



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS COVID-19 and the BC Tripartite Education Agreement

Please note that these questions and answers are in addition to the comprehensive Questions and Answers that can be found on the updated Ministry of Education website at [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) on Continuity of Learning](#) and the [FNESC Website](#).

For FAQs and other information and templates that are specific to the BCTEA process, reporting requirements and the 2020/21 Joint First Nations Transportation Plan submission process please visit the [Ministry of Education School District Reporting Catalogue website](#) or the FNESC website above for First Nations.

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION TARGETED FUNDING SUPPLEMENT

With the suspension of in-class instruction it may be challenging to provide structured opportunities to use targeted funding to provide culturally appropriate educational programs and services to support Indigenous students. What if a school does not fully spend the 2019/20 school year Indigenous Education Targeting Funding Supplement?

- At this time, there is no change to the expectation that school districts spend the entire 2019/20 school year Indigenous Education Targeted Funding Supplement, including cumulative underspent amounts from prior years.
- Indigenous students served by this funding will continue to receive continuity of learning through the school they are registered to attend. Targeted funding is to be spent on programs and services that are over and above the regular continuity of learning services that all students will receive.
- School districts are advised to engage with local First Nations whom they serve, as well as the broader Indigenous community, to identify appropriate programs and services to be delivered through targeted funds during the suspension of in-class instruction.
- School districts should also be planning and sharing decision making with local Indigenous communities on the potential underspend of targeted funds.
- As in past years, with any underspend of targeted funding, school districts will be required to seek permission from the Ministry of Education, explain why it occurred and have the underspend carried forward and added to the 2020/21 school year supplement.

What is the ministry expectation regarding Indigenous/First Nations support workers during the suspension of in-class instruction?

- In the spirit of collaboration and to achieve the best outcomes and equitable access to education services for Indigenous learners, school districts are advised to consult with local First Nations and Indigenous peoples in order to identify appropriate programs and services to be delivered through the use of targeted funds during the suspension of in-class activities.
- This includes collaborative discussions about support workers who liaise between students/parents and teachers to support continuity of learning. For example, school districts may find that Indigenous Support Workers liaising between students/parents and teachers is beneficial to ensure students receive enhanced services and supports appropriate to remote conditions.

LOCAL EDUCATION AGREEMENTS (LEAS)

During this time, when there are so many conflicting priorities, should school districts and First Nations continue to work on establishing LEAs?

- LEAs can be an important tool to ensure First Nations learners continue to receive the support needed to achieve their goals of a successful transition to the next step in their educational journey.
- The ministry encourages all partners to maintain the spirit and respectful intent of LEAs.
- If an LEA already exists or if a new LEA is being negotiated and the First Nation has requested that negotiations continue, then continue doing so.
- Negotiations may need to be modified to meet physical distancing guidelines and may be subject to the availability of School District and First Nations representatives.
- Boards of education and non-First Nation independent school authorities should ensure engagement with First Nations to determine the needs of their students and develop continuity of learning plans for meeting those needs.

Have the terms and conditions of LEAs changed under the COVID-19 pandemic?

- LEAs set out terms and conditions for the exchange of tuition for education programs and services for First Nations students. Although in-person instruction has been suspended, schools are not closed, and there is an expectation that learning opportunities are being developed and delivered to all learners.
- Boards of education and independent school authorities should plan and provide for equitable continued learning opportunities, making accommodations to ensure that all students, including First Nations students, are supported.

- During this unusual time, it is critical that engagement with First Nations continue, to identify the needs of students, to develop plans to meet student needs; and to refrain from pressuring First Nations for payment until there is clarity on continued learning plans.

BCTEA JOINT FIRST NATIONS STUDENT TRANSPORTATION PLANS—REPORTING ON 2019/20 SCHOOL YEAR FUNDING

In view of COVID-19, are the timelines for 2019/20 BCTEA Joint Transportation Plans reporting still the same as previously communicated in late February 2020?

Tripartite partners recognize that COVID-19 challenges are affecting all people in BC including school boards and First Nations organizations/leadership.

- The deadline for reporting out regarding 2019/20 funding was July 10, 2020, however, due to circumstances, the final date for reporting out on 2019/20 joint transportation funding has been extended until September 30, 2020.
- More information will be provided by the ministry in the coming months.

How will the suspension of in-class instruction and no bus transportation to/from school affect the terms of Joint First Nations Transportation Plans?

- Consistent with the [BCTEA Guiding Principles](#) decisions about how to utilize any unspent transportation funds should be made in collaboration with First Nations signatories to the Joint Plan and families for use toward the original intended purpose of the funds.

How will COVID-19 affect First Nations students that use BC Transit services (compass cards, bus programs, etc.)?

- For information on changes that BC Transit has made to serve clients during these challenging times please visit the [BC Transit Covid-19](#).

2020/21 SCHOOL YEAR JOINT TRANSPORTATION PLANS PROCESS

In view of COVID-19 are the timelines for 2020/21 for BCTEA Joint First Nation Transportation Plans still the same; previously set at May 1, 2020?

- The May 1st deadline has been extended to October 30, 2020.

Our 2019/20 Joint Transportation Plan operational funding was approved in November 2019. As such, we prepaid for operational expenses associated with transportation. What operational funding will be available for September 2020?

- Approved “to/from” operational funding will continue based on what was approved in your 2019/20 Joint Transportation Plan, however, any changes should be noted in the October 30, 2020 submission of the 2020/21 Joint Transportation Plan to allow a reconciliation to occur.

Due to the suspension of in-class instruction, we have a surplus of funding for the 2019/20 school year. How do we account for this unspent funding?

- Unspent funding should be reported as a Special Grant on Schedule 3A of school district’s budgets and financial statements.
- In addition, this surplus funding should be factored into your 2020/21 Joint Transportation Plan as an offset to your 2020/21 requirements.
- Please consider this a revision and use your original submission as a base and outline corrections or updates and resubmit for the October 30, 2020 submission deadline.

Our school district and First Nation(s) were able to confirm our 2020/21 Joint Transportation Plan. Should we submit it now or wait until October 30, 2020?

- We recommend that you wait until October 30, 2020 to submit your plan, as circumstances may change over the coming months.

We were approved for a school bus for the 2020/21 school year. Is the bus still going to be delivered?

- We are unable to guarantee that buses will be delivered by September, 2020.
- The delivery timeline of buses depends on many factors including:
 - when the order is placed by the school district,
 - which manufacturer was chosen and how the bus is optioned out,
 - when the order falls into the manufacturers production schedule, and
 - the logistics of delivery based on where in the province the buses are being delivered.
- Currently all manufacturing of our school buses occurs in the United States and we do not have control over their supply timelines, particularly during this time.
- Contractually, the requirement of the BC school bus acquisition program is that the buses arrive at the school district within the fiscal year (sometime prior to March 31, 2021).