate the PGP implementation last year showed that participating principals perceive the process as having a positive impact on their leadership.

- 96% of the responding principals found the support provided by the PGP staff to be very supportive or supportive. (4% were neutral).
  - The majority of responding principals indicated that their ability to undertake their role improved (85%) as a result of the PGP. (11% of the respondents were neutral).
  - 82% of the responding principals indicated that their teachers have greatly improved or showed some improvement as a result of the PGP. (11% were neutral about this question).
- A small selection of comments from the survey respondents are included below.
- ▶ *"[My Regional Principal] is an amazing individual who always strives to give the best, research based instructional leadership to principals. She ensures I am performing at my best to serve the needs of my students."*
  - ▶ *"[My Regional Principal] helps me keep my feet to the fire and challenges my thinking to keep the bar and expectations high."*
  - ▶ *"[My Regional Principal] has gone above and beyond to ensure our school is operating with high expectations for all. She supports, guides, and assists us on a consistent basis."*
  - ▶ *"I was quite new to the administration role this year, and the Regional Principal walked us through everything. She guided us, ensuring we were on track to finishing off a successful year for our students and school. She made sure deadlines were met and helped us in creating a positive school culture."*
- Possibilities to expand the PGP, while also containing staff travel time and costs, continue to be explored, including an increasing use of remote coaching and a greater emphasis on video and teleconferencing strategies – as shown in the data below.



## 2015/2016 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of schools involved in the PGP process	61
Number of school visits by PGP Regional Principals	263
Number of PGP support telephone calls, emails, remote coaching sessions etc.	8,582

### First Nations Schools Collective Professional Development Initiatives: Workshops, Coaching Support, and Professional Learning Communities

Research shows that teachers and principals matter. But research also shows that teachers and principals differ significantly in effectiveness, and the expertise of each school's teaching staff depends to a large extent on quality professional development. In fact, teachers, principals, and other staff in First Nations schools, who often work in significant isolation, have particularly noted the importance of professional development opportunities for their continued growth. Therefore, a significant portion of the TEFA resources are devoted to this issue.

#### Conventional Professional Development Events

FNESC and the FNSA provide a broad range of professional development events for principals and teachers that are designed specifically to reflect the realities of First Nations schools, including the FNSA annual conference and periodic workshops on a range of topics identified by First Nations schools as priorities.

Principals of First Nations schools in BC are also supported through an annual **Principals Short Course**, which allows for carefully selected presentations on topics of immediate and important concern to principals in First Nations schools, as well

as critical networking amongst principals who might otherwise work in relative isolation – geographically and professionally.

Of the principals who provided feedback about the 2015 short course, 86% found the agenda relevant for their work (the remaining respondents were neutral), 100% found the content informative, 88% indicated that what they learned will be useful for their work and will help them to work with their staff to improve student learning, and 100% intended to attend a future Principals Short Course.

## 2015/2016 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of participants in Principal Short Course	61
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Moricietown Elementary

## Coaching Support

A comprehensive in-school coaching initiative currently provides direct assistance to First Nations schools from individuals with expertise in literacy development, special education, First Nations language and culture programming, and the effective implementation of the FNSA School Assessment and Certification Process. The coaching efforts are consistent with widespread evidence that schools are increasingly looking to coaching and other relationship-based professional development strategies to improve the skills and performance of teachers and school leaders, and that such interventions lead to schools that are more happily and productively engaged in the work of student learning.

### 2015/2016 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of school visits made by literacy coaches	134
Total number of schools that were visited by literacy coaches	34
Number of telephone and email supports provided by the literacy coaches	2,350
Number of school visits made by school assessment coaches	84
Total number of schools that were visited by school assessment coaches	49
Number of telephone and email supports provided by the assessment coaches	1,067
Number of school visits made by the First Nations language coach	49
Number of telephone and email supports provided by the First Nations language coach	495

The school personnel who receive the literacy or First Nations language and culture coaching services are sent a survey to request feedback about their experiences. That survey showed that in 2015/2016:

- 92% found the coaching very relevant or relevant to their work; and
- 90% found the experience very or somewhat useful.

Some of the comments shared include the following.

- ▶ *"[The coach] set us new directions to work towards, and we have been doing it. She had encouraging things to tell us about challenges facing other schools, and was able to address a few of our problems individually. Her experience showed and we really appreciated it."*
- ▶ *"[The coach] always came with really practical ideas for our struggling readers and I always felt that they were extremely relevant to what we were doing."*
- ▶ *"I have seen, and continue to see, improvements in student learning through the changes I make as suggested by the coaches."*
- ▶ *"I felt I could use all of her ideas immediately, and they really worked for our students."*
- ▶ *"[The coach] was an amazing help to our school this year. She ensured we were on the right track, encouraging and supporting us along the way. She was constantly available to chat via email or phone and provided consistent support and advice whenever needed."*

### Professional Learning Communities Initiative

Recognizing the critical importance of quality teaching and leadership for promoting student success, the research-based, internationally-recognized Professional Learning Communities (PLC) approach is being implemented by First

Nations schools in BC. Through this initiative, educators are organized into collaborative teams that meet regularly to monitor student achievement data and focus on plans for improvement. The PLC model is being embraced in a comprehensive way, with schools establishing PLCs within their own settings, complemented by a collective First Nations Languages PLC and provincial-level PLCs for principals and teachers.

Through the **First Nations Languages PLC**, 36 schools were able to gather together to create essential learning outcomes for language learning, and to consider the development of common assessment approaches and tools.

The participants in the **Principal PLC** effort are working together to consider the role of the principal in achieving meaningful change, basing their collective work on a substantive review of student performance information to identify ways to assist students who are identified as being in particular need of supports in order to achieve grade level expectations. 55 principals/vice-principals are currently participating in the Principal PLC process. To date, all interested principals/vice-principals have been accommodated.

In order to assess the effectiveness of the Principal PLC opportunity, a survey was sent to all participants in May 2016, requesting their feedback about their experience with the PLC model.

- 90% of the responding principals find the PLC experience relevant to their work.
- 87% find the PLC experience useful.
- 94% believe that the PLC experience has supported them in improving their practice.

Some of the comments shared by the participating principals include the following.

- ▶ “Team learning, collaboration, new ideas, connections with other administrators .... it reinforces the importance of our roles and responsibilities in schools.”
- ▶ “It focused me, made me really look at my data and schedule time to get into classrooms for instructional coaching.”
- ▶ “The PLC helps keep our focus and energy on what is truly important to improve student success.”
- ▶ “The PLC experience has been important with respect to my keeping a closer connection to struggling students as well as to teachers. My staff and I have created and sustained a strong focus that has resulted in very positive improvements in literacy and even in attendance.”
- ▶ “My learning over the past years has been invaluable. Strategies, resources, understanding, relationships and focusing on the important work for our schools cannot be done in isolation. Thank you for supporting this initiative; we are all stronger from it.”

In the collective **Teacher PLC** initiative, grade level groups of teachers are collaboratively considering what each student should learn, how to know when students are learning what is intended, and what to do if students are experiencing difficulty in achieving the essential learning outcomes that are identified. This work represents a significant component of First Nations schools’ efforts to use data in a meaningful way to guide practice and programming. The grade group teachers meet face-to-face twice each year, complemented by teleconferences every 4 – 6 weeks and additional webinars to reduce costs and the travel burden for participants.

Approximately 172 teachers were involved in the PLC initiative in 2015/2016 – representing about 40–45 teachers in each of four cohort groups. This

past year, the initiative included 31 different schools in the K4 cohort, 35 schools in the K/Grade 1 cohort, 38 schools in the Grades 2/3 cohort, and 31 schools in the Grades 4/5 cohort (some schools have more than one educator involved in a specific grade level cohort).

In a follow-up survey to review the PLC initiative, of the responding teachers:

- 77% reported that the PLC initiative is relevant to their work;
- 88% found the experience to be useful; and
- 93% indicated that the PLC experience has helped them improve their practice.

Some of the comments shared include the following.

- ▶ *“Everything I am learning benefits me and benefits the children because I am becoming a better teacher.”*
- ▶ *“This inspires and encourages me to continually increase my knowledge and ways of teaching.”*

- ▶ *“We are discussing strategies for supporting under-performing students and accountability.”*
- ▶ *“Collaborating with other teachers is beneficial – we are sharing good teaching strategies to support struggling learners.”*
- ▶ *“I truly believe that the PLC initiative helps each of us to continue to examine, explore and modify our education practice. In short it assists me to be a better teacher.”*

### 2015/2016 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of participants in the Principal PLC initiative	55
Number of participants in the Teacher PLC initiative	172
Number of Principal and Teacher PLC in-person meetings	12
Number of Principal and Teacher PLC conference call meetings	341



Kyah Wiget Adult Learning Centre (Moricetown)



## Professional Development for Education Assistants in First Nations Schools

In the past year, FNEC and the FNSEA were able to access funding through the federal First Nations Student Success Program (FNSSP) to sponsor a program of comprehensive support for Education Assistants (EAs) in First Nations schools. EAs supplement and support the work of certified teachers, and their work enhances children's experiences of learning in critical ways. In addition to the many benefits of EAs in conventional educational settings, EAs in First Nations schools in fact make a pronounced and invaluable contribution to their schools and students, as EAs are often members of their school communities and therefore tend to remain in their employment positions longer than some of the other education professionals working in schools, providing much-needed stability for students, families, and long-term programming. Also, EAs often have unique, positive, and particularly effective roles in communicating with parents and engaging them as partners in the education of their children.

Reflecting the invaluable role they play, FNSSP Early Literacy program funding was used to sponsor one-year of intensive training for EAs who work at the K-3 grade levels. In total, 147 individuals were registered for the one-year training initiative, representing 52 different schools. The EAs were sponsored to attend four in-person meetings supplemented by ongoing remote coaching, including video-taping their own practice and sharing that evidence with coaches who provided suggestions in response. Regular conference calls allowed for ongoing monitoring and feedback, and for networking amongst EAs to allow them to continually share their experiences, challenges, and promising practices.

In order to assess the effectiveness of the EA professional development opportunity, a survey was sent to all participating EAs, requesting feedback about their experience with the

opportunity. A survey was also sent to principals of the schools that had EAs participating in the professional development. While the principals did not participate in the professional development opportunity, it was important to ask whether they felt that the EAs' learning was evident in their practice.

- 100% of the responding EAs indicated that the agendas for the gatherings were relevant.
- 100% of the respondents indicated that the content presented was informative.
- 89% of the respondents indicated that the support provided between the gatherings was useful. (11% were neutral).
- 100% of the respondents indicated that what they learned through this past year of support will assist them in their work and will help them to improve student learning.
- 100% of the respondents said that if funding makes future support possible, they would definitely attend another event organized for EAs.

Select comments include the following.

- ▶ *"It is so important to emphasize the work EAs do and the support we provide, not only to students but to other staff and the community as well."*
- ▶ *"I enjoyed all the workshops I was able to attend. There is always something new to learn or share, and it is vital that EAs have access to workshops or training."*
- ▶ *"The information and support from the workshops and staff was fantastic. I've taken specific skills learned during the four conferences and applied it to my everyday interventions with students. Thanks for this excellent opportunity!"*



Stz'uminus Community School

- ▶ *“Such a huge improvement in my teaching. I feel more confident when I’m teaching because I know I’m doing it with more enthusiasm and confidence and we are seeing results!!!”*
- ▶ *“The sessions I attended were by far the most informative and hands on pro-d I have ever been to. I continue to use the tools and techniques I learned.”*

Twenty-two of the participating EAs’ principals also responded to the feedback survey.

- 95% indicated that the agendas for the gatherings were relevant and that the content presented was informative.
- 88% felt their EA(s) found the ongoing supports useful.
- 94% believe that this past year of support will assist the EA(s) in effectively fulfilling their roles and will help to improve student learning in their school.
- 91% indicated that if future support is possible, they would encourage their EA(s) to participate

– although the principals also indicated that the time their EAs were away from the schools was challenging, highlighting the important work done by EAs on a daily basis.

- ▶ *“Overall, I found the EA Professional Development to be very beneficial for the staff members involved. Their peers and our students experienced positive outcomes as well.”*
- ▶ *“The EAs came back with a renewed sense of their work and improved skills to accomplish their jobs. There was a buzz around the school as they shared their knowledge with others!!”*
- ▶ *“This was VERY beneficial for my EAs. Thank you so much for sponsoring this initiative.”*
- ▶ *“It was an important opportunity for our EAs to feel valued and an essential part of our school community. The success of the learners in our school is dependent on effective differentiated instruction. Without EAs, we would not be able to run small individualized groups and their pro-d is an essential part of this process.”*

## Principal Evaluation Support

The FNSA supports the principle that an effective evaluation process can assist school principals in the realization of their full potential, resulting in improved leadership qualities and ultimately supporting a positive impact on instruction and student achievement, as well as an intentional and effective focus on the community's mission, vision, values and goals for the school. A comprehensive evaluation process will enhance professional growth, as well as confidence in the principal, which will benefit the principal, teachers, parents, and students.

The FNSA therefore has endorsed a Principal Evaluation Policy for sharing with First Nations School Governing Agencies, based upon the FNSA Standards for Principals in First Nations Schools. Additionally, staff are available to support School Governing Agencies with the implementation of the FNSA Principal Evaluation Policy.

### 2015/2016 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of school governing agencies  
provided principal evaluation support

3



Alexis Creek Elementary/Junior Secondary

## Curriculum Development and Promotion

As high quality, relevant curricular materials are necessary for promoting a range of First Nations education goals, substantial time and resources are being devoted to this important programming area, and created materials and information sharing opportunities are regularly promoted with interested educators in public and First Nations schools, as well as through the K-12 Aboriginal Education Partners Table, the Aboriginal Post-Secondary and Training Partnership Table, at speaking events throughout the year, and through social media.

### *Indian Residential School Resources and Professional Development*

In 2015/2016, FNEC and the FNSA produced new resources for public and First Nations schools to promote a greater understanding of the important issue of Indian Residential Schools and Reconciliation. Before finalization, the residential schools materials were subject to a rigorous pilot and review process, after which the curriculum was finalized and made freely available online. FNEC and the FNSA also have a three-year funding commitment from the Vancouver Foundation to support the implementation of these resources.

In addition, three regional workshops focused on the Residential Schools and Reconciliation resources offered participants an opportunity to explore available resources and participate in professional conversations and networking related to teaching about residential schools in a respectful and sensitive way. An additional three workshops were provided at FNEC's Annual Aboriginal Education Conference.

Further, a summer institute assisted educators with teaching about residential schools in a well-informed and appropriate way, in keeping with the spirit of reconciliation and the call from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada for region-specific residential schools classroom resources.

### *First Nations Career Role Models and Career Resources*

FNESC and FNSA also produced resource materials for teachers and parents/families to support effective career planning with First Nations learners. These materials include exciting print and video profiles of First Nations role models, which describe various pathways to a range of career options. The resources are available for free on-line.

A regional workshop also provided participants the opportunity to explore teacher and parent/student resources designed to support First Nations students' success in school, and engage in professional conversations and networking about ways to help students be prepared for their options following graduation. Two additional workshops were provided at the Annual Aboriginal Education Conference.

### *Science First Peoples Grades 5-9 Resources*

A teacher resource guide is being created to help educators integrate the rich perspectives and knowledge of First Peoples into science courses at the grades 5 – 9 level. This work is expected to be complete by fall 2016, after which the resource will be made freely available on-line.

Two regional workshops on the draft *Science First Peoples Resources* provided participants opportunities to explore the available resources, and participate in professional discussions and networking related to the integration of First Peoples perspectives and knowledge into Science classrooms. An additional workshop was offered at the Annual Aboriginal Education Conference.

### *Authentic First Peoples Resources For Use in K-9 Classrooms (Update and Extension)*

The *Authentic First Peoples Resources for Use in K-7 Classrooms* resource guide has been updated and extended to include grades 8 and 9. This resource guide is an annotated list of classroom resources that have been deemed Authentic First Peoples resources, which will enable teachers to integrate authentic, relevant First Peoples materials into their classrooms for student use.

A regional workshop on First Peoples literature offered participants an opportunity to explore available resources and participate in professional conversations and networking related to authentic First Peoples resources for English Language Arts and English First Peoples courses.

### *Math First Peoples Resources*

A regional workshop focused on teaching Math through a lens of First Peoples cultural relevancy afforded participants an opportunity to explore available resources and participate in professional conversations and networking related to supporting First Nations learners in Math.

### *First Nations Schools Regional Information Sessions on BC Curriculum Changes*

Four regional workshops were offered to teachers in First Nations schools to provide participants the opportunity to examine and learn about new changes in the BC curriculum in order to assist participants in understanding how the revisions relate to their classroom practice.



## 2015/2016 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of participants in the Summer Institute for Teachers	80
Number of participants in Residential Schools Workshops	194
Number of participants in Science First Peoples Workshops	119
Number of participants in Math First Peoples Workshops	39
Number of participants in the First Peoples Literature Workshop	48
Number of participants in Career Role Models Workshop	40
Number of participants in Information Sessions on BC Curriculum Changes	158



Seabird Island Community School

## Data – Promoting Evidence-Based Decision Making

There is a growing recognition of the need to use data to inform decision-making, monitor instructional and program effectiveness, meet school planning needs, and maintain accountability to parents, communities, and funding agencies. Data can help educators decide what actions to take to improve instruction, change practice, or reform schools. Data also provides quantifiable substance for meaningful, ongoing dialogue with families and communities. First Nations schools are therefore being supported in the use of student assessment data and other evidence for identifying necessary improvements.

For example, as described above, a range of in-school coaching for school staff provides direct mentoring and assistance for the implementation of student assessments, as well as coaching on how to analyze student results in order to inform instructional choices. On a very practical level, the FNSA previously organized a number of in-service and training workshops and provided financial assistance for the purchase of recommended standardized student assessment tools – the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), and Canadian Achievement Test 4 (CAT4). Finally, TEFA funding continues to be used to support collective scoring of CAT4 results.

Reflecting the efforts being made in this area, 70 of the 73 schools that can be using DIBELS are doing so (i.e. schools that offer relevant grade levels: K5 – 6), and 68 schools are now participating in the CAT4 collective services.

## 2015/2016 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of schools supported with CAT4 Scoring	68
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## Data Records and User Management System (DRUMS)

The Data Records and User Management System (DRUMS) is an integrated infrastructure for managing student information at the school level and for analyzing and reporting aggregate data at the provincial level. DRUMS was designed by First Nations schools in order to meet individual school needs, to inform programming at the local and collective levels, and to support reporting to communities and parents. Throughout the past year, ongoing training was provided for the schools that continue to take advantage of this important system.

DRUMS was a key topic of discussion at the 2016 FNSA Authorized Representatives meeting, where participants provided valuable feedback about both the DRUMS system and their overall technology needs. FNEC and the FNSA will be following up on that feedback throughout the upcoming year.

### 2015/2016 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of schools participating in the DRUMS initiative

83

## Technology Support Line

With TEFA funding, a toll-free technology support line is available to support First Nations school staff who require assistance in the area of information and communications technology. Schools can call about ...

- Hardware – including trouble with computers (including Macs) / Smart Boards / PanaBoards / Tanbergs / SonicWalls / routers / videoconferencing, etc.
- Software - including upgrades, licensing, warranties, product suggestions and software use
- Connectivity – such as trouble connecting to the Internet, connectivity speed, etc.
- Funding and Purchases - tips for accessing funding, estimating costs, and accessing bulk purchasing opportunities to save money
- DRUMS – questions about the First Nations schools student information system

### 2015/2016 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of phone calls/emails answered

3,598



Award Presentation at the First Nations Schools Association Conference

## Connected Classrooms Initiative

For the past five years, the FNSA and FNESE have been piloting a Connected Classrooms initiative, which is designed to facilitate joint offerings of specific secondary courses by a collective of First Nations schools. Participating schools use a combination of technologies, including real time video conferencing, to connect and create an interactive classroom environment for students located in a collective of First Nations schools throughout BC. This project differs from other Distance Learning initiatives as the students participate in a real time virtual classroom with an instructor qualified to teach the subject, complemented with in-person support from an on-site educator. Students have attributed their success in Connected Classrooms courses to their ability to see and interact with the teacher and other students.

In 2015/2016, twelve schools participated in the Connected Classrooms initiative, and collectively offered nine courses. These courses were provided to a total of 139 different students – noting that some students registered in more than one of the courses. Results for all of the 2015/2016 Connected Classrooms courses were not available at the time of writing this Annual Report, as the students just completed their final exams at the end of June. However, final results from classes that ended in June 2015 showed that 79% of all registered students passed the course. Further, the results from the courses completed in January 2015 showed that 75.5% of the registered students passed their courses.

### 2015/2016 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of schools participating in Connected Classrooms initiative	12
Number of students taking courses through Connected Classrooms	139*

\* Many students registered in more than one of the courses.

## Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Among the most widely recognized and least disputed findings of educational research is the primary role of teachers in the success of students, and numerous studies demonstrate persuasively that the potential effect of teacher quality on academic achievement is quite high. The range of programs described throughout this report are aimed at supporting teachers, which is expected to help facilitate greater teacher retention. In addition, several specific, practical activities are being implemented to directly address teacher recruitment and retention and support schools in implementing effective employment practices as a key priority.

For example, an *Employment Handbook for First Nations Schools* is available, and employment workshops continue to be offered regularly in the many conferences and special events hosted for First Nations schools. In 2015/2016, a Teacher Recruitment and Retention Workshop was offered to 37 participants at the FNSA Conference, and three workshops were offered in communities to a total of 22 interested school representatives.

Additionally, since 2012/2013 those opportunities have been extended through an ongoing partnership with Make a Future, a recruitment initiative created by the BC Public School Employers' Association. Through TEFA funding, First Nations schools now have access to the Make a Future services and website, which facilitates high quality, innovative promotion of employment opportunities to a broad audience, enhancing the recruitment efforts of First Nations schools. See [www.makeafuture.ca](http://www.makeafuture.ca) for more information about this new opportunity for recruitment support.

### 2015/2016 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of schools accessing Make a Future teacher recruitment activities	66
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## Bulk Purchasing Opportunities

For several years, First Nations schools interested in purchasing a new school bus have been able to take advantage of standing offer prices for various types of buses – creating an opportunity to purchase school buses at a much lower cost. This opportunity is being offered by the BC Ministry of Education, working with the Association of School Transportation Services of BC (ASTSBC), in the spirit of the July 2006 BC First Nation Education Jurisdiction Agreement and January 2012 TEFA. Additional opportunities for access to economies-of-scale for First Nations schools' purchases are being explored.



Canim Lake Band

## Support for Local Education Agreements

For the past six years, FNEESC has managed the federal government's Education Partnerships Program (EPP) funding on behalf of First Nations in the BC Region, and has used the resources to implement activities in partnership with the BC Ministry of Education (MED).

For example, First Nations, FNEESC, and MED have been striving to develop a number of initiatives aimed at increasing First Nations involvement in the BC education system, based upon enhanced partnerships between provincial-level organizations as well as strong, cooperative relationships at the local level. One important focus provincially and locally has been Local Education Agreements (LEAs) between First Nations and School Boards, which describe mutually agreed upon goals aimed at supporting First Nations students attending public schools. LEAs generally outline a variety of strategies that both parties agree will result in greater student success. LEAs also are the mechanism through which federal funding for identified on-reserve First Nations students is distributed to school districts and Independent Schools by First Nations.

Although the effectiveness of LEAs varies across the province, many First Nations communities and school district personnel value the benefits the agreements create. They can result in open communications and careful consideration of strategies and supports that are identified as appropriate by First Nations people. They also can raise awareness of the challenges faced by First Nations students, accelerate the search for possible solutions, and affirm the rights and responsibilities of communities and parents for determining and evaluating appropriate strategies for educational success.

Given the many positive benefits that are associated with effective LEAs, EPP funding was used in the past several years to support a number of key activities.



- With EPP funding, more than 500 people have attended workshops organized to exchange information about LEAs and how these agreements might better contribute to the success and achievement rates of First Nations students attending public or independent/private schools off reserve.
- FNEC sponsored the development of a comprehensive LEA Toolkit, which outlines issues associated with the negotiation of LEAs, including options for parties to consider in reaching mutual agreements for the benefit of students.
- There have been individual sessions involving experienced, professional facilitators who have assisted First Nations and school districts in areas of the province where negotiations have not been proceeding well, resulting in renewed commitments to conclude agreements that reflect promising practices being implemented in other parts of the province.
- A template Community-to-Community LEA has been developed, as well as a private school LEA template for use by the many First Nations that have students attending a BC Independent School.
- FNEC has worked with the Ministry of Education to increase the availability to First Nations of achievement data for on-reserve First Nations students attending public schools – including at both the provincial and school district levels, and FNEC has produced template documents to assist First Nations in accessing the data for their students. This increase in transparency regarding results has led to informed, deep discussions about ways to better support First Nations learners and improve their outcomes.

- Significant effort has been made to consider LEA issues within the context of the BC Ministry of Education's accountability framework.

2015/2016 EPP funding also was used to sponsor two provincial meetings involving 160 participants in total. The day-long events included an overview of:

- First Nations students' educational outcomes, including both provincial and school district level data;
- funding mechanisms and related issues (the provincial Operating Grants Manual, the First Nations Billing Rate, and common funding challenges such as transportation etc.);
- the Ministry of Education's accountability framework;
- the purpose of LEAs and their relationship with other types of agreements; and
- existing resources to support negotiations, such as FNEC's LEA Toolkit and samples.

The following comments were shared by the meeting participants.

- ▶ *"Very informational session."*
- ▶ *"Excellent information. Thank you."*
- ▶ *"This workshop has made me realize what a big job we have in front of us."*
- ▶ *"We now have essential tools to begin our negotiations again."*

## Building Stronger Accountability for Student Success

It is clear that strong accountability mechanisms, within which goals for Aboriginal students are identified, measured and regularly monitored in partnership with First Nations, are fundamental to the success of joint efforts to support Aboriginal students in the public school system. Accordingly, using 2013/2014 EPP funding, FNEESC sponsored a comprehensive review of the BC Accountability Framework. The discussion paper that resulted from that review has since been used as a basis for evidence-based discussions about Aboriginal students' educational outcomes in public schools, and the paper led to a number of recommendations that have been consistently and pro-actively advanced with relevant partners. The review findings and recommendations were also shared with participants in FNEESC's Regional Sessions and a series of accountability workshops to promote increased understanding of the province's accountability commitments and to facilitate informed discussions at the regional and local levels, between both FNEESC and MED and between First Nations and school districts. The accountability recommendations have continued to be adjusted to reflect changing circumstances.

Building upon that work, FNEESC organized seven meetings with First Nations that have students attending one of the provincial school districts with some of the lowest levels of First Nations student achievement rates. In 2015/2016, sixty participants in total attended the workshops, representing thirty different First Nations. The agendas for those meetings included discussion of a variety of existing accountability mechanisms, including a description of provincial Enhancement Agreements, LEAs, the BC Ministry of Education Accountability Framework, and student data for on-reserve students in public schools. The workshop participants also considered challenging funding issues, contextual factors for student achievement improvements, as well as the importance of attendance.

## Dual Credit Research

Throughout North America, reflecting the considerable interest in improving transitions from high school to higher learning opportunities, governments, secondary, and post-secondary institutions are exploring opportunities for granting credit at both the secondary schools, and post-secondary levels for completion of a single course. For example, in BC, dual credit programs allow students in Grades 11 and 12 to earn credits toward secondary school graduation while also earning credits in a post-secondary academic course, vocational program, or in a trade apprenticeship.

FNEESC has long had an interest in better understanding the potential of dual credit within the context of First Nations education, and using 2015/2016 EPP funding, a consultant was hired to write a detailed report about dual credit programming, including how it relates to challenges generally related to adult education programming. The report now represents a start to longer term, collaborative efforts to promote dual credit opportunities for First Nations students.



Kispiox First Nation

## Special Education Program

The Special Education Program (SEP) supports First Nations schools in meeting the needs of all of their students. The program is implemented using an intervention-based approach to special education delivery, involving a systematic process that begins in the classroom, with an extensive use of informal and formative assessment techniques for the purpose of program planning and for identifying students who might need more intensive assessments and support, and/or ultimately psycho-educational diagnoses and possibly assistance from one or more specialists.

First Nations schools also have placed significant emphasis on early identification of special needs, as identifying and addressing exceptionalities as early as possible offers the best opportunity for mitigating challenges and giving students the greatest chance of long-term success.

In addition, the SEP program in BC includes funding at the school-level for direct support for students with special needs, complemented by collective initiatives to create economies-of-scale and increase access to necessary expertise and special education materials.

Accordingly, each year all First Nations schools are provided an allocation to support their special education programming, with accompanying responsibilities set out in contribution agreements. In addition, a separate portion of the BC SEP funding is allocated through a proposal process to schools with specific students with high cost low incidence special needs who cannot be served using the school's annual grant. Using these funds, First Nations schools have made great progress in terms of their special education programming.

In addition, collective activities are implemented to maximize the benefits of the SEP funding.

- SEP staff share information with schools, answer questions, organize services, and provide overall

management to ensure the effective operation of the SEP program.

- The SEP staff are working to provide ongoing assistance to all interested First Nations schools in BC through professional development and training workshops, to which all First Nations schools are invited to send representatives. Professional development opportunities are designed – to the extent possible – to recognize geographic challenges, meaning that community or least regionally-based training opportunities are seen as important.
- Seven Learning Assistance Teacher Networks are now being facilitated, through which Learning Assistance Teachers meet regularly through teleconference for advice and information sharing. All Learning Assistants in all First Nations schools are welcome to join in this initiative.
- Each year, schools are able to apply for additional funding grants to support students with specific high cost special needs. All schools that identify students through this process receive at least one visit during the school year, additional visits if possible, as well as ongoing support through phone and email.
- SEP Managers and Coaches provide training and in-school support to promote the development, delivery, implementation and evaluation of strategies and programs aimed at increasing the quality of special education services throughout BC. Continued student, school and community support is provided on an on-going basis through emails, telephone and technology. To date, all schools that have requested support from a SEP Manager or Coach have received it before the end of the school year – although for scheduling purposes, priority is assigned to schools with the greatest numbers of students with high cost special needs enrolled.



- FNEC/FNSA-sponsored Speech Language Pathologists are working in a number of First Nations schools in various regions of the province. The SLP services provide teachers with much-needed information and language development strategies, and assessment and intervention recommendations are provided for students with exceptional learning needs.
- Finally, for twelve years, FNEC/FNSA has coordinated a provincial-level approach to psycho-educational assessments for students referred for potential learning and behavioural exceptionalities. Each year, FNSA/FNEC hire specialists and assign them to visit schools to conduct appropriate assessments and provide associated follow-up, as possible given available time and resources.



Nala'atsi Program

## 2015/2016 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of schools provided 2015/2016 SEP grants	114
Number of schools that reported on 2015/2016 SEP grants	114
Number of students supported through SEP grants (school and additional grants)	1,876
Number of students provided an assessment through the coordinated initiative	60
Total number of school visits made by Special Education Managers and Coaches	347
Total number of schools visited by Special Education Managers and Coaches	87
Number of workshops provided by SEP Staff	151
Total number of school visits made by Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs)	108
Total number of schools visited by SLPs	41
Total number of students supported through sponsored SLP services	398
Total contacts made to schools (toll-free line and emails)	1,505
Number of students provided assistive technology supports	23



Lalumuthut Tseep Parents Club

## First Nations Parents Club

The First Nations Parents Club is designed to support the key role that parents play in the educational success of their children. It provides parents with information, support, and rewards for their efforts, and it involves supporting locally-based clubs with newsletters, incentive prizes and parenting resources.

During 2015/2016, the Club continued to publish a regular newsletter and an annual calendar full of family activities. The Club also provided incentive prizes to parents for participating in club activities and for sharing local news. All Club members received First Nations Parents Club certificates at the end of the school year to acknowledge their participation. Each Parents Club is also awarded a small grant to sponsor parent-support activities.

In 2015/2016, new Parents Club Workshops were also offered to interested communities. Two-hour workshops in six communities shared information on topics such as career and post-secondary planning, ways to support children's success, parental advocacy, Internet safety, and Local Education Agreements. Over 150 parents enjoyed these opportunities.

Finally, to support those workshops, “Parents Kits” were created – box sets of resources including “Talking About Education” discussion cards, notepads, mini parents club handbooks, pens, bookmarks and magnets. The kits were distributed at the Parents Club workshops and were also provided more widely upon request.

## 2015/2016 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of Parents Clubs in BC	80
Number of Parents Club members in BC	1,874
Number of Parents Club Grants of \$1,500 awarded	36

*\* While this initiative broadly supports First Nations parents in a variety of situations, grants are provided only to those clubs that can demonstrate direct affiliation with a First Nation.*

## The Seventh Generation Club Stay in School Initiative

The Seventh Generation Club, established in 1997, is intended to provide a fun, age-appropriate and engaging opportunity for children to encourage them to make healthy choices, participate in sports and community activities, and, most importantly, regularly attend and stay in school.

This initiative has always offered an important opportunity for partnerships, reflected in the ongoing support provided by the Vancouver Canucks and the First Nations Health Authority. Those partners have helped make it possible to provide all Club members with Seventh Generation Club Daytimers, which are intended to help students develop organizational skills, and which also share information to help students succeed in school, prepare for higher education, and engage in career planning at an early age. The Daytimers feature art, photos and written submissions contributed by schools and students.

In addition to the Daytimers, the Seventh Generation Club sponsors regular newsletters, a sports day, and contests to promote the Club's goals.

### 2015/2016 KEY ACTIVITIES

Seventh Generation Club  
Members

6,300  
students in

123 different schools

## First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy Initiative

The First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy is part of the broader Youth Employment Strategy program, and it consists of two distinct programs.

1. The Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP) supports opportunities for summer work experience and training for in-school secondary and post-secondary First Nations students, providing communities with wage subsidies for short-term student work experience positions.

2. The Skills Link Program supports youth participants in the following initiatives through a proposal-based application process.

- The Career Promotion and Awareness Program sponsors youth in First Nations schools to explore career development and supports schools in providing career fairs and leadership projects.
- The Cooperative Work Placements Program sponsors youth in First Nations schools to participate in mentored school-based work and study opportunities.
- The Science and Technology Program sponsors activities to promote science and technology as a career choice by providing First Nations youth with first-hand experience in various science and technology disciplines.
- The Mentored Work Placement Program sponsors work experience opportunities for out-of-school, unemployed, or under-employed First Nations youth.
- The Information Communication Technology (ICT) Work Placements sponsors information and communication technology work experience opportunities for out-of-school, unemployed, or under-employed youth.

## 2015/2016 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of communities funded through SWEP	158
Number of youth supported through Career Promotion & Awareness Program	3,026
Number of students sponsored for Cooperative Work Placements	54
Number of student participants in Science and Technology Programs	2,101
Number of students sponsored through the Mentored Work Placement Program	115



Neqweyqwelsten

## First Nations Health and Science Promotion Initiative

For the past several years, the First Nations Health Authority has provided funding to sponsor a First Nations Health and Science Career Promotion (FNHSCP) Program, which has enabled First Nations to offer their students health and science educational and career planning activities. The program is intended to encourage students to consider and prepare for health and science related careers in positive ways, which ultimately will inspire them to pursue and access education and career options in those fields.

Specifically, this program provides First Nations with grants to sponsor projects such as tutoring and homework clubs to promote higher levels of student achievement – particularly in areas required for post-secondary acceptance – and/or parent information sessions, workshops to promote career planning, relevant field trips, visits to post-secondary institutes, science camps, and attendance at health career fairs. In the long-term, it is anticipated that these programs will contribute in a meaningful way to the broader efforts being made to increase the participation of First Nations students in health and science post-secondary programs and careers.

## 2015/2016 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of communities provided a program grant	39
Number of participants in program activities	2,918



## Artists in Education Initiative

Funded by the BC Arts Council and the Government of BC's Creative Futures Initiative, each year Artists in Education grants support artistic programming – including performances, workshops and residencies – in schools across the province, and for almost two decades, this initiative has been specifically extended to First Nations schools in BC. Through the Artists in Education initiative, approximately \$1,700 funding grants are provided to First Nations schools on a rotating basis, allowing local BC First Nations artists to provide exciting art opportunities for students. Most of the artists included in the funded programs are recognized by their communities for their talents and gifts, and they usually teach their art in traditional ways that are embedded in their languages, cultures, stories, and/or teachings. Accordingly, this program has supported very relevant and much-appreciated opportunities that otherwise may not have been possible.

### 2015/2016 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of schools provided an Artists in Education grant

14



Tl'etinqox School

## First Nations ActNow Get Healthy Stay Healthy Challenge

The *First Nations ActNow Get Healthy Stay Healthy Challenge* is a project undertaken with funding from the First Nations Health Authority. The focus of the initiative is to promote physical health through daily fitness activities and to promote healthy eating through activities that promote nutrition awareness. The project involves an ongoing sharing of information, documents, resources, and support from a Project Coordinator using information and communications technologies (ICTs), including a project web site. Additionally, specific resources and materials to be used by students are shared with participating schools, based upon their identified needs. Finally, visits to participating schools allow for direct contact between the Project Coordinator and students, teachers, and support staff, which provides for additional encouragement, information sharing, direct instruction, as well as project monitoring.

### 2015/2016 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of schools that participated in ActNow

36

Number of students that participated in ActNow

1,664



Sen Pok Chin

## BC FRIENDS For Life Program

In 2015/2016, the First Nations Health Authority continued its financial support for the implementation of the BC Friends For Life Facilitators Training for First Nations schools. The BC FRIENDS program, sponsored by the Ministry of Children and Family Development, is an evidence-based program intended to reach as many students as possible and provide them with life skills that will strengthen resiliency and reduce the risk of developing an anxiety problem. The program provides training and resources to First Nations educators and parents and is comprised of three program levels: Fun FRIENDS (K/Gr. 1), Child (Gr. 4/5) and Youth (Gr. 6/7). The objectives for 2015/2016 included the following.

- Coordination of a BC FRIENDS Facilitator training – Fun FRIENDS and Child FRIENDS training
- Distribution of BC FRIENDS resources to support the delivery of the program in classrooms
- Provision of mental health materials for First Nations schools and parents
- Increased support for the parent component of the program

In the past year, the Fun Friends (K/Gr. 1) and the Child Friends (Gr. 4/5) Facilitator Training were offered to all K-7 First Nations schools. Program

materials also were available for all new and formerly trained facilitators, and mental health resources were provided to all session participants for classrooms and parents.

### 2015/2016 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of schools involved in the FRIENDS Program	21
Number of teachers and parents trained for the FRIENDS program	62



Fraserview Learning Centre



Nak'albun PAC, First Nations Parents Club







# 5

## Additional First Nations Languages Support Programs and Activities

*In addition to the First Nations Languages Conference and the Language-specific activities described in the section above, a number of additional activities are being implemented to support the First Nations Language-related efforts of First Nations schools and communities.*

*Since its establishment, a First Nations Languages Sub-Committee has led efforts to promote and support a variety of First Nations language professional development opportunities, research projects, and services for First Nations and schools. The First Nations Languages Sub-Committee is comprised of both community and partner organization representatives.*



## First Nations Language Teacher Professional and Resource Development Grants

As in past years, in 2015/2016 a number of grants were distributed to support professional development opportunities for First Nations language teachers in BC, and for collaborative efforts to design and create much needed educational resources for First Nations language education programs. Once again, these grants supported successful community-driven professional development events and collaboration sessions. The 2015/2016 events reached over 500 individuals, including nearly 150 First Nations language teachers.

## Collaboration with the BC Ministry of Education

FNESC has been working closely with the BC Ministry of Education to support First Nations language learning in the BC school system. A joint research project examined the development and implementation of Ministry-approved First Nations language curriculum documents, and the information and recommendations emanating from that work will assist both FNESC and the Ministry in supporting First Nations language learning. FNESC continues to advocate for the creation of a First Nations Language Education Policy, to be developed by and for BC First Nations.

## New First Nations Language Education Resources

In the past year, two new resources were released, which are aimed at supporting First Nations language education in BC. The *First Nations Language Curriculum Building Guide* and the *First Nations Language Education Planning Workbook* both provide valuable information for First Nations language educators. The resources have been promoted and shared at both FNESC and FNSA events and are available for free download from the FNESC website.

## First Nations Languages Fluency Degree

FNESC and IAHLA have partnered with a consortium of Indigenous and public post-secondary institutions to support the development of First Nations language fluency degree pilot projects. The language fluency degree project is a long-standing effort of FNESC and IAHLA, and represents a direct effort to support language revitalization and the creation of new language speakers. The implementation of pilot projects is intended to create space for more degree programs across the province.

## First Nations Languages Roundtable

In March 2016, FNESC and the First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) once again co-hosted a gathering of provincial organizations and institutions that support First Nations language revitalization – a meeting that provided a valuable opportunity for networking and collaboration. Roundtable participants worked together to identify key issues and opportunities for joint initiatives.

## Association of BC Deans of Education

Since 2011, FNEC and IAHLA have had an MOU with the Association of BC Deans of Education (ABCDE), through which the parties commit to collaboration and information sharing to address the following key areas.

- Promotion of effective and appropriate Language Teacher Education programs in BC
- Promotion of teacher education programs that effectively address Aboriginal education
- Advancement of the principles of First Nations ownership, control, access, and possession of Indigenous knowledge, resources and materials

FNEC continues to work with the Deans of Education to increase the participation of Aboriginal people in teacher education programs and to promote the infusion of Aboriginal worldviews and perspectives as a key element of teacher education. As the language fluency degree project advances, FNEC will work with ABCDE and other partners to ensure that practical and culturally-relevant First Nations language teacher training programs are available to fluency degree graduates.



Amy Woodland School



Barriere Elementary





# 6

## Post-Secondary Education and Training Support Programs and Activities

*In keeping with its commitment to supporting lifelong learning, FNEESC is active in advancing quality post-secondary education (PSE) opportunities for First Nations learners in BC – in terms of increasing transitions and supporting improved outcomes for learners in both public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal-controlled institutes.*

## Post-Secondary Subcommittee

FNESC's work in this area is guided by the Post-Secondary Subcommittee (PSSC), which for many years has worked to address First Nations PSE issues and to develop united responses to provincial and federal PSE policies and programs.

The PSSC is comprised of Board members who are selected based upon their experience and knowledge of First Nations PSE. The role of the PSSC is as follows.

- To participate in and contribute to discussions about PSE
- To identify areas requiring specific attention in the long and short term
- To advocate for post-secondary initiatives and services as necessary
- To seek community input to identify and prioritize post-secondary issues
- To develop unified responses to provincial and federal PSE issues

Long-term funding to support this work is being sought, as the PSSC is critical to the advancement of First Nations PSE in BC; it provides policy and program advice to inform FNESC's post-secondary work and ensure that community needs are met.

## Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework Implementation

FNESC has continued to work with its PSE partners, particularly the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, to advance the implementation of the *Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Action Plan: 2020 Vision for the Future* – which was released by the Ministry in 2012 to guide progress on Aboriginal post-secondary education and training. The Framework

was developed in close collaboration with FNESC, IAHLA, and other partners, and sets out a series of goals and actions intended to advance the following vision:

*Aboriginal learners succeed in an integrated, relevant, and effective British Columbia post-secondary education system that enhances their participation in the social, cultural and economic life of their communities, the province, and global society; and the public post-secondary education system is relevant, responsive, respectful and receptive to Aboriginal learners and communities.*

FNESC has provided detailed feedback and recommendations on all initiatives being carried out under the Policy Framework to ensure they meet the needs of communities and learners. This input is informed by the PSSC, as well as through information provided directly by communities.

In 2015/2016, engagement related to the Framework included:

- bilateral meetings with the Ministry of Advanced Education, including meetings with the Minister, Deputy Minister and staff;
- quarterly meetings of the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners Table, as well as meetings of the Policy Working Group and Joint Partners Transitions Working Group;
- participation in the development, implementation and adjudication of the Aboriginal Community Based Training Partnerships Program (part of the Employment Services and Support Program);
- contributions to program changes and adjudication for the Aboriginal Service Plan Initiative;
- work with the Association of BC Deans of Education on a Joint Action Plan;

- work with the IAHLA Executive to ensure post-secondary projects and initiatives are aligned and coordinated;
- participation in the Aboriginal Awards Committee of the Irving K. Barber Society; and
- input and advice related to changes to private career training legislation.

### Support for Community PSE Coordinators

Community PSE Coordinators are critical to the success of First Nations learners in PSE, as the Coordinators provide guidance to students, administer funding, and implement community PSE priorities. Too often, however, the Coordinators have worked in isolation, with limited support, resources, or professional development opportunities. In response to this situation, FNEESC has developed a number of initiatives to assist First Nations PSE Coordinators in carrying out their work. In 2015/2016, the supports included:

- maintaining the public FNEESC PSE website ([www.fnesc.ca/pse](http://www.fnesc.ca/pse)), including a coordinator resource page;
- regularly contacting the FNEESC Board and PSE Coordinators to communicate news, events, and funding opportunities;
- developing and distributing the joint FNEESC/IAHLA PSE newsletter to IAHLA institutes, Board members, First Nations Post-Secondary Coordinators, and partners across BC;
- refining the local operating guidelines toolkit, which provides template guidelines, forms, and best practices for use by communities to ensure their resources are consistent with the latest INAC program guidelines.

### PSE Coordinator Workshops

For the third consecutive year, in 2015/2016 FNEESC hosted a series of five regional PSE Coordinator Workshops to facilitate professional development and update communities on recent developments in post-secondary. These workshops provided information related to the administration of the Post-Secondary Student Support Program and University and College Entrance Preparation Program, such as identifying changes in the INAC guidelines, discussing challenges, and sharing suggestions to improve post-secondary administration.

A total of 124 PSE Coordinators participated in the workshops, an increase of 21% over the previous year. Of the 90 participants who completed evaluations, 97% found the content very valuable.

### Post-Secondary Resource Line

FNEESC continues to operate a Post-Secondary Resource Line for First Nation PSE Coordinators. Through this service, First Nations are able to ask questions about administering post-secondary programs, scholarships and awards, and related issues. The number of inquiries to the resource line continues to grow, this year by 15%, with 574 unique contacts (400 through email and 174 by phone). This represents an 82% increase from 2013/2014, which can be attributed in part to improved communication and outreach to communities through the PSE Workshops and other events.

### Aboriginal Learning Links

In fall of 2016, FNEESC launched a redesigned Aboriginal Learning Links website ([www.aboriginallearning.ca](http://www.aboriginallearning.ca)) – a web portal that provides resources for Aboriginal learners who want to pursue or continue post-secondary studies in BC. The site includes information on education planning, paying for school, on-campus services, childcare, housing, and specific resources for current and former children in care.







## CONCLUSIONS

For over 20 years, BC First Nations have advanced the principles of quality education and First Nations control of First Nations education through the development of a comprehensive, community-driven and research-based BC First Nations Education System. FNEC and the FNSA have worked with First Nations to design programs and services that we believe will help our children to succeed. We have supported positive relationships that are helping us to meet the complex needs of our students, families, and communities. We have created standards for our schools that reflect our unique values and circumstances. We also understand the critical importance of thoughtful program monitoring and accountability, and we carefully measure our success and report on our results to our parents, communities, and to our funding agencies.

We are confident that our expanding partnerships and formal agreements will result in important, positive changes in First Nations education – including increasing our control of our own education processes, giving First Nations more recognition and decision-making authority over the education of our children, and leading to even more important programs and services that will support our schools and communities.

We now look forward to continuing our advocacy for educational reforms that will benefit our children and youth – promoting quality education for First Nations learners, founded upon our languages and cultures and focused on high levels of learning for all of our students.

We welcome everyone who is interested to join us in our ongoing efforts.





# First Nations Education Steering Committee

## Financial Statements – March 31, 2016

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*Note: Schedules of Program Operations Available on Request*

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## First Nations Education Steering Committee Society

March 31, 2016

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### Management's Responsibility for Financial Reporting

The accompanying financial statements of First Nations Education Steering Committee Society and all the information in this annual report are the responsibility of management and have been approved by the Board of Directors.

The financial statements have been prepared by management in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. Financial statements are not precise since they include certain amounts based on estimates and judgements. When alternative accounting methods exist, management has chosen those it deems most appropriate in the circumstances, in order to ensure that the financial statements are presented fairly, in all material respects.

The Society maintains systems of internal accounting and administrative controls of high quality, consistent with reasonable cost. Such systems are designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial information is relevant, reliable and accurate and the Society's assets are appropriately accounted for and adequately safeguarded.

The Board is responsible for ensuring that management fulfills its responsibility for financial reporting and is ultimately responsible for reviewing and approving the financial statements.

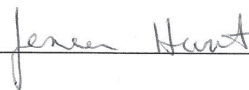
The Directors review the Society's financial statements and recommends their approval. The Board meets periodically with management, as well as the external auditors, to discuss internal controls over the financial reporting issues, to satisfy themselves that each party is properly discharging their responsibilities, and to review the annual report, the financial statements and the external auditor's report. The Board takes this information into consideration when approving the financial statements for issuance to the members. The Board also considers the engagement of the external auditors.

The financial statements have been audited by D&H Group LLP Chartered Professional Accountants in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards on behalf of the members. D&H Group LLP Chartered Professional Accountants have full access to First Nations Education Steering Committee Society.

President



Treasurer





## Independent Auditor's Report

To the Board of Directors of First Nations Education Steering Committee Society

### Report on the Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of First Nations Education Steering Committee Society, which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2016 and the statement of operations, statement of changes in fund balances and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

#### *Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements*

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

#### *Auditor's Responsibility*

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.



### *Opinion*

In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of First Nations Education Steering Committee Society as at March 31, 2016, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

### **Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements**

As required by the *Society Act* (British Columbia), we report that, in our opinion, the accounting principles in the Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations have been applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

Vancouver, B.C.  
July 7, 2016



**Chartered Professional Accountants**

## Statement 1

**First Nations Education Steering Committee Society****Statement of Operations and Changes in Fund Balances - Operating Fund****Year ended March 31, 2016**

	2016 \$	2016 \$	2015 \$
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>
<b>Revenue</b>			
INAC funding	21,202,752	21,202,752	21,575,455
Province of BC funding	310,000	365,000	247,000
Administration fee recoveries	625,275	624,511	668,562
Other funding sources	<u>741,600</u>	<u>1,033,022</u>	<u>929,640</u>
	<u>22,879,627</u>	<u>23,225,285</u>	<u>23,420,657</u>
<b>Expenditures</b>			
Direct	19,167,160	18,934,981	18,610,918
Indirect	3,808,600	3,869,536	3,852,500
Transfers to First Nations Schools Association	<u>350,400</u>	<u>350,400</u>	<u>350,400</u>
	<u>23,326,160</u>	<u>23,154,917</u>	<u>22,813,818</u>
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures	(446,533)	70,368	606,839
<b>Fund balance, beginning of year</b>	6,786,067	6,786,067	6,269,208
Recoveries of surpluses	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(89,980)</u>
<b>Fund balance, end of year</b>	6,786,067	6,856,435	6,786,067

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

# First Nations Education Steering Committee Society

## Summary Statement of Operations and Changes in Fund Balances - Operating Fund

Year ended March 31, 2016

	Schedule #	INAC funding	Province of BC funding	Other revenue	Total revenue	Total expenditures	Excess (deficiency) for the year	Beginning fund balance (deficit)	Recoveries/ transfers	2016 Ending fund balance (deficit)
TEFA Core	1	4,187,000	-	2,667	4,189,667	4,219,936	(30,269)	827,673	(19,839)	777,565
First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy Program	2	2,888,578	-	-	2,888,578	2,888,578	-	-	-	-
First Nations Language Teacher Education Program	3	-	20,000	-	20,000	24,451	(4,451)	29,506	-	25,055
Annual Education Conference	4	-	-	304,962	304,962	281,134	23,828	199,866	-	223,694
Seventh Generation	5	-	-	65,109	65,109	64,962	147	11,307	-	11,454
First Nations Language Conference	6	-	-	50,714	50,714	60,596	(9,882)	47,544	-	37,662
Contingency Reserve	7	-	-	156,853	156,853	-	156,853	3,673,731	-	3,830,584
Local Education Agreement	8	118,720	-	-	118,720	120,574	(1,854)	-	-	(1,854)
Post-Secondary Support to Communities	9	75,000	-	-	75,000	118,360	(43,360)	-	43,360	-
Dual Credit Implementation	10	19,080	-	-	19,080	17,094	1,986	-	-	1,986
Accountability	11	69,960	-	-	69,960	70,080	(120)	-	-	(120)
School Assessment	12	1,365,000	-	-	1,365,000	1,371,209	(6,209)	27,611	36,319	57,721
Indigenous Adult Higher Learning Association	13	-	-	5,173	5,173	106,793	(101,620)	197,890	-	96,270
ECD and Transitions	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tripartite Agreement	15	164,000	-	-	164,000	164,395	(395)	(11,216)	11,216	(395)
Jurisdiction Project	16	14,620	-	-	14,620	14,620	-	365,745	-	365,745
Friends For Life	17	-	-	60,000	60,000	77,717	(17,717)	17,717	-	-
TEFA Curriculum	18	310,000	-	-	310,000	289,804	20,196	12,459	(12,459)	20,196
Parents Club	19	67,000	-	-	67,000	88,020	(21,020)	52,526	(12,524)	18,982
Indigenous Adult Higher Learning Association - Core	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vancouver Foundation Projects	21	-	-	30,000	30,000	29,197	803	128	-	931
Special Education	22	9,971,582	-	-	9,971,582	9,971,582	-	-	-	-
New Paths for Education	23	220,537	-	-	220,537	220,537	-	-	-	-
Post-Secondary Education	24	-	195,000	-	195,000	133,835	61,165	82,016	21,883	165,064
Early Childhood Development	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
School Capacity Development	26	-	-	-	-	-	-	(37,865)	37,865	16,990
Jurisdiction Capacity Building	27	472,700	-	-	472,700	455,710	16,990	-	-	-
Education Partners Activities	28	-	150,000	-	150,000	225,633	(75,633)	136,882	(21,882)	39,367
Aboriginal Health Human Resources Initiative	29	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Professional Growth Process	30	480,000	-	-	480,000	507,480	(27,480)	147,235	(46,358)	73,397
Information System	31	174,000	-	-	174,000	183,008	(9,008)	(697)	697	(9,008)
Connected Classroom	32	154,000	-	-	154,000	176,840	(22,840)	(5,082)	5,082	(22,840)
Youth Initiatives Coordinator	33	-	-	50,000	50,000	42,536	7,464	15,148	-	22,612
Summer Early Literacy	34	450,975	-	-	450,975	450,975	-	-	-	-
Health and Science Education	35	-	-	197,600	197,600	197,600	-	-	-	-
Core Projects	36	-	-	734,454	734,454	581,661	152,793	995,943	(43,360)	1,105,376
		21,202,752	365,000	1,657,532	23,225,285	23,154,917	70,368	6,786,067	-	6,856,435

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

## Statement 3

**First Nations Education Steering Committee Society****Statement of Changes in Fund Balances****Year ended March 31, 2016**

					2016 \$	2015 \$ (Note 10)
	Invested in capital assets	Restricted	Internally designated	Unrestricted	Total	Total
<b>Balance, beginning of year</b>	69,613	2,116,393	3,088,600	1,581,074	6,855,680	6,321,726
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures	-	(239,278)	-	309,646	70,368	606,839
Interfund transfers	-	43,360	-	(43,360)	-	-
Recoveries of surpluses	-	-	-	-	-	(89,980)
Purchase of capital assets	102,269	-	-	-	102,269	59,344
Amortization of capital assets	(66,532)	-	-	-	(66,532)	(71,544)
Repayment of capital lease obligations	<u>23,436</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>23,436</u>	<u>29,295</u>
<b>Balance, end of year</b>	128,786	1,920,475	3,088,600	1,847,360	6,985,221	6,855,680

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

# First Nations Education Steering Committee Society

## Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2016

	2016 \$	2015 \$
		(Note 10)
<b>Assets</b>		
Current		
Cash	5,161,050	6,217,636
Term deposits (Note 3)	3,121,125	3,045,000
Accounts receivable	117,387	84,000
GST receivable	70,035	62,030
Prepaid expenses	42,499	47,499
Due from First Nations Schools Association (Note 8)	193,482	105,030
Due from Indigenous Adult Higher Learning Association (Note 8)	<u>1,600</u>	<u>-</u>
	8,707,178	9,561,195
Capital assets (Note 4)	<u>193,235</u>	<u>157,498</u>
	8,900,413	9,718,693
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	1,850,743	2,775,128
Current portion of obligations under capital leases	<u>23,436</u>	<u>23,436</u>
	1,874,179	2,798,564
Obligations under capital leases	<u>41,013</u>	<u>64,449</u>
	<u>1,915,192</u>	<u>2,863,013</u>
Commitments and contingency (Note 7)		
<b>Fund balances</b>		
Invested in capital assets	128,786	69,613
Restricted	1,920,475	2,116,393
Internally designated (Note 9)	3,088,600	3,088,600
Unrestricted (Note 10)	<u>1,847,360</u>	<u>1,581,074</u>
	<u>6,985,221</u>	<u>6,855,680</u>
	8,900,413	9,718,693

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

Approved on Behalf of First Nations Education Steering Committee Society

 President

 Treasurer

## Statement 5

**First Nations Education Steering Committee Society****Statement of Cash Flows****Year ended March 31, 2016**

	2016 \$	2015 \$
<b>Cash flows from (used in) operating activities</b>		
Excess of revenue over expenditures	70,368	606,839
Items not affecting cash		
Purchase of capital assets	102,269	59,344
Recoveries of surpluses	-	(89,980)
Changes in non-cash working capital		
Decrease (increase) in		
Accounts receivable	(33,387)	(37,000)
GST receivable	(8,005)	(16,523)
Prepaid expenses	5,000	(10,090)
Due from First Nations Schools Association	(90,052)	(1,220)
Increase (decrease) in		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	(924,385)	(298,913)
	<u>(878,192)</u>	<u>212,457</u>
<b>Cash flows from (used in) investing activities</b>		
Purchase of capital assets	(102,269)	(59,344)
Purchase of term deposit	(76,125)	(45,000)
	<u>(178,394)</u>	<u>(104,344)</u>
<b>Increase (decrease) in cash during the year</b>	(1,056,586)	108,113
Cash, beginning of year	<u>6,217,636</u>	<u>6,109,523</u>
<b>Cash, end of year</b>	5,161,050	6,217,636

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.



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# First Nations Education Steering Committee Society

## Notes to the Financial Statements

March 31, 2016

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### 1. Society, aims and objectives

The First Nations Education Steering Committee Society (the "Society") was incorporated on April 20, 1999 under the Society Act of British Columbia.

The purpose of the Society is to facilitate discussions about education matters affecting First Nations in British Columbia by disseminating information and soliciting input from First Nations. The Society will work to provide a forum for networking, communication and liaison among First Nations schools, other educational institutes, and the federal, provincial and other governments.

The Society is exempt from income taxes as long as certain criteria continue to be met.

### 2. Summary of significant accounting policies

#### Basis of presentation

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations which necessarily involves the use of estimates. The financial statements have, in management's opinion, been properly prepared within reasonable limits of materiality and within the framework of significant accounting policies summarized below.

For the purposes of the statement of operations (Statement 1), direct expenditures include expenditures, except administrative fees, incurred under all programs other than the Core and Contingency Reserve programs (Schedules 1 and 7). The Core program expenditures include the administrative and operating costs of the Society; the Contingency Reserve program reports the expenditure of unrestricted funds. Indirect expenditures include expenditures incurred under the Core and Contingency Reserve programs.

#### Use of estimates

The preparation of financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amount of assets and liabilities, and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amount of revenues and expenditures during the period. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

#### Fund accounting

The Society follows the restricted fund method of accounting for contributions. The Society records accounting transactions using the fund accounting method generally in use for not-for-profit organizations. A fund is determined for the purpose of carrying on specific activities or attaining certain objectives in accordance with special regulations, restrictions or limitations. Each fund has its own statement of operations which presents the results of operations for the fund. The financial position of the Society is shown on the statement of financial position which includes the assets, liabilities and fund balances of all funds presented in the financial statements.

#### Revenue recognition

Restricted and unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue of the appropriate fund when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

## First Nations Education Steering Committee Society

### Notes to the Financial Statements

March 31, 2016

#### 2. Summary of significant accounting policies - continued

##### Capital assets

Capital assets are recorded as expenditures in the appropriate fund and are also reported on the statement of financial position as capital assets at cost. Amortization is charged to the capital fund on a straight-line basis over the expected useful life of the assets as follows:

Capital leases - equipment	-	5 years
Computer equipment	-	3 years
Computer software	-	2 years
Furniture and equipment	-	5 years
Leasehold improvements	-	5 years

##### Budget figures

All budget figures were prepared by management and are unaudited.

#### 3. Term deposits

Term deposits consist of four guaranteed investment certificates ("GICs"), two in the amount of \$ 1,000,000 and two in the amount of \$ 500,000. The GICs have three year terms ending November 4, 2016 with interest rates of 1.75%, 2.50% and 3.25% in the first, second, and third years, respectively. The GICs are redeemable only on the anniversary date each year.

4. Capital assets	2016		
	\$		
	Cost	Accumulated amortization	Net
Capital leases - equipment	117,180	52,732	64,448
Computer equipment	257,170	236,481	20,689
Computer software	30,914	30,558	356
Furniture and equipment	258,015	155,747	102,268
Leasehold improvements	<u>107,578</u>	<u>102,104</u>	<u>5,474</u>
	770,857	577,622	193,235
	2015		
	\$		
	Cost	Accumulated amortization	Net
Capital leases - equipment	117,180	29,295	87,885
Computer equipment	248,501	229,879	18,622
Computer software	30,914	23,330	7,584
Furniture and equipment	174,191	134,309	39,882
Leasehold improvements	<u>102,803</u>	<u>99,278</u>	<u>3,525</u>
	673,589	516,091	157,498

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## First Nations Education Steering Committee Society

### Notes to the Financial Statements

March 31, 2016

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#### 5. Financial instruments

The Society's financial instruments consist of cash, term deposits, accounts receivable, amounts due from First Nations Schools Association and Indigenous Adult Higher Learning Association, and accounts payable and accrued liabilities. These financial instruments are carried at amortized cost.

The fair value of the Society's cash, term deposits, accounts receivable and accounts payable and accrued liabilities are believed to equal their carrying amounts due to their short terms to maturity. The fair value of the amount due from First Nations Schools Association is not readily obtainable.

Unless otherwise noted, it is management's opinion that the Society is not exposed to significant interest, currency, or credit risks arising from these financial instruments.

#### 6. Economic dependence

The First Nations Education Steering Committee Society receives the majority of its revenues pursuant to a Comprehensive Funding Arrangement with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC).

#### 7. Commitments and contingency

The Society is committed to the minimum lease payments over the next three fiscal years for office premises and equipment in the following amounts:

	\$
2017	188,844
2018	122,758
2019	<u>18,807</u>
	<u>330,409</u>

The office premises lease expires October 31, 2017. The equipment lease expires December 1, 2018.

Surpluses in INAC and the Ministry of Education funded programs are potentially refundable to INAC and the Ministry of Education.

#### 8. Related party transactions

The Society, the First Nations Schools Association ("FNSA") and the Indigenous Adult Higher Learning Association ("IAHLA") are separate organizations, each with their own Board of Directors. The Society is related to FNSA and IAHLA pursuant to an administrative agreement whereby the Society provides administrative and financial support, including staffing and office premises, to FNSA and IAHLA.

Unless otherwise stated, related party transactions are measured at the exchange amount, being the amount of consideration established and agreed to by the related parties.

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## **First Nations Education Steering Committee Society**

### **Notes to the Financial Statements**

**March 31, 2016**

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**9. Internally designated and unrestricted funds**

The Society currently holds internally designated funds as a contingency reserve (see Schedule 7). The fund balance is capped at \$ 3,088,600, which approximates six months of operation funding, and is to be used in the event that funding is delayed or drastically reduced by funding agencies. The balance of the contingency fund in excess of the cap is considered to be unrestricted, along with the Core Projects program (see Schedule 36). These unrestricted funds will be spent down according to a priorities set out in a plan approved by the Board.

**10. Comparative figures**

Certain 2015 figures have been reclassified to conform to the presentation adopted in the current year. During the year, the Board designated the accumulated funds derived from interest earned, GST rebates and administration fee recoveries as unrestricted. As a result, \$ 585,131 has been reclassified as at March 31, 2015 from internally designated funds and \$ 995,943 from restricted funds to unrestricted funds.





# First Nations Schools Association

## Financial Statements – March 31, 2016

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*Note: Schedules of Program Operations Available on Request*



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## First Nations Schools Association

March 31, 2016

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### Management's Responsibility for Financial Reporting

The accompanying financial statements of First Nations Schools Association and all the information in this annual report are the responsibility of management and have been approved by the Board of Directors.

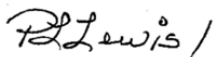
The financial statements have been prepared by management in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. Financial statements are not precise since they include certain amounts based on estimates and judgments. When alternative accounting methods exist, management has chosen those it deems most appropriate in the circumstances, in order to ensure that the financial statements are presented fairly, in all material respects.

The Association maintains systems of internal accounting and administrative controls of high quality, consistent with reasonable cost. Such systems are designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial information is relevant, reliable and accurate and the Association's assets are appropriately accounted for and adequately safeguarded.

The Board is responsible for ensuring that management fulfills its responsibility for financial reporting and is ultimately responsible for reviewing and approving the financial statements.

The Directors review the Association's financial statements and recommend their approval. The Board meets periodically with management, as well as the external auditors, to discuss internal controls over the financial reporting issues, to satisfy themselves that each party is properly discharging their responsibilities, and to review the annual report and the financial statements for issuance to the Association. The Board takes this information into consideration when approving the financial statements for issuance to the Association. The Board also considers the engagement of the external auditors.

The financial statements have been audited by D&H Group LLP Chartered Professional Accountants in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards on behalf of the members. D&H Group LLP Chartered Professional Accountants have full access to First Nations Schools Association.



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Pamela Lee Lewis, President, Board of Directors



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Kirsten Barnes, Treasurer, Board of Directors



## Independent Auditor's Report

To the Board of Directors of First Nations Schools Association

### Report on the Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of First Nations Schools Association, which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2016 and the statement of revenue and expenses, statement of changes in fund balances and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

#### *Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements*

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

#### *Auditor's Responsibility*

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

#### *Opinion*

In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of First Nations Schools Association as at March 31, 2016, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.



**D&H Group LLP**  
Chartered Professional Accountants  
10th Floor, 1333 West Broadway  
Vancouver, BC V6H 4C1

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#### **Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements**

As required by the *Society Act* (British Columbia), we report that, in our opinion, the accounting principles in the Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations have been applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

Vancouver, B.C.  
July 21, 2016

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'D&amp;H Group LLP'.

**Chartered Professional Accountants**

## Statement 1

**First Nations Schools Association****Statement of Revenue and Expenses****Year ended March 31, 2016**

	2016 \$	2016 \$	2015 \$
	<u>Budget</u> (Unaudited)	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>
<b>Revenue</b>			
First Nations Education Steering Committee			
Society funding, Operations	350,400	350,400	350,400
INAC funding - EPP	120,000	120,000	-
Membership fees	-	20,934	16,583
ArtStarts contributions	20,739	20,739	24,655
Annual general meeting vendors' table income	8,250	8,450	7,865
Interest income	-	5,785	7,012
Miscellaneous	-	11,380	9,183
	<u>499,389</u>	<u>537,688</u>	<u>415,698</u>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Annual general meeting catering	100,000	149,045	88,593
Artists in Education program	23,800	23,800	32,300
Consulting	8,225	16,975	-
Co-ordinator	18,334	18,334	-
Directors' costs	99,500	57,326	100,517
Educational Assistant Forum	-	-	58,376
Executive assistant	12,000	12,000	-
Insurance	2,500	2,276	2,210
Materials and supplies	27,500	59,636	21,557
Meeting costs	76,941	76,941	-
Principal professional development	25,000	55,292	14,050
Professional fees	18,400	7,139	8,651
Representative travel	50,000	92,489	58,538
Speakers	32,000	35,039	35,155
Summer learning project	25,764	25,764	-
	<u>519,964</u>	<u>632,056</u>	<u>419,947</u>
<b>Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses</b>	<b>(20,575)</b>	<b>(94,368)</b>	<b>(4,249)</b>

*The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.*

## First Nations Schools Association

		2016										\$
	Schedule#	FNESC funding	INAC funding	Membership fees	Other revenue	Total revenue	Total expenses	Excess (deficiency) for the year	Beginning fund balance	Transfers for the year	Ending fund balance	
Core Projects	1	-	-	20,934	46,354	67,288	58,314	8,974	466,502	(130,451)	372,025	
TEFA Core	2	160,400	-	-	-	160,400	160,433	(33)	-	33	-	
Annual General Meeting and Conference	3	190,000	-	-	-	190,000	293,418	(103,418)	-	103,418	-	
National Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
EPPP - Structural Readiness	5	-	120,000	-	-	120,000	119,891	109	-	-	109	
		350,400	120,000	20,934	46,354	537,688	632,056	(94,368)	466,502	-	372,134	

*The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.*

## Statement 3

**First Nations Schools Association****Statement of Changes in Fund Balances****Year ended March 31, 2016**

	2016 \$	2016 \$	2016 \$	2015 \$
	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Balance, beginning of year</b>	-	466,502	466,502	470,751
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	<u>109</u>	<u>(94,477)</u>	<u>(94,368)</u>	<u>(4,249)</u>
<b>Balance, end of year</b>	109	372,025	372,134	466,502



# First Nations Schools Association

## Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2016

	2016 \$	2015 \$
<b>Assets</b>		
Current		
Cash	554,363	561,344
Contributions receivable	120,000	-
GST receivable	6,073	8,495
Prepaid expenses	<u>10,000</u>	<u>1,693</u>
	690,436	571,532
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Current		
Accounts payable	119,860	-
Deferred revenue (Note 4)	4,960	-
Due to First Nations Education Steering Committee Society (Note 5)	<u>193,482</u>	<u>105,030</u>
	<u>318,302</u>	<u>105,030</u>
<b>Fund balances</b>		
Restricted (Schedule 5)	109	-
Unrestricted	<u>372,025</u>	<u>466,502</u>
	<u>372,134</u>	<u>466,502</u>
	690,436	571,532

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

Approved on Behalf of First Nations Schools Association

*P. Lewis*

Pamela Lee Lewis, President

*Kirsten Barnes*

Kirsten Barnes, Treasurer

## Statement 5

**First Nations Schools Association****Statement of Cash Flows****Year ended March 31, 2016**

	2016 \$	2015 \$
<b>Cash flows from (used in) operating activities</b>		
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	(94,368)	(4,249)
Changes in non-cash working capital		
Decrease (increase) in		
Contributions receivable	(120,000)	-
GST receivable	2,422	2,001
Prepaid expenses	(8,307)	(1,693)
Increase (decrease) in		
Accounts payable	119,860	-
Deferred revenue	<u>4,960</u>	<u>(8,345)</u>
	(95,433)	(12,286)
<b>Cash flows from financing activity</b>		
Due to First Nations Education Steering Committee Society	<u>88,452</u>	<u>1,220</u>
<b>Increase (decrease) in cash during the year</b>	(6,981)	(11,066)
Cash, beginning of year	<u>561,344</u>	<u>572,410</u>
<b>Cash, end of year</b>	554,363	561,344

*The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.*

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# First Nations Schools Association

## Notes to the Financial Statements

March 31, 2016

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### 1. Association, aims and objectives

First Nations Schools Association (the “Association”) was incorporated under the *Society Act* of British Columbia on December 18, 1996. The Association obtained its Registered Charity status effective April 1, 1998.

The Association serves First Nations schools to promote quality education and to maximize the available resources in order to improve the quality of education of First Nations students. The Association will direct its energies to supporting the work of First Nations schools in developing and implementing culturally appropriate, meaningful and quality educational programs. The Association will work to provide a forum for networking, communication and liaison among First Nations schools, other educational institutes, and federal, provincial and other governments.

The Association is exempt from income tax as long as certain criteria continue to be met.

### 2. Summary of significant accounting policies

The following is a summary of significant accounting policies used in the preparation of the financial statements:

#### Basis of presentation

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (“ASNPO”) which necessarily involves the use of estimates. The financial statements have, in management’s opinion been properly prepared within reasonable limits of materiality and within the framework of significant accounting policies summarized below.

#### Use of estimates

The preparation of financial statements in accordance with ASNPO requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amount of assets and liabilities, and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amount of revenues and expenses during the period. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

#### Fund accounting

The Association follows the restricted fund method of accounting for contributions.

The Operating Fund accounts for the Association’s program delivery and administrative activities. The fund reports restricted and unrestricted resources and is further divided into the following funds:

- Core Projects;
- TEFA Core;
- Annual General Meeting and Conference; and
- EPP - Structural Readiness

#### Revenue recognition

Restricted contributions related to general operations are recognized as revenue of the Core Projects Fund in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. All other restricted contributions are recognized as revenue of the appropriate restricted fund.

Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue of the appropriate fund in the year received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

Membership fees are recognized as revenue when earned and collection is reasonably assured.

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## **First Nations Schools Association**

### **Notes to the Financial Statements**

**March 31, 2016**

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**2. Summary of significant accounting policies - continued**

**Budget figures**

All budget figures were prepared by management and are unaudited.

**3. Financial instruments**

The Association's financial instruments consist of cash, contributions receivable, accounts payable and amounts due to First Nations Education Steering Committee Society. Unless otherwise noted, it is management's opinion that the Association is not exposed to significant interest, currency or credit risks arising from these financial instruments.

**4. Deferred revenue**

Deferred revenue represents funds collected for Annual General Meeting exhibitor fees. The Annual General Meeting is being held subsequent to the year end date.

**5. Related party transactions**

The Association and the First Nations Education Steering Committee Society ("FNESC") are separate organizations, each with their own Board of Directors. The Association is related to FNESC pursuant to an administrative agreement and TEFA memorandum of understanding whereby the Association receives administrative and financial support, including staffing and office premises, from FNESC.

Unless otherwise stated, related party transactions are measured at the exchange amount, being the amount of consideration established and agreed to by the related parties.

**6. Economic dependence**

The Association is economically dependent on funding from First Nations Education Steering Committee Society (65.2% in 2016 and 84.3% in 2015).



**First Nations Education Steering Committee  
First Nations Schools Association**

#113 - 100 Park Royal South  
West Vancouver, BC V7T 1A2

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**FRONT COVER IMAGES (LEFT TO RIGHT)**

Kumsheen Secondary; First Nations Language Conference 2015; Kispiox Community School; Outma Squilx Cultural School

**BACK COVER IMAGES (LEFT TO RIGHT)**

Squiaala Elementary; Kinnikinnick Elementary; T'it'q'et Preschool; Kumsheen Secondary

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