

PROPOSED TOPICS

for

Indigenous Education Councils

IN BC PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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fnesc

FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE

#113 - 100 Park Royal South, West Vancouver, BC V7T 1A2
604-925-6087 | Toll-free in BC 1-877-422-3672

info@fnesc.ca | www.fnesc.ca

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INTRODUCTION

School Amendment Act (2023) – Indigenous Education Councils

In 2023, the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the Ministry of Education and Child Care (ECC) co-developed legislation with the purpose of improving the outcomes, attendance, and experiences of First Nations learners attending BC public schools. The [School Amendment Act](#), which received Royal Assent on November 8, 2023, requires that each district establish an Indigenous Education Council (IEC) to advise Boards of Education on programs and services for Indigenous students and on the integration of Indigenous world views and perspectives, in particular those of local First Nations in whose territories Boards operate schools. To support the implementation of this initiative, FNESC and ECC also co-developed a [Ministerial Order, Policy](#), and a [template Terms of Reference](#) for IECs. These documents are compiled in FNESC's [School Act Amendments](#) resource, available for download on the FNESC website.

This legislation responds directly to Action 4.3 of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan*, which states that the Ministry of Education and Child Care will “co-develop and implement a framework for the involvement of Indigenous Education Councils in school district financial planning and reporting.”

Purpose of IECs

As set out in the IEC Policy and in section 87.001 of the [School Act](#), each Board must establish and maintain an IEC for the following purposes:

- Advising the Board on any matter relating to:
 - Providing comprehensive and equitable educational programs and services to Indigenous students
 - Improving Indigenous student achievement
 - Integrating into learning environments Indigenous world views and perspectives, in particular those of the First Nations, the Treaty First Nations, or the Nisga'a Nation in whose territory the Board operates
- Advising on grants provided under the *School Act* in relation to Indigenous students
- Approving plans, spending and reporting related to grants as set out in section 87.002
 - Advising the Board in relation to the distinct languages, cultures, customs, traditions, practices or history of the First Nations in whose traditional territory the Board operates, through advice from the IEC members representing those First Nations, Treaty First Nations or the Nisga'a Nation.

[School Act s. 87.001 - Purposes of Indigenous Education Councils](#)

INTRODUCTION

Proposed Topics for Indigenous Education Councils in BC Public Schools Resource

FNESC developed the *Proposed Topics for Indigenous Education Councils in BC Public Schools* resource to support First Nation members of IECs in advocating for their learners and improving public education in British Columbia. The resource provides suggested topics to be raised at IEC tables, including relevant policies, data, and funding information that impacts First Nation learners. These topics were selected based on feedback from BC First Nations. First Nation IEC members are encouraged to use the resource in a way that best meets the needs of your local priorities and circumstances. IEC members are also encouraged to consult the Ministry of Education and Child Care's [Form 1701](#) which is used to collect student information for the purpose of allocating funds to Boards of Education and includes information on specific programs, including Indigenous Education Targeted Funds.

As set out in the Principles of the 2018 BC Tripartite Education Agreement, First Nation students, at all levels of education, must have access to educational opportunities that:

- I. Ensure that they are confident in their self-identity, their families, their communities and traditional values, languages and cultures;
- II. Give them the skills they need to thrive in contemporary society, including 21st century technological skills; and
- III. Prepare them to access any opportunities they choose for higher learning, employment and life choices.

Topics Not for Discussion at the IEC Table

Please note that a number of topics relevant to First Nations have not been included in this resource. These include transportation for on-reserve students, Local Education Agreements, and First Nation Schools of Choice. These matters are specific to a First Nation and the Board of Education, and better discussed between individual First Nations and the Board, rather than dealt with collectively at the IEC table.

Indigenous Education Council Membership

The [Indigenous Education Council Order](#) and the [Indigenous Education Council Policy](#) outline the following membership criteria for the establishment and composition of IECs:

- A Board must invite each local First Nation to designate two persons as members of the IEC
- A Board must invite each non-local First Nation with students enrolled in an educational program within the district—and for whom Canada provides funding for the student’s education—to designate one person to be a member of the IEC, and the Board must appoint those persons designated. This may include students who are boarded (i.e. living away from their community) or students who travel from a neighboring community
- A First Nation invited to designate a person to be on the IEC may choose not to designate anyone to participate on the IEC
- When establishing an IEC, a Board must take into account the distinctions and diversity among the Indigenous student population served by the Board and ensure that the composition of the IEC reasonably reflects these
- After seeking advice from each local First Nation, a Board may appoint additional persons who bring perspectives relevant to the Indigenous student population served by the Board, recognizing that this population may include First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students
- A Board must endeavor to achieve an IEC where the total number of representatives of local First Nations are not outnumbered by the additional representatives
- As per the IEC Policy, and Section [87.004\(2\)](#) of the *School Act*, school Board trustees and employees are not eligible to be voting members of an IEC

Further, when a vacancy occurs on an IEC, or on an annual basis, a Board must work with the IEC to review, and if necessary, appoint members in accordance with the criteria outlined in the IEC Order. Note that a local First Nation may appoint more than two members to the IEC.

For more information

[IEC Order](#)

[IEC Policy](#)

QUESTIONS FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

What is the district’s process for determining who will be invited to attend IEC meetings as guests?

How will the IEC review and determine IEC membership?

How is the IEC striving to ensure local First Nations are not outnumbered by other members?

How will the IEC review and make changes to the Terms of Reference?

Indigenous Education Targeted Funds and Surplus

The Ministry of Education and Child Care provides Indigenous Education Targeted Funding (IETF) to Boards of Education as a targeted spending portion of their operating funds. IETF supports school-age students who self-identify as being of Indigenous ancestry to participate in enhanced Indigenous education programs and services in addition to any other programs and services for which the student is eligible. Indigenous ancestry is determined on a voluntary basis through self-identification. School districts report students of Indigenous ancestry according to the [Form 1701](#) Instructions.

Boards of Education must seek the input and advice, and secure the approval, of the Indigenous Education Council (IEC) on the Board's IETF spending plan and reporting, if any.

Funding Guidelines

- IETF is a targeted grant under [section 106.4 of the School Act](#)
- Students who are eligible for IETF will be funded as per the current year's [Operating Grants Manual](#)
- The minimum amount of IETF spending is set by the Ministry
- A Board may choose to allocate more core funding to provide supplemental supports for Indigenous programs and services. This should be done in collaboration with the IEC
- Where a school district has prior year unspent IETF, the planning, spending and reporting of those surplus funds need to be approved by the IEC and in accordance with Ministry direction
- 2025/26 Rate - \$1,790 per student. (Note that this rate is reviewed annually and may be updated)

For more information

[Form 1701: Student Data Collection](#)

[K-12 Funding – Indigenous Education Policy](#)

[School Act s. 106. 4 - Targeted Grant](#)

[IEC Policy](#)

[IEC Order](#)

QUESTIONS

FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

What is the process and timeline for the IEC to complete the planning, spending and reporting on the IETF?

Is there currently surplus IETF? How will the IEC and Board spend the surplus?

How can the Board's budget cycle and/or timelines better support IEC initiatives?

Indigenous Education Council Capacity Funding and Surplus

Indigenous Education Council Capacity Funding is provided as a targeted grant to cover costs associated with establishing and maintaining IECs, including secretariat support, activities, and costs related to IECs carrying out their purposes. According to the [IEC Policy](#), Boards of Education are expected to support the IEC in coordinating and fulfilling administrative tasks, including covering reasonable costs of holding meetings and travel costs for IEC members to attend meetings when they are held in-person. IEC Capacity Funding is a targeted grant under [section 106.4 of the School Act](#). A Board is expected to provide a secretariat or main point of contact for the IEC to assist in IEC membership tracking, meeting and agenda setting, providing information to the IEC, and liaising between the Board and IEC. Per the [IEC Policy](#), IECs must be involved in the planning, spending, and reporting of IEC Capacity Funding.

Some IECs receive secretariat support from within the school district, while others contract out for these services.

- 2024/25 Provincial total - \$5,670,203
- 2025/26 Provincial total - \$6,392,183
- 2026/27 estimated Provincial total - \$2,400,000

For more information

[IEC Policy - Capacity Funding](#)

[IEC Order](#)

[School Act s. 106. 4 - Targeted Grant](#)

QUESTIONS FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

What is the process and timeline for the IEC to plan, spend and report on the IEC Capacity Funding? How does this align with timelines for the Board's budget?

How is the IEC Capacity Funding used to cover secretariat support?

If there is surplus IEC Capacity funding, what is the plan for spending it?

School District Operating Grant, Special Purpose Grants, and Multi-Year Financial Planning

As set out in the [Operating Grants Manual](#), the Ministry of Education and Child Care will be providing a total of \$7.267 billion in operating grants to Boards of Education in the 2025/26 school year. The General Operating Grants have been estimated using the Funding Allocation System formulae contained in the Operating Grants Manual. Tables showing funding amounts for every district are included in a separate, supplementary document. These tables are updated following each enrolment count that occurs during the school year: September, February and May.

The General Operating Grants do not include special grants, which is discretionary funding for a specific purpose. In the 2025/26 school year, some examples of special grants to school districts are the Feeding Futures Fund (\$71.5 million), CommunityLINK (\$60 million) and the Student Transportation Fund (\$15.4 million). Operating Grants account for approximately 85-90% of what school districts receive from the Province. The remaining amounts that school districts receive are special grants.

The [K-12 Public Education Financial Planning and Reporting Policy](#) requires Boards of Education to develop multi-year financial plans that outline how funding and resources will be used to support their strategic plans and operational needs. These plans must demonstrate how financial resources are used to enhance student education outcomes, as specified in their Framework for Enhancing Student Learning reports. The Financial Planning and Reporting Policy requires Boards to have local policies in place to clearly identify how local First Nations will be engaged to provide input into the development of Board financial plans.

For more information

[School Act s. 106.3 – Operating grants to Boards](#)

[Operating Grants and Operating Grant Manuals](#)

[2025/26 Operating Grant Tables](#)

[K-12 Public Education Financial Planning and Reporting Policy](#)

QUESTIONS FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

How is the IEC involved in the development of multi-year financial planning for the school district?

In addition to the Indigenous Education Targeted Funds and IEC Capacity Funding, how much of the district's Operating Grants are being used to provide additional supports specifically to Indigenous students?

Is the district's multi-year financial plan to use the Operating Grants aligned with the Board's plan to improve the education outcomes of Indigenous students?

School District Operating Surplus

The *School Act* requires Boards of Education to prepare balanced annual budgets. If a school district spends less than their revenue in a given year, it results in an “operating surplus.” Per the [K-12 Public Education Accumulated Operating Surplus Policy](#), it is appropriate for Boards to maintain a reasonable operating surplus to manage financial risk and maintain services for students for more than a year. However, it must be done for specific purposes with identified timelines, according to the Policy.

A portion of the school district’s operating surplus is “internally restricted operating surplus,” which means that it has been set aside for specified use in future years. This includes unspent amounts from targeted and special purpose grants from the Ministry (section 106.4 and s.115 of the *School Act*).

According to the K-12 Public Education Accumulated Operating Surplus Policy, Boards of Education can maintain a reasonable amount of operating surplus for the following purposes:

- To support major capital projects that are identified in the Board’s 5-year Capital Plans
- To support emergent operating issues, including emergency situations (e.g., severe weather, forest fires)
- To offset unrealized revenues in the future, including downturns in the economy

The K-12 Public Education Accumulated Operating Surplus Policy requires Boards of Education to develop, publish, and maintain a local policy that describes how they will engage with their local community, including local First Nations, on the management of their operating surplus.

For more information

[School Act s. 156 – Accounting practices](#)

[K-12 Public Education Accumulated Operating Surplus Policy](#)

QUESTIONS

FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

How is the IEC involved in setting the school district’s annual budget?

How much is in the district’s operating surplus, if any? What is the district’s plan to spend the operating surplus?

How can a portion of the operating surplus be spent to support First Nation student outcomes and attendance?

What is the district’s plan to spend the operating surplus?

Aboriginal: How Are We Doing? Report

Since 1999, the Ministry of Education and Child Care has published an annual “Aboriginal: How Are We Doing?” Report with comprehensive data about Indigenous students in the public K-12 system including: Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) results, completion rates (including both the Dogwood Diploma and the Adult Dogwood Diploma), Evergreen Certificates, alternate programs, and Student Learning Survey results. The Ministry publishes a report for the province as a whole, as well as a report for each of BC’s 60 school districts. Beginning with the 2024/25 “How Are We Doing?” Report, attendance data will also be included. This information is critical to the development of strategies to support First Nation students in attending school regularly, given the close relationship between regular attendance and student success. The report is published in December or January each year.

In alignment with the purpose and mandate of IECs, this data should inform the planning and delivery of comprehensive and equitable education and support services for Indigenous students, including those delivered through Indigenous Education Targeted Funds, other targeted grants, and operational funding.

Each year, following the publication of the “How Are We Doing?” Report, the Deputy Minister sends a letter to the Superintendent of each school district identifying trends and concerns based on the district’s data. It is recommended that IECs request a copy of their district’s “How Are We Doing?” Deputy Minister letter for review and discussion at the IEC table.

For more information

[Aboriginal: How Are We Doing? Report](#)

QUESTIONS FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

Based on the latest “How Are We Doing?” Report, what areas of concern have been identified by the district for follow-up action (e.g. Adult Dogwood or Evergreen rates, completion rates, assessment results, student attendance, student survey results, etc.)?

How is the district going to work with the IEC to effectively respond to the data within the “How Are We Doing?” Report?

How will the data from the “How Are We Doing?” report inform the district’s planning and delivery of education and support services for Indigenous students?

Attendance

Regular school attendance is an essential part of the learning process and crucial to graduating from school with a strong foundation for further studies or transitioning to the workforce. Studies show that students with good attendance have a greater chance of graduating, and they often finish high school with higher grades leading to a wider range of options for post-secondary education and careers. Students who attend school regularly access opportunities to practice and build important behavioural and social-emotional skills and create positive relationships with adults and other students in the school.

Absence rates increased for all students, following the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, schools and school districts throughout North America report that absence rates remain at these higher levels and are a serious concern.

Chronic absenteeism refers to long-term and/or repeated absences that can impact a student's educational success. A student is commonly defined as chronically absent in research literature as missing 10% or more of a school year, including excused and unexcused absences. An absence rate of 10% is thought to be the threshold at which learning starts to be negatively impacted. Schools must be attentive to students who miss an excessive number of school days, recognizing that this problem can have lifelong impacts. Addressing attendance concerns will require intentional efforts to build positive relationships and to engage students and families. It is recommended that IECs discuss attendance patterns within their district and co-develop proactive strategies based on local context.

For more information

[Attendance Counts: A Toolkit for Raising the Attendance Rates of First Nations Students in British Columbia](#)

QUESTIONS FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

What are the attendance rates for our district? Are particular grade levels of greater concern?

How does the district work with schools to ensure they appropriately monitor and respond to attendance data?

*How do schools in our district inform parents and caregivers about absences?
Do schools in our district have consistent policies and procedures related to attendance?*

How does the district support partnerships with parents and caregivers to help students attend school regularly and on time?

Alternate Education

The Ministry of Education and Child Care’s [Alternate Education Program Policy](#) defines alternate education programs as programs which focus on educational, social and emotional issues for students whose needs are not being met in a traditional school program. According to the Ministry, an alternate education program provides its support through differentiated instruction, specialized program delivery and enhanced counselling services based on students’ needs. The over-representation of First Nation students in alternate education programs is of concern, and the outcomes for students in alternate education programs should be carefully examined and monitored. There is also a high percentage of Indigenous students in Alternate Programs with behaviour designations, which is very concerning.

Boards of Education are funded at a rate of 1.0 full time equivalent (FTE) for school-age students who have not graduated and are enrolled in alternate education programs that meet Ministry requirements.

For more information

[Alternate Education Program Policy](#)

QUESTIONS FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

What are the educational outcomes and attendance patterns of First Nation students in Alternate Education programs in this district?

What criteria are used to identify and recommend students for Alternate Education programs?

Beyond instruction, what additional supports are provided to students in Alternate Education programs?

How many First Nation students are entering Alternate Education programs in Grade 12?

How many First Nation students in Alternate Education programs are receiving an Adult Dogwood?

Adult Dogwood

Students 18 years of age and older are currently eligible to receive an Adult Dogwood Diploma, which requires a minimum of 20 credits instead of the 80 credits required by the standard Dogwood Diploma. Students pursuing the Dogwood Diploma are required to complete Graduation Numeracy and Literacy Assessments; students receiving the Adult Dogwood are not required to complete these assessments. Given these different requirements, students receiving the Adult Dogwood may face challenges transitioning to post-secondary. Young Indigenous students are significantly over-represented among Adult Dogwood recipients.

The [2025 BC Graduation Program Policy Guide](#) states that students under the age of 18 may not enter the Adult Graduation program and should not be prematurely encouraged to pursue the Adult Dogwood. If a school-age student, aged 18 or 19, is contemplating switching from the BC Graduation Program to the Adult Graduation Program, the Policy Guide indicates that the school should ensure that students and their parents are fully informed of the implications, including the differences between the Dogwood and Adult Dogwood credentials and the prerequisites needed for post-secondary education.

The [2025 BC Graduation Handbook of Procedures](#) states that under no circumstances will a student under the age of 18 be allowed to enter the Adult Graduation Program.

For more information

[Adult Graduation Program Policy](#)

[British Columbia Adult Graduation Requirements Order](#)

[2025 BC Graduation Program Policy Guide](#)

[2025 BC Graduation Handbook of Procedures](#)

QUESTIONS FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

What proportion of the district's school-age Adult Dogwood recipients are First Nation students?

How does the district monitor compliance with the BC Graduation Program Policy Guide to ensure consistency with Ministry guidelines regarding entry into the Adult Graduation Program?

What is the five-year completion rate for school-age First Nation students in comparison to Non-First Nation students after the removal of Adult Dogwood recipients?

How many students in the district's Alternate Education program receive an Adult Dogwood?

Adult Upgrading for Graduated Adults

As set out in the [Adult Upgrading Policy](#), Adult Upgrading Programs are designed for adult students who have already graduated high school and wish to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, high school grades, and/or obtain pre-requisites for post-secondary studies. A graduated student is defined as a student who has completed the graduation requirements from a secondary school or high school in BC or in another jurisdiction.

School districts offer upgrading courses for adults at secondary schools, adult learning centres, and continuing education centres.

Adult Upgrading courses may be offered as face-to-face, self-paced and/or online learning. For a list of available courses offered by school districts, refer to [High School Courses for Students Already Graduated](#). Course offerings vary between districts.

As per the [Adult Funding Policy](#), to be eligible for funding, a Board of Education must:

- Adopt a motion that it intends to provide tuition-free education to graduated adults in Continuing Education and/or K-12 schools, and notify the ministry that it has done so, and
- Ensure that graduated students are ordinarily resident in BC, enrolled in the district, and under the supervision of, assessed and evaluated by an employee of the Board of Education who is certified by the Teacher Regulation Branch

Eligible courses will only be funded if they are documented on a Course Enrolment Form and if the student taking the course(s) meets the attendance requirements.

For more information

[Ministry of Education and Child Care's Adult Upgrading Policy](#)

[Ministry of Education and Child Care's Adult Funding Policy](#)

[High School Courses for Students Already Graduated](#)

[Adult Education Policy Framework](#)

QUESTIONS FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

What proportion of Adult Upgrading students in the school district are First Nation?

How is the district communicating and promoting Adult Upgrading opportunities to students and parents?

English Language Learning

An English Language Learning (ELL) student is defined as a student enrolled in a BC school who needs additional English language development support in order to access the provincially prescribed curriculum and succeed in school. Students identified for ELL services are students whose primary language(s) at home is not English or who speak a dialect of English that differs significantly from that used in broader Canadian society. In 2025/26, the Ministry of Education and Child Care will allocate an estimated \$159,890,610 to BC public school districts for ELL services. School-age students requiring and receiving ELL support generate ELL funding (\$1,815 per student in 2025/26) for a maximum of five years. Some school districts claim Indigenous students under ELL.

Boards of Education and their schools are responsible for determining services for ELL students. According to the [Form 1701](#), in order for a Board of Education to qualify for Supplemental Funding for English Language Learning support services, there must be, for each student reported:

- Documentation of a current annual English language proficiency assessment, confirming that the student’s use of English is sufficiently different from standard English that he or she is identified as requiring specialized services to develop intellectually
- Evidence that a current annual instructional plan is in place
- Evidence that an ELL specialist teacher is involved in the development of the instructional plan and participates in a regular review of that plan during the school year (at a minimum, at each student reporting period)
- Evidence that additional ELL services are being provided
- A schedule or list documenting the ELL services provided by an ELL specialist teacher, teacher or teacher’s assistant
- Documentation of the student’s progress in the acquisition of English proficiency in all Student Progress Reports

More information is available in the Form 1701. ELL funding should not be used for the delivery of basic classroom instruction. ELL students should receive ELL supplementary services on a regular basis that are beyond those offered to the general student population and are proportionate to the level of need.

Boards of Education report ELL students on the Form 1701. Students receiving ELL services are eligible to receive the standard Dogwood Diploma (80 credits).

For more information

[Ministry of Education and Child Care’s English Language Learning Policy Guidelines](#)

[Form 1701: Student Data Collection](#)

QUESTIONS FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

How are ELL services tailored to address the unique needs of First Nation students (e.g. use of First Nations literacy resources)? How many First Nation students receive ELL services?

How are parents involved in the determination of students who require ELL supports?

K-12 Literacy Supports

As part of Budget 2024, the provincial government invested \$30 million over three years to improve literacy levels for students in BC.

The Ministry of Education and Child Care has stated that the funding is to be used to:

- Implement required early literacy screening for all students in kindergarten to Grade 3, with mandatory screening in kindergarten (as a minimum) in the 2025/26 school year
- A standardized literacy approach and single screening tool for provincial use
 - The ministry will be working with researchers to develop a BC screening tool (in English and in French for French Immersion) for the 2027/28 school year. The unique experiences of Indigenous students will be considered in the development of the screening tool
- Distribute professional learning grants to school districts and independent schools to provide literacy-focused professional learning opportunities for teachers and support staff (now complete)
- Enhance literacy-focused teacher training and K-12 instructional supports for new and current teachers

The Ministry of Education and Child Care has committed to working with First Nations and FNEC on the K-12 Literacy Supports Initiative.

For more information

[K-12 Literacy Supports](#)

[Press Release about K-12 Literacy Supports](#)

QUESTIONS FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

How is early literacy screening being implemented in the district? How will we see the results of the screening?

How will the IEC and school district respond to the screening data?

Children and Youth In Care (CYIC)

A child living outside of their parental homes under a legal care arrangement with the Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD) includes children that are in the custody, care, or guardianship of an MCFD director (“In care” status), those that are under Kinship Care, and those who have a Youth Agreement or are receiving youth services. First Nation children and youth in BC are over-represented among this population. The Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Policy requires that districts report specifically on the educational outcomes of children and youth in care.

In January 2025, the Province released the first [annual report](#) on the education assessments, experiences and outcomes of children and youth in care and formerly in care. The report shows that children and youth in care experience significantly poorer educational outcomes compared to their peers. The six-year completion rate for children and youth who have ever had a legal arrangement with MCFD is about 40-50% lower than that for students who were never in a legal care arrangement. Furthermore, Grade 12 students who have ever had a legal care arrangement are 3-4 times more likely to receive an Evergreen certificate than those who have never had a legal care arrangement.

For the 2025/26 school year, the Province will allocate \$28 million to school districts through the Equity of Opportunity Supplement, of which \$6.9 million is allocated based on the number of children and youth in care (Table 4c in the Operating Grant Tables). However, many school districts have reported challenges in identifying children and youth in care within their district. Districts are not required to report on this funding.

Additionally, the Province allocates \$60 million through [CommunityLINK](#) designed to support the academic achievement and social functioning of vulnerable students. This funding is a Special Purpose Fund pursuant to [section 115 of the School Act](#) with reporting attached to its spending. The [IEC Order](#) states that Boards of Education must consult with IECs on the implementation of initiatives funded by special purpose grants paid under section 115 (1) of the *School Act* that have a particular relevance to or impact on Indigenous students.

For more information

[School Act s. 115 - Special purpose grants](#)

[IEC Order](#)

[Operating Grants and Operating Grant Manuals](#)

[CommunityLINK](#)

[Report: How Are We Doing?](#)

QUESTIONS FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

How will the district review and respond to the CYIC outcome data included in the district’s Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Report in collaboration with the IEC?

How does the district respond to the data for Children and Youth in Care in the FESL Strategic Plan?

What added services are provided to First Nation CYIC (students under the care of the Director, students in kinship care, and students under a youth agreement) attending schools in the district?

Has the IEC and school district reviewed the annual CYIC How Are We Doing Report?

Inclusive Education

The Ministry of Education and Child Care's [Inclusive Education Policy](#) states that inclusive education programs and services enable students with disabilities or diverse abilities to have equitable access to learning and opportunities to pursue and achieve the goals of their educational programs. Indigenous students are over-represented in most Inclusive Education funding categories. For example, in 2023/24, Indigenous students were approximately 3.3 times more likely to be identified in the Intensive Behavior or Serious Mental Illness category and 2.1 times more likely to be identified in the Moderate Behavior or Mental Illness category when compared to non-Indigenous students. Indigenous students are also less likely to be identified in the Gifted category.

In order to qualify for Inclusive Education funding, a student must be appropriately assessed and identified and have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in place. Students should be reported on the Form 1701 in the appropriate category.

In 2025/26, the Ministry of Education and Child Care will allocate an estimated \$1,009,989,440 for Inclusive Education programs and services. In 2025/26, Supplements for Unique Student Needs - Inclusive Education allocated per student are as follows:

- Level 1 - \$51,300 per student
- Level 2 - \$24,340 per student
- Level 3 - \$12,300 per student

This funding is pooled for all students with Inclusive Education support needs, and are not individual amounts for each student. The specific amounts allocated to each school district for each level are included in Table 4a of the Operating Grants Tables.

In addition, the Supplemental Student Location Factor provides \$5,000 for every eligible Level 1 student with disabilities or diverse abilities and \$1,000 for every eligible Level 2 student with disabilities or diverse abilities. The specific amounts allocated to each district for the supplemental student location factor are included in Table 6G of the Operating Grants Tables.

For more information

[Inclusive Education Policy](#)

[Individual Education Plan Order](#)

[Students With Disabilities or Diverse Abilities Order](#)

QUESTIONS FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

What proportion of First Nation students are identified as having an inclusive education designation?

What criteria are used to identify students requiring an IEP?

How is the district involving First Nation parents and caregivers in the assessment process and the development of IEPs?

How many students with disabilities or diverse abilities identified in Category H (Level 3, Intensive Behaviour Intervention or Serious Mental Illness) in the district receive an Evergreen certificate?

How many students identified in Category R (Moderate Behaviour Support or Mental Illness) in the district receive an Evergreen certificate?

Is parental or caregiver consent required for specialist assessments of students suspected of having diverse abilities?

School Completion (“Evergreen”) Certificates

As set out in the [Student Credentials Policy](#), the British Columbia School Completion Certificate or “Evergreen” is awarded to a student with disabilities or diverse abilities who has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and who meets the goals of their educational program other than graduation. The [2025 BC Graduation Program Policy Guide](#) states that to be eligible for the Evergreen Certificate, a student must be designated in one of the 12 Inclusive Education funding categories and have an IEP with replacement learning standards. Per the [Student Credentials Order](#), the Evergreen Certificate is awarded to students with disabilities or diverse abilities and an IEP who are enrolled in an educational program that is not designed to meet the graduation requirements set out in the [Graduation Program Order](#).

Per the [Ministry of Education and Child Care](#), the Evergreen Certificate is not a graduation credential, and students who receive an Evergreen Certificate have not graduated. It is important that students and their parents/caregivers clearly understand that the Evergreen recognizes the completion of personal learning goals for students who are unable to achieve the provincial learning standards due to serious intellectual disabilities, but it does not represent graduation.

Not all students with disabilities or diverse abilities should be in an Evergreen Certificate Program. As set out by the [Ministry of Education and Child Care](#), the decision to put a student in an Evergreen Program should not be made prior to Grade 10, and should include the informed consent of the student’s parents/caregivers.

To address the over-representation of First Nation students tracked for an Evergreen, FNESC has included a provision in the [Model Local Education Agreement](#) to ensure parental consent and that there is confirmation/evidence that the student has significant limitations in adaptive functioning.

For more information

[Student Credentials Policy](#)

[Student Credentials Order](#)

[Ministry of Education and Child Care – School Completion Certificate Program](#)

[2025 BC Graduation Program Policy Guide](#)

[Graduation Program Order](#)

[Model Local Education Agreement](#)

QUESTIONS FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

What proportion of First Nation students with an IEP received an Evergreen credential?

How is the district involving parents in the decision to assign a student an Evergreen credential?

How many First Nation CYIC students receive an Evergreen, compared to the non-First Nation CYIC population?

School Food Programs: Feeding Futures and National School Food Funding

As of 2023, the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care provides \$71.5 million annually for the Feeding Futures initiative, which provides school districts with funds to create new, or expand existing, school food programs for students who need it the most.

In addition, in 2024, Canada announced \$1 billion over five years for the National School Food program, which provides school districts with funds to supplement their school food programs. In 2025/26, \$14.4 million was allocated to BC school districts through the National School Food program.

With this funding, each school district has the flexibility to develop and deliver programs to meet the needs of their local communities.

- The [Feeding Futures Guiding Principles](#) suggest that school districts work with Indigenous Education Councils to ensure that decision-making is informed by First Nation rights holders and Indigenous partners
- One of the objectives of the [National School Food program](#) is to ensure programs are culturally appropriate, through partnership with First Nations and community leaders, such as Elders
- IECs must be involved in the planning and spending of this funding, per the [IEC Order](#)

Funds must be spent in alignment with [spending criteria](#) established by the Ministry of Education and Child Care, which include food, staffing, and equipment required to deliver school food programs. School districts are required to submit an annual report to the Ministry outlining how the funds were spent. In this report, school districts are also required to report how they engaged Indigenous Education Councils in the development of their school food programs.

For more information

[Feeding Futures School Food Programs Fund – Instructions to School Districts](#)

[Feeding Futures Guiding Principles](#)

[School Act s. 115 – Special purpose grants](#)

[IEC Order](#)

[National School Food Policy](#)

QUESTIONS FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

How is the IEC involved in the annual Feeding Futures & National School Food Program Year-End Report to the Ministry of Education and Child Care?

How are First Nation students in the district benefitting from the provincial and federal food grants?

Indigenous Education Council Involvement in Hiring

According to the [Indigenous Education Council Order](#) (section 4(1)(a)), Boards of Education must consult with IECs on procedures related to recruiting and hiring Board staff who develop and deliver programs and services for Indigenous students or whose role involves significant interaction with Indigenous students. The [IEC Policy](#) specifies that consultation may include reviewing proposed job descriptions, advising on posting or sharing current job opportunities to reach potential candidates, and IEC participation in hiring processes.

In alignment with the rules for conduct outlined in the [IEC Order](#), IEC participation in hiring processes must respect the protocols, laws, customs and traditions of local First Nations and have deference to the views and perspectives of members representing local First Nations.

For more information

[IEC Policy](#)

[IEC Order](#)

QUESTIONS FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

How is the IEC involved in the hiring process for relevant roles? Is this hiring process documented?

What steps is the district taking to prioritize hiring candidates who are members of local First Nations for roles that involve integrating local First Nation culture and world views?

Framework for Enhancing Student Learning

The Framework for Enhancing Student Learning is the primary accountability mechanism in BC public schools that formalizes planning and reporting expectations for all school districts with a focus on improving equity of learning outcomes and enhancing the intellectual, human and social, and career development of all students in the K-12 public system. On an annual basis, Boards of Education must report the following outcomes as per the [Enhancing Student Learning Reporting Order](#):

- Current year and 3-year trend for the number and percentage of students in grades 4 and 7 on-track or extending literacy expectations as specified in provincial assessments
- Current year and 3-year trend for the number and percentage of students proficient or extending literacy expectations as specified in the Grade 10 literacy assessments
- Current year and 3-year trend for the number and percentage of students in grades 4 and 7 on-track or extending numeracy expectations as specified in provincial assessments
- Current year and 3-year trend for the number and percentage of students proficient or extending numeracy expectations as specified in the Grade 10 numeracy assessments
- Number and percentage of students who are completing grade to grade transitions on time
- Number and percentage of students in grades 4, 7, and 10 who feel welcome, safe, and have a sense of belonging in their school
- Number and percentage of students in grades 4, 7, and 10 who feel there are two or more adults at their school who care about them
- Number and percentage of resident students who achieved a BC Certificate of Graduation Dogwood Diploma within 5 years of starting Grade 8
- Number and percentage of students transitioning to Canadian post-secondary institutions within 1 and 3 years

Boards must report separately on Indigenous students (on reserve and off reserve), children and youth in care, and students with disabilities or diverse abilities. Under the [Indigenous Education Council Policy](#), Boards must consult IECs on reporting for the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning. As set out in the [Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Policy](#), Boards of Education are to set, create and maintain a strategic plan, annually report on student outcomes and put systems in place to continuously improve the educational outcomes for all students and improve equity of outcomes for Indigenous students, children and youth in care, and students with disabilities or diverse abilities. As per the Ministry's resource, [A Guide to Effective Planning and Reporting in the BC K-12 Education Sector](#), strategic plans should be developed in collaboration with local First Nations through Indigenous Education Councils.

For more information

[Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Policy](#)

[Enhancing Student Learning Reporting Order](#)

[A Guide to Effective Planning and Reporting in the BC K-12 Education Sector](#)

QUESTIONS FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

How is the IEC involved in the annual Framework for Enhancing Student Learning reports, including the development of strategic plans?

How does the district's strategic plan respond to the outcomes data for Indigenous students?

Foundation Skills Assessment

The Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) is an annual province-wide learning assessment for all grade four and seven students, focusing on literacy and numeracy. Action 4.1 of the DRIPA Action Plan states that the Ministry will “Identify and undertake concrete measures to increase the literacy and numeracy achievement levels of Indigenous students at all levels of the K-12 education system, including the early years.” FSAs are an important component of this action item.

Per the [Student Learning Assessment Order](#), for the purpose of assessing the effectiveness of education programs, Boards must ensure that the FSAs are administered and completed, and that the data collected from the assessments are transmitted to the Minister of Education and Child Care.

The FSA does not impact student marks or report cards. Teachers mark the FSAs using the provincial proficiency scale, marking results as emerging, developing, proficient, or extending.

The FSA provides parents, teachers, schools, school districts, IECs, First Nations, FNEsc and the Ministry with important information on how well students are progressing in the foundation skills of literacy and numeracy. FNEsc has supported the administration of the FSA since its inception, as a tool to identify system-wide strengths and weaknesses within the education system and to measure and advance equity for students through planning, intervention, and support. According to the Ministry, FSAs are predictors of graduation and the system needs to respond to the results.

In November 2021, the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) sent correspondence to the Minister of Education and Child Care, with the BC Teachers’ Federation (BCTF) copied, expressing concern regarding the ongoing campaign to cancel FSAs. In November 2022, the FNLC sent a letter directly to the Teachers’ Federation and local chapters expressing disappointment in the campaign to discredit and cancel FSAs. In October 2023, FNEsc also wrote to the BCTF and its local chapters expressing similar concerns.

FSA results indicate a significant disparity in outcomes between First Nation and non-Indigenous learners. It is particularly concerning that these gaps persist as provincial literacy and numeracy rates continue to decline, especially for First Nation students on reserve. It is important for IECs to discuss and plan based on the district’s FSA results.

For more information

[Student Learning Assessment Order](#)

[Ministry of Education and Child Care FSA Parent Brochure](#)

QUESTIONS FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

What are the district’s participation rates in the FSAs for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, including students living on reserve?

Given these assessments are set out in a Ministerial Order, how is the school district supporting increased participation?

How does the district use the FSA results to inform strategies to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for First Nation students?

Student and School Safety

According to the [Safe and Caring School Communities Policy](#), Boards of Education and schools have prevention, intervention, and response strategies in place to support safe, caring, and inclusive school communities, which includes “striving to work together to better understanding issues such as racism, discrimination, and other worrisome behaviours and respond effectively and appropriately.”

The Policy states that Boards should use the following to achieve safe, caring, and inclusive schools:

- District Safe School Coordinators and teams
- Codes of conduct
- Online student reporting tool
- Community threat assessment protocols

Per the [Safe and Caring School Communities Policy](#) and the [Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order](#), Boards must also ensure that their codes of conduct include a reference to each of the prohibited grounds of discrimination set out in the *Human Rights Code*, which include race, Indigenous identity, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.

According to the [2023-24 How Are We Doing Report](#), 69% of surveyed Indigenous students in Grade 10 reported that they feel safe at school, compared to 76% of non-Indigenous students. 12% of surveyed Indigenous students in Grade 10 reported that they are bullied, teased, or picked on at school, as compared to 8% of non-Indigenous students.

For more information

[Safe and Caring School Communities Policy](#)

[2023-24 How Are We Doing Report](#)

[Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order](#)

QUESTIONS FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

What are the district’s policies and processes for responding to reports of racism and discrimination in schools?

What are the district’s policies and processes for responding to reports of worrisome behaviour or safety concerns in schools?

What is the district doing to support safer schools?

How is the district ensuring that safety protocols and processes are culturally safe for First Nations students?

Is the school district Code of Conduct up to date? How has it been communicated with parents and community members?

Sixth Non-Instructional Day and Other Professional Development Opportunities

As committed to in the BC Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA) and set out in section 8 of the [School Calendar Regulation](#), in the 2025/26 school year, Boards of Education must schedule at least one Indigenous-focused non-instructional day. The purpose of the Indigenous-focused non-instructional day is to provide teachers with an opportunity to participate in discussions and activities that focus on enhancing Indigenous student achievement and integrating Indigenous world views and perspectives into learning environments.

As per the [IEC Order](#), a Board must consult with the IEC on professional development related to cultural competencies, including the 9th [Professional Standard for Educators in BC](#), and non-instructional time focused on enhancing Indigenous student achievement or integrating Indigenous worldviews and perspectives into learning environments.

As set out in the [IEC Order](#), the incorporation of Indigenous world views and perspectives into learning environments should include an emphasis on the local First Nations on whose territories districts operate and have deference to the views and perspectives of members representing local First Nations.

For more information

[IEC Policy](#)

[IEC Order](#)

[School Calendar Regulation](#)

QUESTIONS FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

How is the IEC involved in the planning and delivery of the Indigenous-focused non-instructional day and related professional learning?

National Truth and Reconciliation Day and National Indigenous Peoples Day

The [Indigenous Education Council Policy](#) and [Indigenous Education Council Order](#) both state that Boards of Education must consult with IECs on any activities or resources related to the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30th) and National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21st). National Indigenous Peoples Day has been observed on June 21st since 1996, when it was formally recognized by the Governor General of Canada. National Day for Truth and Reconciliation has been observed on September 30th since it received royal assent in 2021. Any activities or celebrations for these days must be planned in discussion with the IEC. Per the [IEC Policy](#), advice must be sought from local First Nation IEC members on protocols for these days.

For more information

[IEC Policy](#)

[IEC Order](#)

QUESTIONS FOR IEC MEMBERS TO RAISE

How is the IEC, and local First Nations, involved in the planning and delivery of activities to honour National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and National Indigenous Peoples Day?



FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE



fnesc

FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE

#113 - 100 Park Royal South, West Vancouver, BC V7T 1A2
604-925-6087 | Toll-free in BC 1-877-422-3672

info@fnesc.ca | www.fnesc.ca