

ANNOUNCEMENT OF GRANTS FOR FIRST NATIONS IN BC: 23-24 SUPPORTING CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR FIRST NATIONS K-12 EDUCATION GOVERNANCE

The BC First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNEESC) is pleased to announce the availability of grants to support capacity development for First Nations K-12 Education Governance.

FNEESC recognizes that strong governance is a crucial factor in the success of First Nations primary, elementary, and secondary students, wherever they attend school – whether public, First Nation, or non-First Nation Independent schools.

- First Nations can have a critical and positive influence over the education programs and services provided to their learners by public schools and Independent schools that are located off-reserve.
- First Nations School Governing Authorities¹ are crucial for their schools' provision of quality education for students enrolled in First Nation schools, recognizing that First Nation schools are an expression of First Nations control of First Nations education.

This initiative is intended to support First Nations in building their capacity for education governance – including support for the community authority that oversees First Nations education broadly, and/or a First Nation School Governing Authority specifically, where applicable.

¹ **Note: Definition of Governing Authorities**

A broad range of governance models exist for First Nations education and First Nations schools in BC, such as:

- education governed directly by Chief and Council, with no school board or education committee in existence;
- education governed by Chief and Council, advised or guided by some kind of an education or school committee or board, which may or may not be incorporated;
- education guided by some kind of education or school committee (non-legal entity), accountable back to the Chief and Council;
- governance of a First Nation school by a formal school board (a distinct legal entity, usually under the provincial *Societies Act*); or
- governance of a First Nation independent school under the provincial *Independent School Act (BC)*, which usually means a society within the meaning of the *Societies Act*.

For the purpose of these grants, the term “Governing Authority” is used for simplicity. First Nations are welcome to use these grants regardless of what governance structure they use for K-12 education matters.

Grants to Support Capacity Development for Education Governance

- \$4,578,404.00 million is available for the 2023/2024 K-12 Education Governance grants.
- This funding is being allocated using a base-plus-per-capita formula for all K- 12 students.
- **The funding allocated to your First Nation for this program has been sent to your Nation’s representative via DocuSign.**

Possible Options for Capacity Development Activities

The grants available through this funding opportunity can be used to support capacity development activities that are related to any of the aspects of education governance set out below, depending on the unique structure of each First Nation and where their students attend school.

Note: First Nations may choose to implement activities from any of the following activity categories. For example, this grant can be used to implement one or more activities to support governance of education broadly, as well as one or more activities related to governance of a First Nation school specifically. The scope of activities should reflect each First Nation’s grant amount and unique needs and circumstances.

Activities to Support Governance Related to Public Education and/or First Nation Schools

- Strengthening capacity for governance and education leadership, including professional development related to topics such as, but not limited to, confidentiality, conflict of interest in education governance, effective education advocacy, education funding and financial management, education-related human resource management, and information and communications technology management, planning, and policies.
- Establishing or reviewing / updating the Governing Authority’s operations and procedures, including developing and formalizing processes and protocols related to the structure of the Authority, Terms of Reference, conduct of meetings / meeting procedures, etc. – possibly involving access to consulting / legal advice, as needed.
- Establishing and maintaining external partnerships, accessing information, and building knowledge for participating in policy and program development with partners.
- Developing or reviewing / updating community education and/or First Nation school policies, possibly with consultant or legal support, and potentially involving a retreat / meeting of appropriate community personnel and representatives.
- Enhancing the Governing Authorities’ ability to promote family and community engagement for education transformation, including formalizing mechanisms for parents / caregivers to exercise their roles and responsibilities and participate in education decision-making.
- Facilitating information sharing mechanisms to involve communities in discussions of education issues and concerns, and in planning program and policy changes.
- Accessing training / support for interpreting and monitoring student achievement data to monitor improvement and plan for continued growth.

In addition to the activities outlined above:

Specific Activities to Support Governance of Education Services Related to the Public Education System

- Preparing for or undertaking consultations with school districts regarding Local Education Agreement negotiations or implementation, the new provincial professional learning day for educators focused specifically on Indigenous education, or other issues as relevant.

Specific Activities to Support the Governance of First Nation Controlled Schools *

- Establishing or reviewing the First Nation school's mission and vision, possibly involving consulting support and/or using surveys or meetings / gatherings to gather input from families and other community members.

Activities to Support the Governance of First Nation Controlled Independent Schools

- Accessing training / advice in regard to Society Act and/or BC Independent School Act requirements.

* In order to help inform the development of proposals, a draft *Handbook for First Nation School Governing Authorities*. The Handbook is intended to help guide considerations about the role of School Governing Authorities.

<https://www.fnesc.ca/supports-available-for-first-nationschool-governing-authorities/>

LETTERS OF INTENT ARE DUE BY **TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2023**

Completed Letters of Intent can be emailed to: soniao@fnesc.ca

Interim Final Reports for funded projects will be due **March 15, 2024**

Final Report will be due by **Friday, May 31, 2024**