

SCHEDULE A

THE BC FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION SYSTEM

First Nations in British Columbia have worked for decades to increasingly exercise First Nations control of First Nations education through the development and operation of what has become the BC First Nations Education System – a system that prioritizes First Nations languages, cultures, values, and traditions, and a commitment to quality education and successful student outcomes. The System respects each First Nation’s inherent authority over the education of their students, and is built upon innovative education theories and research, using evidence-based decision-making to design and implement practical approaches to culturally relevant education programs and services. The System is evolutionary in nature, responding to student needs, data, emerging trends, and the changing legal and political landscape.

BC First Nations have consistently advocated that First Nation learners, at all levels of education, must have access to educational opportunities that:

- ensure that they are confident in their self-identity, their families, their communities and traditional values, language and cultures.
- give them the skills they need to thrive in contemporary society, including 21st century technological skills.
- prepare them to access any opportunities they choose for higher learning, employment and life choices.

The System is a distinct, regional model designed to support all K4-12 and post-secondary First Nation Students, wherever they live and attend school, while respecting the diversity of the Nations. It is premised on providing the best supports for those students through advocacy, policy development, quality program and service delivery, and responsiveness to relevant and quality data. The System includes standards and processes to address core matters, such as relevant curriculum, quality instruction, teacher and principal professional development, rigorous school reviews and certification, and supporting students with special needs. To ensure accountability, the System focuses on reliable and high quality data collection, analysis and reporting in order to inform ongoing efforts. This includes reporting to parents as a key accountability mechanism. The First Nations Education Steering Committee, working with the First Nations Schools Association, provides collectively organized second and third level services and economies-of-scale, and serves to deliver a unified voice and common approach for First Nations education in BC.

As of 2018, there are 131 First Nation Schools, owned and operated by First Nations who direct how education programs and services are delivered in a culturally relevant manner (of those First Nation Schools, 29 have opted also to be BC-certified independent schools.) Approximately 4,925 First Nation Students attend First Nation Schools in BC, where there exist partnerships, processes and mechanisms to

support those First Nation Students toward successful outcomes. Approximately 7,270 First Nation Students attend BC Public Schools, and 675 attend BC Independent Schools located off-reserve. Many First Nation Students move between First Nation Schools and BC Schools, necessitating collaboration to ensure compatibility between the systems in support of those First Nation Students.

In this regard, fundamental components of the System are tripartite and bilateral relationships between First Nations and the federal and provincial governments that focus on collaboration to address the historical legacy of colonialism, and the persistent jurisdictional complexities of educating a mobile First Nation student population. These relationships have evolved through a series of arrangements and agreements, including the 2006/07 package of First Nations Education Jurisdiction agreements (and associated federal and provincial legislation), as well as the 2012 Tripartite Education Framework Agreement (TEFA) that introduced a new regional funding model focused on elevating funding for the education of First Nation students to comparable funding for non-First Nation students, with adaptations to respond to unique needs of First Nation Students, First Nation Schools and communities, and supported by BC-specific policies and guidelines. In addition, working relationships have been established among key education partners to maximize opportunities to make systemic improvements to support First Nation learners. These efforts are further informed by commitments of the federal and provincial governments to implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action for reconciliation, and to rights recognition and implementation.