



*FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION*



*IT'S OUR VISION, IT'S OUR TIME*

*JULY 2010*





# FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

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## INDIAN CONTROL OF INDIAN EDUCATION: 1972 POLICY PAPER

### STATEMENT OF VALUES

*“We want education to provide the setting in which our children can develop the fundamental attitudes and values which have an honored place in Indian tradition and culture. The values that we want to pass on to our children, values which make our people a great race, are not written in any book. They are found in our history, in our legends and in the culture. We believe that if an Indian child is fully aware of the important Indian values he will have reason to be proud of our race and of himself as an Indian.*

*We want the behavior of our children to be shaped by those values which are most esteemed in our culture. When our children come to school, they have already developed certain attitudes and habits that are based on experiences in the family. School programs that are influenced by these values respect cultural priority and are an extension of the education which parents give children from their first years. These early lessons emphasize attitudes of:*

- *self-reliance,*
- *respect for personal freedom,*
- *generosity,*
- *respect for nature, and*
- *wisdom.*

*All of these have a special place in the Indian way of life. While these values can be understood and interpreted in different ways by different cultures, it is very important that Indian children have a chance to develop a value system which is compatible with Indian culture.*

*The gap between our people and those who have chosen, often gladly, to join us as residents of this beautiful and bountiful country, is vast when it comes to mutual understanding and appreciation of differences. To overcome this, it is essential that Canadian children of every racial origin have the opportunity during their school days to learn about the history, customs and culture of this country's original inhabitants and first citizens. We propose that education authorities, especially those in Ministries of Education, should provide for this in the curricula and texts which are chosen for use in Canadian schools.”<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> National Indian Brotherhood/Assembly of First Nations, *Indian Control of Indian Education: Policy Paper, 1972* at pg. 2.



# FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

## OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE OF PAPER

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The *Indian Control of Indian Education 1972 (ICIE 1972)* policy articulated a statement of values which is as true today as it was at its inception. The National Indian Brotherhood (hereinafter Assembly of First Nations (AFN)) adopted the policy paper "*Indian Control of Indian Education*" in 1972 (Appendix I). The *ICIE 1972* policy was affirmed by then Minister of Indian Affairs, Jean Chrétien, in 1973. The full spirit and intent of the *ICIE 1972* policy, however, has never been supported in a meaningful manner. Successive federal governments have consistently failed to provide the necessary support to fully implement the comprehensive First Nations learning environments and systems envisioned by First Nations that would lead to an overall improvement in learning outcomes.

First Nations leaders and educators recognize that the underlying principles of the *ICIE 1972* policy still apply in 2010 as they did in 1972. However, in order to ensure the *ICIE 1972* policy reflects current challenges and changes in education and continues to support the realization of education as a tool to eradicate poverty, on February 21, 2007 the AFN Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE) and the National Indian Education Council (NIEC) recommended that the thirty-eight year old *ICIE 1972* policy be updated. The work for the revised *ICIE 2010* document was mandated by the Chiefs-In-Assembly Resolution No. 13/2009 at the AFN General Assembly held in Calgary, Alberta in July 2009 (Appendix II).

This revised *Indian Control of Indian Education 2010* document, hereinafter *First Nations Control of First Nations Education 2010 (FNCFNE 2010)*, was developed pursuant to Resolution No. 13/2009. The revisions and updates incorporated into this renewed policy paper will assist governments and First Nations communities in building the requisite policies, programs, services and systems to ensure the future prosperity of First Nations peoples in Canada.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of the policy framework presented in this paper is to reaffirm the First Nations' vision of lifelong learning presented in the *ICIE 1972* policy and reassert First Nations inherent Aboriginal and Treaty rights to education. This policy framework provides strategic recommendations that will enable the development and implementation of education legislation, governance frameworks, policies, programs and services for all levels of education for First Nations learners at all stages of lifelong learning. Key elements of First Nations' lifelong learning addressed in this paper include language immersion, holistic and culturally relevant curricula, well-trained educators, focused leadership, parental involvement and accountability, and safe and healthy facilities founded on principles that respect First Nations jurisdiction over education.

*"Unless a child learns about the forces which shape him: the history of his people, their values and customs, their language, he will never really know himself or his potential as a human being. Indian culture and values have a unique place in the history of mankind. The Indian child who learns about his heritage will be proud of it. The lessons he learns in school, his whole school experience, should reinforce & contribute to the image he has of himself as an Indian."*

- *ICIE 1972 POLICY PAPER*

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<sup>2</sup> This policy paper is a living document subject to periodic review by the Executive of the Assembly of First Nations. Additions or amendments may be initiated as the need arises.

## PREAMBLE

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Prior to the arrival of Europeans, First Nations had full control and access to all of the land and resources within their traditional territories. After European settlement and expansion, First Nations were forced onto small land parcels called reserves and were deprived of exercising their rights to their lands, resources, jurisdiction, culture and governance.

Canada's ongoing colonial processes continue to have detrimental impacts on First Nations peoples. Being forced to move from self-sufficiency to dependency has undermined the individual, family, community and national well-being of First Nations. It has also adversely affected our relationships between peoples and with the natural world.

Canada's assimilationist and racist policies from the residential school era failed First Nations peoples. Misguided government actions have also devastated the socio-economic well being of First Nations children, families and communities. This was acknowledged by the Government of Canada in the *Statement of Apology to Former Students of Indian Residential Schools* made by Prime Minister Stephen Harper on June 11, 2008.<sup>3</sup> Many of these impacts, however, continue to be perpetuated by chronic under-funding, despite a commitment and a federal fiduciary obligation to adequately support and implement full First Nations' control over First Nations' education as described in the *ICIE 1972* policy.

In the past, the Canadian governments' education policy has been a tool of oppression, but it can be a tool of liberation founded on First Nation control over education. First Nations view education as a means to achieving self-determination and redressing the negative impacts of colonial practices.

All peoples have the right to maintain their cultural and linguistic identities, and education is essential to actualizing this right. First Nations control over education will provide the means to acquire the necessary skills to be self-empowered and self-sufficient and to maintain First Nations cultural values and languages. This is essential to actualizing an individual's success in society. It will also provide a strong foundation for empowering proud First Nations peoples who are fully able to contribute to the development of their families, clans, communities and nations.

Elders and leaders in the 1970s recognized the importance of local control over education. As a result, the *ICIE 1972* policy was anchored in the philosophy that the Government of Canada, working in partnership with First Nations, would secure and provide the necessary financial resources to responsibly support First Nations learning and develop the types of comprehensive learning systems that would truly enhance student outcomes. Today, the necessity for Canadian-First Nations partnerships to support collective action to bridge the First Nations education gap is as critical as it was in 1972.

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<sup>3</sup> Online at: <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/rqpi/apo/index-eng.asp>



## FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

The following statements from the *ICIE 1972* policy reflect a continued vision of First Nations education that can form the basis for this crucial collective action:

- “We want education to give our children the knowledge to understand and be proud of themselves and the knowledge to understand the world around them.”<sup>4</sup>
- “We believe in education: ...as a preparation for total living; ... as a means of free choice of where to live and work; ... as a means of enabling us to participate fully in our own social, economic, political and education advancement.”<sup>5</sup>
- “The time has come for a radical change in Indian education. Our aim is to make education relevant to the philosophy and needs of Indian people.”<sup>6</sup>

The *ICIE 1972* policy of First Nations control over education led to an expansion of the number of First Nations operated schools and the creation of Indigenous Institutes of Higher Learning. However, even with these developments, high school drop out rates nationally remain at 51%, and the graduation rate of First Nations children has not exceeded 48% in the nearly forty years since the enactment of the *ICIE 1972* policy.

Repeated attempts have been made to inform Canada, through numerous studies, audits and evaluations, that the status quo of First Nations learning systems is inadequate. Despite this evidence, success in achieving the identified objectives of First Nations education have consistently been stymied by Canada’s unilateral failure to adequately fund and support First Nations education in a sustainable and meaningful manner. This failure on the part of the Canadian government was explicitly recognized in the 2004 Report of the Auditor General of Canada, which stated that the Auditor General remains “concerned that a significant education gap exists between First Nations people living on reserves and the Canadian population as a whole and that the time estimated to close that gap has increased...[to] about 27 to 28 years.”<sup>7</sup>

Through the *First Nations Control of First Nations Education 2010* policy, First Nations reassert their refusal to sacrifice future generations to the continued inadequacies of federal government policy and funding. First Nations can and must acquire the tools to achieve economic viability and sustainability through comprehensive learning systems. This requires Canada to uphold the Honour of the Crown by finally meeting its obligation to provide stable, sustainable and adequate resources for First Nations education.

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<sup>4</sup> National Indian Brotherhood/Assembly of First Nations, *Indian Control of Indian Education: Policy Paper, Statement of the Indian Philosophy of Education*, 1972 at pg. 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* *Statement of Values* at pg. 2.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *2004 Report of the Auditor General of Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada – Education Program and Post-Secondary Student Support*, Chapter 5, online at [http://www.oag.bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl\\_oag\\_200411\\_05\\_e\\_14909.html](http://www.oag.bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_200411_05_e_14909.html)



### OUTCOMES SINCE 1972

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The *ICIE 1972* policy was a significant catalyst for change. It was a response to the 1969 White Paper which called for the dissolution of the reserve system and total assimilation of First Nations peoples. The *ICIE 1972* policy statement was also a call to action at a critical time in First Nations collective history, and it set the stage for change in the decades that followed.

The First Nations learning philosophy outlined in the AFN *ICIE 1972* policy was affirmed by the Canadian government on June 23, 1972 in a speech by the then Honourable Jean Chrétien, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, to the Council of Ministers of Learning. Minister Chrétien followed up on this affirmation of the *ICIE 1972* policy in a February 2, 1973 letter to Mr. George Manuel, then President of the National Indian Brotherhood (now the Assembly of First Nations), where he stated:

*“The paper is a significant milestone in the development of Indian education in Canada. I wish to assure you that I and my Department are fully committed to realizing the learning goals for the Indian people which are set forth in the policy proposals.”*<sup>8</sup>

Despite the Canadian government’s affirmation of the *ICIE 1972* policy, the full spirit and intent of the policy has never been supported in a meaningful manner by federal, provincial or territorial governments. The federal government’s implementation of the *ICIE 1972* policy was limited to providing a basic framework for First Nations to administer community schools with some degree of involvement in the delivery of programs that had previously been managed by the federal government.

The Canadian government’s inadequate implementation of the *ICIE 1972* policy allowed for only a modest level of control by local communities in the form of delegated authority. The unilaterally designed devolution process instituted by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) transferred limited administrative control of education by First Nations without including the necessary transfer of the resources that would have allowed for full implementation of First Nations controlled education systems.

### FIRST NATIONS SUCCESSES

The *ICIE 1972* policy also led to First Nations autonomously developing and creating First Nations schools. Today, there are 518 on-reserve schools that are responsible for delivering programs and services for students from Kindergarten to grade 12 using First Nations pedagogies. Many of these First Nations controlled schools are led by First Nation principals and administrators with qualified and certified First Nations teachers. The majority of these schools provide local language and culture programs. Sixty percent of all First Nations students, approximately 70,000 individuals, attend First Nations elementary and secondary schools. In many communities, there are also locally controlled early childhood education and preschool programs that feed into the K-12 programs.

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<sup>8</sup> Chrétien, Honourable Jean, “Letter to Mr. George Manuel” February 2, 1973.

## FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

In addition, the *ICIE 1972* policy led to the development and creation of 45 locally controlled Indigenous Institutes of Higher Learning with over 10,000 learners enrolled each year. Those institutes provide a full range of programs from adult education to graduate degrees. In 2009, there were approximately 80,000 First Nations learners attending First Nation controlled schools and institutes. These statistics provide a synopsis of some of the successes achieved through First Nations implementation of the *ICIE 1972* policy.

First Nations capacity in education has improved significantly as a result of the *ICIE 1972* policy. First Nations now have a large number of certified teaching personnel, counselors, education specialists, school administrators, education authorities, scholars, university professors, college presidents and deans. Moreover, First Nations now administer their own certification processes for instructors, programs and facilities.

Through the efforts of First Nations educators and leaders, courses and curricula delivered in First Nation controlled schools and institutes are beginning to reflect the perspectives and foundations of First Nations traditions and worldviews. These important changes have led to increased numbers of relevant education methodologies that strengthen First Nations identities and dramatically improve opportunities for success. Many of these developments have been shared with provincial jurisdictions.

The foundations engendered by the *ICIE 1972* policy have also allowed First Nations to become educated in fields that support the development of First Nations capacity. As a result, First Nations are now participating in educational pursuits at the community, regional, national and international levels. The research generated by, for and with these First Nations scholars further supports and fulfills the principles of First Nations ownership, control, access and possession



(OCAP) of First Nations intellectual and traditional knowledge.<sup>9</sup> These positive changes have been the result of the dedication and hard work of First Nations educators and leaders and the systems they have developed.

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<sup>9</sup> OCAP Resolution 47/2008 which states, among other things, that “(3) First Nations, both individually and collectively, support the First Nations’ established principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP) regarding First Nations’ Education research, data and information” and that “(4) As part of the nations First Nations Education Data Management, Information and Research Framework, a communications strategy be developed to advise key federal departments of this position and to support both the short and long-term funding

## **FIRST NATIONS LEARNING SYSTEMS**

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First Nations' vision of lifelong learning encompasses learning from the pre-natal to Elder level and includes systems that are holistic, high quality, linguistic and culturally-based.

First Nations lifelong learning systems must be founded on First Nations languages, cultures, histories, philosophies, worldviews and values, as these are the heart of our identity.

All First Nations learners require a wide variety of opportunities that will nurture their learning and allow them to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to actively and positively participate in, and contribute to, their families, clans, Nations, society and the global community.

First Nations envision learning systems that include comprehensive First Nations developed curricula and programs for pre-school, Head Start, K-12, adult literacy and upgrading, career, vocational and technical training, university and college, community and continuing learning, and other types of learning as determined by each Nation (Appendix III).

First Nations comprehensive learning systems require First, Second and Third level services under First Nation jurisdiction. These comprehensive learning systems must include programs and services designed to respond to the current and future needs of First Nations and improve learner outcomes. First Nations developed and controlled comprehensive data, management and evaluation systems are critical to measuring outcomes and ensuring opportunities for continuous improvement.

## **PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL LEARNING SYSTEMS**

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The needs of First Nations learners are best met in First Nations institutions. However, First Nations learners may attend a provincial, territorial, or other learning institution due to a variety of reasons, including but not limited to:

- i. The lack of a learning institutions in the community,
- ii. Parental choice, or
- iii. Families living away from their communities for education, social, medical, economic or housing reasons.

It is essential that the inherent and Treaty rights of First Nations learners to quality and relevant learning be supported and maintained while attending non-First Nations schools, as these Rights are portable.

Provincial and territorial education systems must be accountable to First Nations governments, education authorities, parents, and caregivers for the learning outcomes of all First Nations learners attending their institutions. They also have a responsibility to provide quality, culturally-relevant learning opportunities for all First Nations learners enrolled in their learning institutions.

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requirements for the National Education Data Management and Information Framework and future structures that support First Nations jurisdiction in information and research.”



# FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

## RECOGNITION OF FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGES AND IDENTITY

First Nations Treaties provide the historical and legal foundation for the creation of the Canadian State. Many of the earliest Friendship Treaties affirmed a comparable standard of life between the Treaty signatories. Treaties from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries explicitly identify the provision of education as a Treaty Entitlement and confirm First Nations jurisdiction over education. These are among the Treaty and Inherent rights recognized in Section 35 of Canada's *Constitution Act, 1982*.<sup>10</sup>

Canada also has a responsibility to uphold First Nations rights to language and identity as a signatory to the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.<sup>11</sup> Among other matters, the *Convention* confirms that all children have the right to an identity without unlawful interference, and commits Canada to providing education in a manner that affirms First Nations cultural identities, languages and values.

Canada's international obligations to uphold First Nations rights to language and identity are also affirmed in Article 13 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP), which calls upon States to take effective measures to protect the right of First Nations peoples:

*“to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing system and, literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.”*<sup>12</sup>

The *Declaration* also calls upon Nation States to work with First Nation peoples to develop and implement effective measures to ensure First Nations are empowered to “establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.”<sup>13</sup>

As a testament to the *ICIE 1972* policy paper, First Nations were empowered to collaborate on First Nation languages development in order to directly link language training to the lifelong education process. The AFN's *National First Nations Languages Strategy 2000*, *National First Nation Languages Implementation Plan*, and *National First Nation Language Strategy Cost Estimate for Implementation* were unanimously approved by the AFN General Assembly in Resolutions No. 12/2007 and No. 01/2008.<sup>14</sup> These three national documents provide further support for First Nations control of First Nations education.

*“Language is the outward expression of an accumulation of learning and experience shared by a group of people over centuries of development. It is not simply a vocal symbol; it is a dynamic force which shapes the way a man looks at the world, his thinking about the world and his philosophy of life. Knowing his maternal language helps a man to know himself; being proud of his language helps a man to be proud of himself.”*

- “LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION,”  
INDIAN CONTROL OF INDIAN EDUCATION. 1972

<sup>10</sup> Online at: <http://www.canlii.org/en/ca/const/const1982.html#VII>

<sup>11</sup> Online at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm>

<sup>12</sup> UNDRIP, Article 13. Online at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/declaration.htm>

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* Article 14.

<sup>14</sup> Electronic copies available by contracting the AFN Education and Languages Secretariat, online at: [www.afn.ca](http://www.afn.ca)

## ***FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORK***

### **VISION STATEMENT: LIFELONG LEARNING**

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First Nations lifelong learning is a process of nurturing First Nations learners in linguistically and culturally-appropriate holistic learning environments that meet the individual and collective needs of First Nations and ensures that all First Nations learners have the opportunity to achieve their personal aspirations within comprehensive lifelong learning systems.

### **MISSION STATEMENT: EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORK**

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First Nations peoples understand that learning is a formal and informal, instinctive, and experiential lifelong journey, encompassing early childhood learning, elementary and secondary school, career, vocational and technical training, post-secondary education (PSE) and adult learning. The primary role of holistically balanced First Nations learning systems is to transmit First Nations ancestral languages, traditions, cultures and histories, while at the same time preparing and making accessible to the learner the support and tools that will allow them to achieve their full individual potential in any setting they choose.

First Nations assert their right and responsibility to direct and make decisions regarding all matters related to First Nations learning. Provision for, and access to, lifelong learning is an Inherent and Treaty right of all First Nations peoples. Governments must work together to ensure that this lifelong journey is built upon experiences that embrace both Indigenous and mainstream western knowledge systems and that First Nations have access to the supports necessary to achieve successful education outcomes at all stages.

### **OBJECTIVES**

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The *FNCFNE 2010* policy objectives provide a framework that will enable the development and implementation of First Nations community based education legislation, governance frameworks, policies, programs and services for all levels of education. Full implementation of this framework can be achieved using the methodologies presented in the Policy Implementation Recommendations section of this paper. The *FNCFNE 2010* objectives are to:

1. Ensure First Nation lifelong learners have access to an education system with programs and services grounded in First Nations languages, values, traditions and knowledge.
2. Build and sustain First Nation capacity and institutional development so as to deliver a wide spectrum of quality programs and services across the learning continuum.
3. Implement First Nations control of First Nations education.



# FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

## POLICY IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

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The following policy implementation recommendations provide strategic approaches for implementing First Nations control of First Nations education. Many of these recommendations require cooperation and initiative on the part of federal, provincial, territorial and First Nations governments. Recommendations requiring implementation by the federal, provincial and territorial governments of Canada must be developed in consultation and collaboration with First Nations governments, and with their free, prior and informed consent.

### 1. ACCESS TO LIFELONG LEARNING

Lifelong learning is a process of nurturing learners in linguistically, culturally-appropriate and holistic learning environments that meet individual and collective needs. The lifelong learning model incorporates formal, informal, instinctive and experiential learning systems (Appendix IV). Full implementation and support for this model will ensure that all First Nations people have the opportunity to achieve their personal aspirations within comprehensive lifelong learning systems that encompass early childhood education, elementary and secondary school, vocational training and post-secondary, and adult learning. All governments must take collective action to guarantee that First Nations learners have access to education systems founded on the lifelong learning model with programs and services grounded in First Nations languages, values, traditions and knowledge.

#### 1.1 LANGUAGES

1.1.1. First Nations languages, knowledge, and diversity are an important national heritage that must be protected, supported and preserved. Recognition and respect is vital for the success of comprehensive First Nations learning strategies that will lead to meaningful and improved learner outcomes.

*“Canada’s Aboriginal languages are among the most endangered in the world.”*

- UNESCO (1996) ATLAS OF THE WORLD’S LANGUAGES IN DANGER OF DISAPPEARING, Ed. Stephen A. Wurm, Paris, p.23

1.1.2. For successful implementation of First Nations language education, the government of Canada must recognize and support the Policy Objectives and Goals identified in the *National First Nations Language Strategy* as approved by the Assembly of First Nations in Resolution No. 12/2007.<sup>15</sup>

#### 1.2 EARLY LEARNING

1.2.1. Federal, provincial, territorial and First Nations’ governments must ensure that every First Nations child regardless of residency, has access to integrated early learning programs and services including, but not limited to, language nests, immersion programs, Head Start programs, daycare, pre-kindergarten and

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<sup>15</sup> Assembly of First Nations Resolution No. 12/2007 was endorsed at the Annual General Assembly in Halifax, NS on July 11, 2007



preschool. Actualization of this policy requires that First Nations communities be provided with the supports and resources necessary to run these programs.

- 1.2.2. Federal, provincial and territorial governments must work with First Nations, locally and regionally, to develop and implement strategic plans to ensure that early learning initiatives promote school readiness, the holistic development of the individual and high quality culturally relevant programs and services.

## 1.3 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

- 1.3.1. Federal, provincial and territorial governments must engage with First Nations to develop curricula that:

- i. Recognize and support varying student needs,
- ii. Meet standards identified by First Nations, and
- iii. Allow for the development of materials and programs to preserve and protect First Nations languages, cultures and histories.



- 1.3.2. Provincial and territorial schools must work in collaboration with First Nations to develop and implement curriculum into all schools in Canada that addresses the contributions, histories and cultures of First Nations and the impacts of colonialism on Indigenous peoples.

## 1.4 INCLUSION

- 1.4.1. First Nations have the right and responsibility to exercise free, prior and informed consent in all education decisions that affect First Nations citizens, regardless of place of residence or type of institution.
- 1.4.2. Provincial and territorial governments must ensure that First Nations representatives are included in planning and policy-making through institutional boards/divisions, parent advisory councils, and other advisory councils for systems that include First Nations learners.
- 1.4.3. Provincial and territorial governments must enter into agreements with First Nations governments that provide for meaningful First Nations decision-making capacity on school boards/divisions, and for the hiring of First Nations administrators, instructors, counselors, professionals, support staff and Elders.

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## 1.5 ACCESS

- 1.5.1. Federal, provincial and territorial governments must develop, institute and maintain agreements and partnerships with First Nations communities and organizations to provide a supportive environment for learners, including an environment that is rich with First Nations relevant curricula and appropriate program development.
- 1.5.2. Federal, provincial, territorial and First Nations governments must ensure that all First Nations learners, regardless of residency, have access to any school program or institute. This requires that First Nations learners be provided with the resources and supports necessary to remove barriers to successful completion of the education program(s) of the First Nations learner's choice.
- 1.5.3. The Inherent and Treaty rights of First Nations to post-secondary education must be fully implemented through the provisions of full funding and all necessary supports to First Nations learners in a manner that will ensure access to PSE programs and increased graduation rates. This will require the development of legislative mechanisms in collaboration with First Nations.

## 1.6 CULTURAL COMPETENCY

- 1.6.1. Federal, provincial, territorial and First Nations governments must work together to fully implement First Nations' rights to access high quality and culturally relevant learning in all education systems.
- 1.6.2. Provincial and territorial governments, school boards/divisions and learning institutions must acknowledge their responsibility to provide high quality, culturally-relevant learning opportunities for all First Nations learners enrolled in their learning institutions.
- 1.6.3. Federal, provincial and territorial governments, school boards/divisions, and learning institutions will ensure that all First Nations learners receive culturally and linguistically appropriate support services.
- 1.6.4. Federal, provincial and territorial governments, school boards/divisions and learning institutions shall develop and implement on-going anti-racism programs and cross-cultural education and training to ensure that all people in Canada have a high level of cultural competency regarding Indigenous peoples.

*“It is generally accepted that pre-school and primary school classes should be taught in the language of the community. Transition to English or French as a second language should be introduced only after the child has a strong grasp of his own language. The time schedule for this language program has been determined to be from four to five years duration. Following this time span, adjustment and adaptation to other languages and unfamiliar cultural milieu are greatly enhanced.”*

- “LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION”  
INDIAN CONTROL OF INDIAN  
EDUCATION, 1972

- 1.6.5. Provincial and territorial governments, school boards/divisions, learning institutions, decision-makers, learners, teachers, and support services staff must achieve cultural competency through on-going Professional Development, designed and delivered by First Nations professionals and Elders at the local and regional levels.

## 2. COMMUNITY AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

Federal, provincial, territorial and First Nations governments must take immediate collaborative action to build and sustain the community and institutional capacity of First Nations to deliver a wide spectrum of quality academic and culturally-relevant programs and services across the lifelong learning continuum.

### 2.1 SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1.1. Federal, provincial, territorial and First Nations governments shall develop and implement strategies to support the engagement of First Nations parents and communities as partners in lifelong learning.

- 2.1.2. Federal, provincial, territorial and First Nations governments must consult on the development of strategic plans that will ensure balanced and high quality academic programs designed to focus on lifelong learning, including early childhood programs, K-12 education, school support services, post-secondary education and Traditional Knowledge, such as on the land learning, and access to special education programs and services.

- 2.1.3. Data analysis is a critical component for planning and improving learning outcomes. The government of Canada must support First Nations in developing and implementing system infrastructures and processes for data management analysis and research based on OCAP principles.



- 2.1.4. Federal, provincial, territorial and First Nations governments must work together to strengthen the capacity and number of Regional Education/Management Organizations (REO/RMO) and recognize their authority and expertise in delivering second and third level services to First Nations.





## FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

2.1.5. Federal, provincial, territorial and First Nations governments will engage in continuous improvement planning, implementation and follow-up in all matters pertaining to lifelong learning, including funding, resourcing and systems development.

### 2.2 *PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE*

2.2.1. The government of Canada must acknowledge that there is a crisis with regards to the construction of schools and other learning facilities in First Nations communities. The government of Canada must work immediately with First Nations to assess the resource needs of communities and to develop and implement a comprehensive infrastructure strategy that ensures safe and healthy learning environments. This infrastructure strategy must include, but not be limited to:

- i. Establishing and maintaining the school and transportation infrastructure required at the community and regional levels for increased accessibility, retention and graduation rates.
- ii. Access to quality learning environments, specialized equipment and transportation for students with physical, learning and behavioural challenges.
- iii. Plans for renovating existing school facilities and building new facilities to ensure safe and healthy learning environments that are well-equipped, well-maintained, environmentally and culturally appropriate, and reflect Indigenous knowledge in the physical structure of the building (e.g. including space in schools for parents, Elders, the physically challenged, community engagements, and early childhood learning).
- iv. Adequate funding for all minor and major capital/infrastructure requirements including start-up and operational costs for schools, libraries, science labs, language labs, computer labs, smart classrooms, e-learning facilities, accessibility, vocational/advanced skills programming, existing and evolving technologies, community space, and other requirements as needed on an ongoing basis.
- v. Comprehensive learning facility assessment protocols and systems that include environmental, operational and maintenance frameworks, and are updated on an annual basis according to new population information and other needs that might arise. These standards must be maintained through a maintenance program framework that is conducive to pro-active improvements through on-going investments.

### 2.3 FUNDING

- 2.3.1. The government of Canada must support First Nations comprehensive learning systems through sustainable funding that allows for effective decision-making, capacity development, and community-based program design and delivery. There must be funding for second and third level support structures as determined by First Nations at the community, regional and national levels. The level of financial resources that is required shall be informed by First Nations research.
- 2.3.2. The government of Canada shall work in cooperation with First Nations to jointly develop and implement an effective funding approach for comprehensive lifelong learning systems. This funding approach shall include, but not be limited to, costs associated with the following:
- i. Assessment, review, and remediation of learner achievement levels,
  - ii. High quality staffing, including cost of living increases and indexing to off-set inflation, inequities, and changing requirements for the salaries and compensation benefits of teachers and staff in First Nations learning institutions,
  - iii. Sustainable funding for both regular and specialized services to meet the special needs of learners, including assessment and programming supports,
  - iv. Adequate funding for learners who must attend provincial, territorial and other institutions, including those who may be incarcerated or in the care of the child welfare system,
  - v. First Nations developed and approved First Nations language instruction and curricula,
  - vi. First Nations developed and approved culturally-relevant curricula, teaching methodologies, standards and evaluation in all subject areas.

### 2.4 ACCOUNTABILITY AND EVALUATION

- 2.4.1. The government of Canada shall work in cooperation with First Nations to develop appropriate and relevant accountability and evaluation mechanisms and reporting protocols so that First Nations are informed on an on-going basis of improvements in the educational outcomes of First Nation learners.
- 2.4.2. Provincial and territorial governments must work in cooperation with First Nations governments to develop and implement appropriate accountability and evaluation mechanisms and regularly report to First Nations on the improvement of educational outcomes for First Nations learners enrolled in provincial, territorial learning and other institutions.

# FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

## 3. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Federal, provincial, territorial and First Nations governments must begin immediate consultations to develop concrete action plans to fulfill their responsibility to fully and effectively implement all aspects of the First Nations Control of First Nations Education policy.

### 3.1 RESEARCH CAPACITY

- 3.1.1. Federal, provincial, territorial governments and education institutions must develop programs and policies to support and develop the research capacity of First Nations peoples, and their institutions, in a manner that respects the principles of ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP).

*“There is increasing need for factual and scientific information on which to base planning and decisions. The Indian people advocate that research be under the direction and control of Indian people....Academics who are engaged to conduct research projects will be responsible to the Indian community, local or regional. It is equally important that the Indian people have the direction and control of experimental programs conducted in their name by universities, academic centres or research bodies.”*

- “RESEARCH,” INDIAN CONTROL OF INDIAN EDUCATION, 1972

### 3.2 INDIGENOUS INSTITUTES OF HIGHER LEARNING

- 3.2.1. Federal, provincial and territorial governments shall cooperate to ensure Indigenous Institutes of Higher Learning have secure and adequate funding, safe and healthy physical infrastructures and the necessary recognition of their authority to grant transferable credentials.

### 3.3 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITY

- 3.3.1. Canada must respect and uphold First Nations Inherent and Treaty Rights to education. These rights are recognized and affirmed in Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. Full articulation of these Rights requires that Canada work in partnership with First Nations to establish the necessary implementation mechanisms required for First Nations to exercise their full jurisdiction over all aspects of lifelong learning.
- 3.3.2. The Government of Canada will work with First Nations as full partners in all aspects of government decision-making that impact upon First Nations lifelong learning. First Nations will exercise their rights, recognized in Treaties, the Constitution of Canada and in international law, to make any and all final decisions in regards to First Nations lifelong learning.
- 3.3.3. Federal, provincial and territorial governments will support the development and implementation of agreements and partnerships that recognize, acknowledge, respect, and support First Nations Rights and jurisdiction regarding First Nations lifelong learning.



## OUTCOMES OF FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

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Through the full and effective implementation of the First Nations Control of First Nations Education policy the following outcomes will be achieved:

### INCREASED ACCESS TO LIFELONG LEARNING

1. First Nations lifelong learners will have access to an education system with policies, programs and services grounded in First Nations languages, values, traditions and knowledge. This will include, but not be limited to:
  - a. Fewer endangered First Nations languages,
  - b. Increased use of First Nations languages in school, work, play and social settings,
  - c. Strengthened pride in Indigenous nationhood,
  - d. Accessible, culturally and regionally relevant and adequately resourced early learning programs,
  - e. Enhanced recognition and knowledge of First Nations contributions, histories and cultures among all Canadian people,
  - f. Increased First Nations participation in the broader Canadian economy through entrepreneurship and a skilled and professional labour force,
  - g. Strengthened and sustainable First Nations professional human resource capacity,
  - h. Continuous evaluation, implementation and celebration of First Nation educational accomplishments,
  - i. Fully implemented First Nations education systems including performance measurement systems,
  - j. Provincial and territorial educational institutions shall have implemented policies and procedures to ensure First Nations educators and parents can fully and effectively participate in all aspects of the education system including, but not limited to, education supervisors, directors, administrators, teachers, counselors and as members of school boards/divisions and parent advisory councils,
  - k. First Nations citizens shall be knowledgeable about all education programs, services and training opportunities available to First Nations peoples,





## FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

- l. Increased First Nations enrollment, retention and graduation rates at all stages of lifelong learning,
- m. Increased success rates of First Nations students through enhanced access to holistic lifelong learning opportunities for on and off-reserve, rural, remote, isolated and Northern communities,
- n. Increased numbers of First Nations post-secondary graduates leading to increased numbers of educated First Nations citizens as fundamental contributors to community and nationhood development, and
- o. Access to high quality and culturally relevant programs and services, regardless of residency, at all stages of lifelong learning for all First Nations learners.

### **STRENGTHENED COMMUNITY AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY**

2. First Nations community and institutional capacity to deliver a wide spectrum of quality programs and services across the learning continuum will be enhanced and sustained. Outcomes of improved First Nations capacity will include, but not be limited to:
  - a. Increased satisfaction of First Nations learners, parents and communities in education programs, services and governance structures as provided by federal, provincial, territorial and First Nations governments,
  - b. Comprehensive data management and technological systems guided by OCAP principles,
  - c. Secure and sustainable resources and infrastructure to maintain healthy educational environments for staff and students,
  - d. Increased capacity and numbers of First Nations Regional Education/Management Organizations,
  - e. All First Nations learners will benefit from the shared expertise of collaborative and equal partnerships,
  - f. Sustainable funding will be provided in an accessible manner to support the implementation and operation of First Nations comprehensive learning systems that meet the ongoing needs of all First Nations learners, including those with physical, learning and behavioural challenges and other special needs.
  - g. Full implementation of appropriate accountability and evaluation mechanisms by federal, provincial, territorial and First Nations governments, which include reciprocal accountability and regular reports to First Nations learners, parents and communities on improvements to the educational outcomes of all First Nations learners, including those with special needs, and those who are incarcerated or within the child welfare system.

## POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

3. First Nations control of First Nations education will be fully implemented and respected. This will include, but not be limited to:
  - a. The establishment of First Nations directed education research institutes guided by OCAP principles,
  - b. Increased numbers of Indigenous Institutes of Higher Learning with secure funding and the recognized authority to grant transferable credentials,
  - c. Continuous improvement planning with adequate and sustainable implementation funding and follow-up action,
  - d. Full implementation of First Nations Control of First Nations Education consistent with the Inherent and Treaty rights of First Nations to education,
  - e. The restoration of First Nations governance, cultural, linguistic, economic and social traditions, and
  - f. Improved socio-economic wellbeing of First Nations peoples and communities.

## NEXT STEPS

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All governments in Canada must fulfill their Constitutional, Treaty and international obligations to First Nations peoples by supporting the design and implementation of First Nations comprehensive learning systems with adequate and sustainable resourcing.

It is imperative that the Government of Canada move ahead with the commitment made by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, on behalf of the federal government, in the *Statement of Apology to Former Students of Indian Residential Schools* to

*“forg[e] a new relationship... based on the knowledge of our shared history, a respect for each other and a desire to move forward together with a renewed understanding that strong families, strong communities and vibrant cultures and traditions will contribute to a stronger Canada for all of us.”<sup>16</sup>*

In the spirit of reconciliation, and to ensure the needs and requirements of First Nations learners are met by federal, provincial, territorial and First Nations governments, it is essential that:

- i. Federal and provincial governments amend current laws affecting education and training that are inconsistent with the exercise of the Inherent and Treaty rights recognized and affirmed by the *Constitution Act, 1982* and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

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<sup>16</sup> *Supra* at 3.





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- ii. The Government of Canada, in partnership with First Nations, take immediate steps to engage in the development of federal legislation that guarantees high quality, culturally relevant First Nations education programs and services, and full support for the comprehensive implementation of First Nations control of First Nations education at all levels of learning, including early learning initiatives, elementary and secondary school, adult and post-secondary education, and Language Nests.
- iii. The Government of Canada upholds the Honour of the Crown and fulfills its fiduciary obligations with respect to First Nations education in a manner fully consistent with and in affirmation of First Nations' Inherent and Treaty rights.
- iv. Statutory funding arrangements be developed, in collaboration with First Nations, based on real costs, indexation, and appropriate treatment for Northern and remote communities.
- v. Federal, provincial and territorial governments, in the Spirit of Reconciliation, immediately act upon the commitments made to First Nations in the *Statement of Apology to Former Students of Indian Residential Schools*.
- vi. Professional and accountable institutional supports be developed to ensure the delivery of second and third level supports including First Nation curriculum and immersion in First Nation languages.
- vii. Linkages with the public and private sector be developed to foster collaborative investments in First Nations lifelong learning to enhance access to safe and healthy learning environments in our communities.
- viii. Provincial and territorial governments must support the implementation of First Nations Control of First Nations Education, and in partnership with First Nations, incorporate First Nations Control of First Nations Education into their legislation, strategies, policies and practices.

## CONCLUSION

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The *Indian Control of Indian Education 1972* policy framework emerged from a time when First Nations education was in crisis and real change was necessary. The result was a number of successes by First Nations in First Nations education, despite the lack of full implementation of the *ICIE 1972* policy by governments in Canada. The *First Nations Control of First Nations Education 2010* policy framework is emerging in a time of a new crisis. It is a call to action.

*First Nations Control of First Nations Education 2010* is a reflection of a First Nations vision for real, meaningful and lasting change. Once again, First Nations are initiating constructive, pragmatic and innovative proposals for advancement. In the spirit of reconciliation, it is now time for federal, provincial and territorial governments to equal the commitment and leadership of First Nations.

*“The story of the Indian in America is something more than the record of the white man's frequent aggression, broken agreements, intermittent remorse and prolonged failure. It is a record also of endurance, of survival, of adaptation and creativity in the face of overwhelming obstacles. It is a record of enormous contributions to this country--to its art and culture, to its strength and spirit, to its sense of history and its sense of purpose.*

*It is long past time that the Indian policies of the Federal government began to recognize and build upon the capacities and insights of the Indian people. Both as a matter of justice and as a matter of enlightened social policy, we must begin to act on the basis of what the Indians themselves have long been telling us. The time has come to break decisively with the past and to create the conditions for a new era in which the Indian future is determined by Indian acts and Indian decisions.”*

- President Richard Nixon (8 July 1970), “Special message on Indian affairs delivered to Congress” cited in Jon Reyhner, “Introduction”, [American Indian/Alaska Native Education: An Overview](#)



# FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

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**APPENDICES**

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**APPENDIX I: INDIAN CONTROL OF INDIAN EDUCATION: POLICY PAPER 1972**

**INDIAN CONTROL  
OF  
INDIAN EDUCATION**

**Policy Paper**

**PRESENTED TO THE  
Minister of Indian Affairs  
and Northern Development**

**BY THE  
National Indian Brotherhood/  
Assembly of First Nations**



# FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

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Assembly of First Nations

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**613-241-6789 (Telephone)  
website: [www.afn.ca](http://www.afn.ca)**

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## PREFACE

This statement on Education has been prepared for the Working Committee of the Negotiating Committee of the National Indian Brotherhood to be used as a basis for future common action in the area of education.

The issues which have been considered were designated by the Special Committee of the Executive Council of the National Indian Brotherhood, at Yellowknife, N.W.T., May 17, 1972. This statement has been compiled from provincial and territorial associations' papers or statements on education, and from discussions of representatives of the associations at the Education Workshop, June, 1972.

It is a statement of the:

philosophy,  
goals,  
principles, and  
directions

which must form the foundation of any school program for Indian children.

In August, 1972, the General Assembly of the National Indian Brotherhood accepted the policy in principle, subject to certain additions. The final draft was approved by the Executive Council, November, 1972. It was presented to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development on December 21, 1972. In a letter to the President of the National Indian Brotherhood, dated February 2, 1973, the Minister gave official recognition to INDIAN CONTROL OF INDIAN EDUCATION, approving its proposals and committing the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to implementing them.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper is based on the many statements prepared on behalf of, the Chiefs and Band Councils by the Education Directors of the provincial and territorial Indian organizations over the past years. Acknowledgement is made of the important contribution which the Education Directors have made to this joint policy statement.

Thanks are also due to the National Indian Brotherhood's Education Committee which worked to find the common denominators in all of the provincial statements. Members of this Committee are:

John Knockwood and Peter Christmas  
UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA INDIANS

Barry Nicholas  
UNION OF NEW BRUNSWICK INDIANS

Larry Bisonette, representing  
INDIANS OF QUEBEC ASSOCIATION

Louis Debassige and Roland Chrisjohn  
UNION OF ONTARIO INDIANS

Verna Kirkness  
MANITOBA INDIAN BROTHERHOOD

Rodney Soonias

FEDERATION OF SASKATCHEWAN INDIANS

Clive Linklater  
INDIAN ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA

Teddy Joe and William Mussell  
UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS

David Joe  
YUKON NATIVE BROTHERHOOD  
James Wah-shee  
INDIAN BROTHERHOOD OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES

Dr. Jacqueline Weitz  
NATIONAL INDIAN BROTHERHOOD

A special word of thanks is offered to them for their persistence and patience in correcting the several draft copies which preceded this final approved paper. On behalf of all, I wish to extend particular thanks to Dr. Weitz for her excellent co-ordination of the work, meetings and editing of this history-making document.

And finally, the initiative of the Executive Council in launching this endeavor deserves public recognition.

George Manuel,  
President  
National Indian Brotherhood.

Ottawa, Ontario  
December, 1972



# FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

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# FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

## STATEMENT OF THE INDIAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

In Indian tradition each adult is personally responsible for each child, to see that he learns all he needs to know in order to live a good life. As our fathers had a clear idea of what made a good man and a good life in their society, so we modern Indians, want our children to learn that happiness and satisfaction come from:

- pride in one's self,
- understanding one's fellowmen, and,
- living in harmony with nature.

These are lessons which are necessary for survival in this twentieth century.

- Pride encourages us to recognize and use our talents, as well as to master the skills needed to make a living.
- Understanding our fellowmen will enable us to meet other Canadians on an equal footing, respecting cultural differences while pooling resources for the common good.
- Living in harmony with nature will insure preservation of the balance between man and his environment which is necessary for the future of our planet, as well as for fostering the climate in which Indian Wisdom has always flourished.

We want education to give our children the knowledge to understand and be proud of themselves and the knowledge to understand the world around them.

### **STATEMENT OF VALUES**

We want education to provide the setting in which our children can develop the fundamental attitudes and values which have an honored place in Indian tradition and culture. The values which we want to pass on to our children, values which make our people a great race, are not written in any book. They are found in our history, in our legends and in the culture. We believe that if an Indian child is fully aware of the important Indian values he will have reason to be proud of our race and of himself as an Indian.

We want the behavior of our children to be shaped by those values which are most esteemed in our culture. When our children come to school they have already developed certain attitudes and habits which are based on experiences in the family. School programs which are influenced by these values respect cultural priority and are an extension of the education which parents give children from their first years. These early lessons emphasize attitudes of:

- self-reliance,
- respect for personal freedom,
- generosity,
- respect for nature,
- wisdom.

All of these have a special place in the Indian way of life. While these values can be understood and interpreted in different ways by different cultures, it is very important that Indian children have a chance to develop a value system which is compatible with Indian culture.

The gap between our people and those who have chosen, often gladly, to join us as residents of this beautiful and bountiful country, is vast when it comes to mutual understanding and appreciation of differences. To overcome this, it is essential that Canadian children of every racial origin have the opportunity during their school days to learn about the history, customs and culture of this country's original inhabitants and first citizens. We propose that education authorities, especially those in Ministries of Education, should provide for this in the curricula and texts which are chosen for use in Canadian schools.



# FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

## **THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN SETTING GOALS**

If we are to avoid the conflict of values which in the past has led to withdrawal and failure, Indian parents must have control of education with the responsibility of setting goals. What we want for our children can be summarized very briefly:

- to reinforce their Indian identity,
- to provide the training necessary for making a good living in modern society.

We are the best judges of the kind of school programs which can contribute to these goals without causing damage to the child.

We must, therefore, reclaim our right to direct the education of our children. Based on two education principles recognized in Canadian society: *Parental Responsibility* and *Local Control of Education*, Indian parents seek participation and partnership with the Federal Government, whose legal responsibility for Indian education is set by the treaties and the Indian Act. While we assert that only Indian people can develop a suitable philosophy of education based on Indian values adapted to modern living, we also strongly maintain that it is the financial responsibility of the Federal Government to provide education of all types and all levels to all status Indian people, whether living on or off reserves. It will be essential to the realization of this objective that representatives of the Indian people, in close cooperation with officials of the Department of Indian Affairs, establish the needs and priorities of local communities in relation to the funds which may be available through government sources.

The time has come for a radical change in Indian education. Our aim is to make education relevant to the philosophy and needs of the Indian people. We want education to give our children a strong sense of identity, with confidence in their personal worth and ability. We believe in education:

- as a preparation for total living,
- as a means of free choice of where to live and work,
- as a means of enabling us to participate fully in our own social, economic, political and educational advancement.

We do not regard the educational process as an "either-or" operation. We must have the freedom to choose among many options and alternatives. Decisions on specific issues can be made only in the context of local control of education. We uphold the right of the Indian Bands to make these specific decisions and to exercise their full responsibility in providing the best possible education for our children.

Our concern for education is directed to four areas which require attention and improvement: i.e., responsibility, programs, teachers and facilities. The following pages will offer in an objective way, the general principles and guidelines which can be applied to specific problems in these areas.

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

### **JURISDICTIONAL QUESTION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR INDIAN EDUCATION**

The Federal Government has legal responsibility for Indian education as defined by the treaties and the Indian Act. Any transfer of jurisdiction for Indian education can only be from the Federal Government to Indian Bands. Whatever responsibility belongs to the Provinces or Territories is derived from the contracts for educational services negotiated between Band Councils, provincial or territorial school jurisdictions, and the Federal Government.

Parties in future joint agreements will be:

- (1) Indian Bands,
- (2) Provincial/territorial school jurisdictions,
- (3) the Federal Government.



These contracts must recognize the right of Indians to a free education, funded by the Government of Canada.

The Indian people concerned, together with officials of the Department of Indian Affairs, must review all existing agreements for the purpose of making specific recommendations for their revision, termination or continuance.

In addition to the usual school services provided under joint agreements, attention must be given to local needs for teacher orientation, day nurseries, remedial courses, tutoring, Indian guidance counsellors, etc.

Where Bands want to form a school district under the Federal system, necessary provision should be made in order that it has the recognition of provincial/territorial education authorities.

Master agreements between federal and provincial/territorial governments violate the principle of Local Control and Parental Responsibility if these agreements are made without consulting and involving the Indian parents whose children are affected. Since these children are often from many widely separated bands, it may be necessary to provide for Indian participation through the provincial/territorial Indian associations. In every case, however, parental responsibility must be respected and the local Band will maintain the right to review and approve the conditions of the agreement.

### **LOCAL CONTROL**

The past practice of using the school committee as an advisory body with limited influence, in restricted areas of the school program, must give way to an education authority with the control of funds and consequent authority which are necessary for an effective decision-making body. The Federal Government must take the required steps to transfer to local Bands the authority and the funds which are allotted for Indian education.

The Band itself will determine the relationship which should exist between the Band Council and the School Committee: or more properly, the Band Education Authority. The respective roles of the Band Council and the Education Authority will have to be clearly defined by the Band, with terms of reference to ensure the closest co-operation so that local control will become a reality.

The local Education Authority would be responsible for:

- budgeting, spending and establishing priorities
- determining the types of school facilities required to meet local needs: e.g. day school, residence, group home, nursery, kindergarten, high school;
- directing staff hiring and curriculum development with special concern for Indian languages and culture;
- administering the physical plant;
- developing adult education and upgrading courses;
- negotiating agreements with provincial/territorial or separate school jurisdictions for the kind of services necessary for local requirements;
- co-operation and evaluation of education programs both on and off the reserve;
- providing counselling services.

Training must be made available to those reserves desiring local control of education. This training must include every aspect of educational administration. It is important that Bands moving towards local control have the opportunity to prepare themselves for the move. Once the parents have control of a local school, continuing guidance during the operational phase is equally important and necessary.



# FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

## **REPRESENTATION ON PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL SCHOOL BOARDS**

There must be adequate Indian representation on school boards which have Indian pupils attending schools in their district or division. If integration for Indians is to have any positive meaning, it must be related to the opportunity for parental participation in the educational decision-making process.

Recalling that over 60% of Indian children are enrolled in provincial/ territorial schools, there is urgent need to provide for proper representation on all school boards. Since this issue must be resolved by legislation, all Provinces/Territories should pass effective laws which will insure Indian representation on all school boards in proportion to the number of children attending provincial/territorial schools, with provision for at least one Indian representative in places where the enrollment is minimal. Laws already on the books are not always effective and should be reexamined. Neither is permissive legislation enough, nor legislation which has conditions attached.

A Band Education Authority which is recognized as the responsible bargaining agent with financial control of education funds, will be in a strong position to negotiate for proper representation on a school board which is providing educational services to the Indian community.

There is an urgent need for laws which will make possible RESPONSIBLE REPRESENTATION AND FULL PARTICIPATION by all parents of children attending provincial/territorial schools.

Indian organizations and the Federal Government should do whatever is necessary to conduct an effective public relations program for the purpose of explaining their role and that of the local Band Education Authorities to Ministers of Education, to Department of Education officials and to school board members.

## **PROGRAMS**

### **CURRICULUM AND INDIAN VALUES**

Unless a child learns about the forces which shape him: the history of his people, their values and customs, their language, he will never really know himself or his potential as a human being. Indian culture and values have a unique place in the history of mankind. The Indian child who learns about his heritage will be proud of it. The lessons he learns in school, his whole school experience, should reinforce and contribute to the image he has of himself as an Indian.

The present school system is culturally alien to native students. Where the Indian contribution is not entirely ignored, it is often cast in an unfavorable light. School curricula in federal and provincial/territorial schools should recognize Indian culture, values, customs, languages and the Indian contribution to Canadian development. Courses in Indian history and culture should promote pride in the Indian child, and respect in the non-Indian student.

A curriculum is not an archaic, inert vehicle for transmitting knowledge. It is a precise instrument which can and should be shaped to exact specifications for a particular purpose. It can be changed and it can be improved. Using curriculum as a means to achieve their educational goals, Indian parents want to develop a program which will maintain balance and relevancy between academic/skill subjects and Indian cultural subjects.

To develop an Indian oriented curriculum for schools which enroll native children, there must be full scale co-operation between federal, provincial/territorial and Indian education people:

- (1) In the federal Indian school system, funds must be made available for Indian people to work with professional curriculum planners. Together they will work out and test ideas for a relevant curriculum, utilizing the best from both cultures.
- (2) In the provincial/territorial school system, this same kind of curriculum development must be pursued by the Department of Education with the involvement of the Indian people and the support of federal and provincial/territorial funding.

Some other measures for improving the quality of instruction for all students, both Indian and non-Indian, are recommended to provincial/ territorial and private school systems:

- (a) appointment of native people to the curriculum staff for the purpose of supervising the production and distribution of Indian oriented curriculum materials for provincial/territorial schools, complete with the manpower and other resources to accomplish this task;
- (b) removal of textbooks or other teaching materials which are negative, biased or inaccurate in what concerns Indian history and culture;
- (c) augmenting Indian content in curriculum to include Indian contributions to Canadian life through supplementary courses in: economics, science, medicine, agriculture, geography, etc., as well as special courses in Indian culture, music, art, dance, handicraft, language;
- (d) co-operating with Indian people in developing Indian studies programs at all levels;
- (e) eliminating the use of I.Q. and standardized tests for Indian children. It has been shown that these tests do not truly reflect the intelligence of children belonging to minority, ethnic or other cultural backgrounds.

Textbooks are needed which emphasize the importance of the Indian's role in Canadian history. Material for reading classes must be developed: material which is relevant to the experience of the Indian child living in isolated or northern areas. Federal and provincial/ territorial governments must be ready to respond to the native people and support their legitimate wishes for improved texts. Indian people should be commissioned to work with historians and educators for the development of proper textbook material.

All Indian people, young and old alike, must be given a wide variety of educational opportunities. Specific problems in many Indian communities must be met by improved education. Much needed programs include: nursery and kindergarten education, junior and senior high school opportunity, vocational training, adult education, post-secondary education, and alcohol and drug abuse education.

### Nursery Schools and Kindergartens

Financial support for nursery schools and kindergartens should be the special concern of governments. These programs should be designated as priority programs in every respect.

Many communities will view this pre-school experience as an opportunity for the children to learn the second language in which school subjects will be taught. Other communities will emphasize cultural content, for the purpose of reinforcing the child's image of himself as an Indian. This is the decision of the local parents and they alone are responsible for decisions on location, operation, curriculum and teacher hiring.

### Junior and Senior High Schools

In places where junior and senior high school classes once operated, the children have been transferred to provincial/territorial schools. Alarmed by the increasing number of teenagers who are dropping out of school, Indian parents are looking for alternatives to the high school education which their children are now receiving in provincial/territorial schools. If Indian parents had control of high school education, they could combat conditions which cause failures by:

- adopting clearly defined educational objectives compatible with Indian values;
- providing a relevant educational program;
- making education a total experience: recognizing Indian language, life and customs, inviting the participation of Indian parents in shaping the program;
- providing more counselling by Indians for Indians.





# FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

The needs of children and the desire of parents would indicate that in some areas high schools and/or vocational schools should be established on certain reserves to serve students of surrounding communities. These schools would be operated and maintained by a representative Education Authority.

Serious planning must be directed to developing flexible, realistic and relevant high school programs to meet the specific needs of Indian students who have dropped out and desire to resume their high school studies.

## Vocational Training

A new approach to qualifications for many jobs is needed, as well as a change in academic/vocational courses to meet new requirements. In many cases where these jobs are within the Indian community, job specifications should be set by the Indian people, and the training itself should be supervised by the local Education Authority, which is established and/or recognized by the Band or Bands involved.

Some of these positions might include teachers, counselors, social workers, probation officers, parole officers, community development workers. On a wider scale, responsible efforts must be made to encourage business and industry to open up jobs for Indian people. Job training should correspond to job opportunity and the economic reality.

The local Band Education Authority should be in a position to deal directly with Canada Manpower and other training institutions. When necessary, several Education Authorities might join together to plan programs for a particular region.

## Adult Education

Adult education programs, properly conducted can be a means for many Indians to find economic security and self-fulfillment.

If the native language is spoken in the community, then native instructors should be trained and employed to teach these adult courses. Grade advancement classes should be offered on and off the reserves, as well as basic literacy courses for those desiring to speak, read and write English. Basic oral English programs are also needed. Other adult programs which should be provided as the need demands, might include: business management, consumer-education, leadership training, administration, human relations, family education, health, budgeting, cooking, sewing, crafts, Indian art and culture, etc.

These programs should be carried out under the control and direction of the Band Education Authority, on a short term or continuing basis, according to the local needs.

## Post-Secondary Education

Considering the great need there is for professional people in Indian communities, every effort should be made to encourage and assist Indian students to succeed in post-secondary studies.

Encouragement should take the form of recruiting programs directed to providing information to students desiring to enter professions such as: nursing, teaching, counseling, law, medicine, engineering, etc. Entrance requirements, pre-university programs, counselling and tutoring services, course requirements, are some factors which influence how far a student can progress. He would be further encouraged if the Indian language is recognized for the second language requirement and a native studies program has a respected place in the curriculum.

Considering the tremendous educational disadvantages of Indian people, present rigid entrance requirements to universities, colleges, etc., must be adjusted to allow for entrance on the basis of ability, aptitude, intelligence, diligence and maturity.

Assistance should take the form of generous federal financial support eliminating the difficulty and uncertainty which now accompanies a student's decision to continue on for higher education. Indian students should be able to attend any recognized educational institution of their choice. Those who have the motivation and talent to do post-graduate studies, should receive total financial assistance. Since it will be many years before the number of candidates for professional training exceeds the demand for trained professionals, each request for financial assistance to do post-secondary or post-graduate studies should be judged on its own merits, and not by general administrative directives. Indian people should seek representation on the governing bodies of institutions of higher learning. This includes university senates and boards of governors, as well as the governing councils of colleges, community colleges and technical schools.

### Alcohol and Drug Education

There is immediate need for educational programs of a preventative and rehabilitative nature, designed and operated by Indians to meet the threat of alcohol and drug addiction which plagues both young and old alike. Whatever funds and means are necessary to operate these programs should be made available at the earliest possible date.

Some recommendations proposed by Indian provincial/territorial organizations for implementing these programs are:

- a. Training native people as social animators to initiate programs of group dynamics at the community level. In this way there would be community participation in decision-making which affects the community. Through the acquisition of knowledge about problems and services, combined with reality-oriented group discussions leading to community action, the solution of the socio-medical ills can be placed in the context of the community.
- b. Governments, federal and provincial/territorial, should encourage special seminars and study groups for teachers, parents and students, as well as make available the best audio-visual aids, in order to bring those concerned up to date on all that can be done to combat addiction.
- c. These programs should be directed not only to the victims of addiction but also to the communities, professions and institutions that necessarily become involved in the circle of human relationships which are affected by addiction.

### LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

Language is the outward expression of an accumulation of learning and experience shared by a group of people over centuries of development. It is not simply a vocal symbol; it is a dynamic force which shapes the way a man looks at the world, his thinking about the world and his philosophy of life. Knowing his maternal language helps a man to know himself; being proud of his language helps a man to be proud of himself.

The Indian people are expressing growing concern that the native languages are being lost; that the younger generations can no longer speak or understand their mother tongue. If the Indian identity is to be preserved, steps must be taken to reverse this trend.

While much can be done by parents in the home and by the community on the reserve to foster facility in speaking and understanding, there is a great need for formal instruction in the language. There are two aspects to this language instruction:

- (1) teaching in the native language, and
- (2) teaching the native language.

It is generally accepted that pre-school and primary school classes should be taught in the language of the community. Transition to English or French as a second language should be introduced only after the child has a strong grasp of his own language. The time schedule for this language program has been determined to be from four to five years duration. Following this time span, adjustment and adaptation to other languages and unfamiliar cultural milieu are greatly enhanced.



## FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

The need for teachers who are fluent in the local language is dramatically underlined by this concern for the preservation of Indian identity through language instruction. Realization of this goal can be achieved in several ways:

- have teacher-aides specialize in Indian languages,
- have local language-resource aides to assist professional
- teachers,
- waive rigid teaching requirements to enable Indian people who are fluent in Indian languages, to become full-fledged teachers.

Funds and personnel are needed to develop language programs which will identify the structures of the language: i.e., syntax, grammar, morphology, vocabulary. This is essential, not only to preserve the language, but to encourage its use in literary expression.

Serious studies are needed to adapt traditional oral languages to written forms for instructional and literary purposes.

In places where it is not feasible to have full instruction in the native language, school authorities should provide that Indian children and others wishing it, will have formal instruction in the local native language as part of the curriculum and with full academic credit.

While governments are reluctant to invest in any but the two official languages, funds given for studies in native languages and for the development of teaching tools and instructional materials will have both short and long term benefits.

### **CULTURAL EDUCATION CENTRES**

The purpose of a Cultural Education Center is to provide for the personal development necessary for social and economic achievement in today's society. This personal development is achieved when an individual knows himself fully: his personal identity, dignity and potential. The Cultural Education Center will promote this through studies of Indian history, culture, language and values.

By learning ways to apply traditional beliefs, values and skills to survival in modern society, and by learning modern skills and behaviors needed to participate in the benefits of economic and social development, the Indian will gain self-confidence and independence. The Cultural Education Center will be designed to meet these needs and to make up for deficiencies in other educational programs.

Considering the vital role that these Centers could play in cultural, social and economic development, it is imperative that all decisions concerning their evolution (goals, structure, location, operation, etc.) be the sole prerogative of the Indian people.

Funds for these Centers should be available with a minimum of regulations. These latter should be the result of discussion and agreement between the Government and the Indian people.

The Indian people will welcome the participation of other Departments of Government, of provincial/territorial or local governments, of business or industry, of churches or foundations in securing sufficient and continuing funds for the Cultural Education Centers.

These Centers must be Indian controlled and operated, in view of the fact that they are established for Indian purposes and use.



## TEACHERS

### TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR TEACHERS AND COUNSELLORS

If progress is going to be made in improving educational opportunity for native children, it is basic that teacher and counsellor training programs be redesigned to meet the needs. The need for native teachers and counsellors is critical and urgent; the need for specially trained non-Indian teachers and counsellors is also very great.

#### Native Teachers and Counsellors

It is evident that the Federal Government must take the initiative in providing opportunities for Indian people to train as teachers and counsellors. Efforts in this direction require experimental approaches and flexible structures to accommodate the native person who has talent and interest, but lacks minimum academic qualifications. Provincial/territorial involvement is also needed in this venture to introduce special teacher and counsellor training programs which will allow native people to advance their academic standing at the same time as they are receiving professional training. Because of the importance to the Indian community, these training programs must be developed in collaboration with the Indian people and their representatives in the national and provincial/territorial organizations. The organizations have a major role to play in evolving and implementing the training programs and in encouraging native young people to enter the education field.

Native teachers and counsellors who have an intimate understanding of Indian traditions, psychology, way of life and language, are best able to create the learning environment suited to the habits and interests of the Indian child.

There is urgent need for more Indian counsellors to work with students both on and off the reserves. If the need is to be met, many more training centers must be opened immediately. The few which are now operating can never supply enough trained counsellors for the job that has to be done.

#### Non-Indian Teachers and Counsellors

The training of non-Indian teachers for teaching native children, either in federal or provincial/territorial schools, is a matter of grave concern to the Indian people. The role which teachers play in determining the success or failure of many young Indians is a force to be reckoned with. In most cases, the teacher is simply not prepared to understand or cope with cultural differences. Both the child and the teacher are forced into intolerable positions.

The training of non-Indian counsellors who work with Indian children in either the federal or provincial/territorial systems, is also of grave concern to Indian parents. Counsellors must have a thorough understanding of the values and cultural relevancies which shape the young Indian's self-identity. In order to cope with another cultural group the self-image of the child must be enhanced and not allowed to disintegrate. It is generally agreed that present counseling services are not only ineffective for students living away from home, but often are a contributing factor to their failure in school. It is the opinion of parents that counselling services should be the responsibility of the Band Education Authority.

Federal and provincial/territorial authorities are urged to use the strongest measures necessary to improve the qualifications of teachers and counsellors of Indian children. During initial training programs there should be compulsory courses in inter-cultural education, native languages (oral facility and comparative analysis), and teaching English as a second language. Orientation courses and in-service training are needed in all regions. Assistance should be available for teachers in adapting curriculum and teaching techniques to the needs of local children. Teachers and counsellors should be given the opportunity to improve themselves through specialized summer courses in acculturation problems, anthropology, Indian history, language and culture.

Primary teachers in federal or provincial/territorial schools should have some knowledge of the maternal language of the children they teach.



# FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

Until such time as Bands assume total responsibility for schools, there must be full consultation with the Band Education Authority regarding the appointment of teachers and counselors. As part of its involvement, the community should also take the initiative in helping the teachers and counselors to learn the culture, language and history of the local community.

## **INDIAN PARA-PROFESSIONALS**

More Indian teacher-aides and more Indian aides-aides are urgently needed throughout the school systems where Indian children are taught. These para-professionals can play an important role in helping the young child or the adolescent to adjust to unfamiliar and often overwhelming situations during their school experience.

Job requirements and the personal qualities needed by paraprofessionals working with Indian children will be set by the Education Authority of the Band. Instead of operating on the fringe at some clerical or irrelevant task, Indian para-professionals will be delegated by the parents to work with the children at the level of greatest need. The importance of this work warrants that the paraprofessional receive proper training and be given responsibilities in line with the position. These positions should serve as a training ground for professional advancement.

Performance and effectiveness rather than degrees and certificates should be the criteria used in hiring and in establishing salaries and benefits. For the protection of those who are qualified by experience rather than by academic standing, it is essential that the status of para-professionals be determined by their responsibility and function. On this basis they will be assured of parity in salaries and benefits with professionals doing the same job.

It should be the aim of the para-professional program to encourage young people to continue their commitment to Indian education.

To operate a good school, many types of jobs must be filled. There should be adequate funding to insure that Indian schools are adequately staffed, not only with professionals, but with well-trained para-professionals, including recreation assistants and specialist aides.

## **FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

### **SUB-STANDARD EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES**

All unsafe or obsolete school buildings, equipment and teacherages on reserves should be replaced with modern, functional units. Where Indian communities wish to maintain educational services on their reserves, the reserve school facilities must be brought up to the same standards as those in the outside communities. To provide for all the improvements necessary, Band Councils must make long-term plans for building construction. If the Department of Indian Affairs cannot handle the financing under its usual annual budgeting scheme, other alternatives must be considered.

### **NEW EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES**

It shall be within the power of the Band Education Authority to plan for and provide the school facilities needed for community educational programs: e.g., education of children, parental involvement in education, adult education, cultural activities, training sessions, etc.

### **EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

There is no single type of educational institution which will meet all of the needs of Indian children. Facilities and services must be many and varied to suit particular kinds of circumstances.

#### **Residences**

No general statement can be made on residences because of varying needs across the country. In many places the need still exists for this type of accommodation. However, many parents object to sending their children long distances and want accommodations provided at the village level. In all cases, the Federal Government is advised to consult all **10**

parents with children in residences, in order to determine their wishes on keeping or closing residences, and to examine alternative accommodations.

Admission criteria for student residences will be formulated by the people concerned: parents, Band Councils and administrators. The latter will reflect fiscal considerations.

Indian Bands wishing to take over administrative responsibility and financial control of student residences should be given full assistance to do so. This will require changes in present Department procedures for the operation of residences, as well as training Indian candidates for administrative positions.

Where a residence is in operation, there should be an active parents' council, representative of the student enrollment. This council will act with the responsible residence authority on matters of policy and program.

Programs must be implemented for bettering the qualifications of present staff members and assisting unqualified persons to meet job requirements. Residences should be staffed as far as possible by Indian personnel. Where conditions warrant the closing of a residence, the land and buildings should revert to the use of the Band or Bands, with a preference for educational purposes.

### Day Schools

The need for good schools in Indian communities is becoming more urgent. These schools should have two goals: (a) providing adequate and appropriate educational opportunity, where skills to cope effectively with the challenge of modern life can be acquired, and (b) creating the environment where Indian identity and culture will flourish.

In working toward these goals, the reserve school would be a major factor in eliminating the conditions which lead to dropouts: negative parental attitudes and student alienation.

To provide these facilities an increased financial and human investment must be made in the Indian community. Complete modern buildings, classrooms, equipment, gymnasiums and staff quarters are needed.

These reserve schools will be the vehicle by which Indian parents gain knowledge, experience and confidence in fulfilling their obligation and responsibility in the education of their children. All school facilities should be available to the community for adult education, cultural activities and training sessions.

To facilitate the transition of students from reserve schools to others, it is essential that Ministries of Education recognize Indian day schools as accredited educational centres. This presupposes that academic quality will improve, that federal Indian schools will become "models of excellence", recognized and imitated by provincial/territorial schools. If an Indian oriented curriculum differs from that of the provincial/territorial system, steps should be taken by the proper authorities to develop appropriate criteria for grading and accrediting purposes.

### Group Homes — Hostels

There is a need among students living off the reserve for familiar, homelike accommodations. These could be provided in the small hostel or group home setting. When administered and staffed by Indian people, these homes could give the young person the security and comfort of an Indian family while he or she is adjusting to a new way of life.

In northern communities there is a great need for this kind of home to replace the very large and often far distant residence. Located centrally in every village and operated by an Indian couple, the group home would provide long and short term care, i.e., food, shelter, recreation and companionship for all in the village who need it. This would include children whose parents were absent for hunting and trapping, and old people who might be left alone for the same reasons. The concept of this kind of home is derived directly from Indian culture, and if allowed to take form would contribute to a healthy Indian community.



# FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

## Denominational Schools

As in all other areas of education, the parents have the right to determine the religious status of the local school. In as far as possible, there should be an attempt to satisfy the preference of everyone.

## STAFF

Where there are Indian people in attendance at a school, the number of Indian staff hired, including professional, para-professional, clerical and janitorial, should be based on a minimum ratio of one Indian staff person to every 20 Indian students. This procedure should be observed in residences, reserve day schools and integrated schools.

Professionals, para-professionals and community resource people are all needed to operate a good reserve school. In addition to teachers and teacher-aides, reserve schools must have good counsellors and counsellor-aides. Consultants with knowledge of curriculum development and curriculum adaptation are necessary. A recreation director has a special role to play. Where it is not economically possible to have a recreation director on the school staff, the community recreational program must be designed to include the requirements of the school curriculum.

Whenever possible these positions should be filled by native people. Consultants and specialists in Indian language, history, crafts, customs, dances, legends will be drawn from the local community.

## RESEARCH

There is increasing need for factual and scientific information on which to base planning and decisions. The Indian people advocate that research be under the direction and control of Indian people. Monies labeled for research shall be channeled to research programs identified by Band Councils and Indian organizations in relation to their priorities and programs. Academics who are engaged to conduct research projects will be responsible to the Indian community, local or regional.

It is equally important that the Indian people have the direction and control of experimental programs conducted in their name by universities, academic centres or research bodies.

## **PROBLEMS OF INTEGRATION**

Integration in the past twenty years has simply meant the closing down of Indian schools and transferring Indian students to schools away from their Reserves, often against the wishes of the Indian parents. The acceleration with which this program has developed has not taken into account the fact that neither Indian parents and children, nor the white community: parents, children and schools, were prepared for integration, or able to cope with the many problems which were created.

Integration is a broad concept of human development which provides for growth through mingling the best elements of a wide range of human differences. Integrated educational programs must respect the reality of racial and cultural differences by providing a curriculum which blends the best from the Indian and the non-Indian traditions.

Integration viewed as a one-way process is not integration, and will fail. In the past, it has been the Indian student who was asked to integrate: to give up his identity, to adopt new values and a new way of life. This restricted interpretation of integration must be radically altered if future education programs are to benefit Indian children.

The success of integration hinges on these factors: parents, teachers, pupils (both Indian and white) and curriculum.

On the side of the Indian people, much more preparation and orientation is needed to enable parents to make informed decisions and to assist their children to adjust and to succeed. Indian parents must have the opportunity through full representation to participate responsibly in the education of their children.



The Indian child also needs preparation and orientation before being thrust into a new and strange environment. In handling the conflict of values, he will need the continuing support of his parents and Indian counsellors. Inferiority, alienation, rejection, hostility, depression, frustration, are some of the personal adjustment problems which characterize the Indian child's experience with integration. These are also factors in the academic failure of Indian children in integrated schools.

Indian children will continue to be strangers in Canadian classrooms until the curriculum recognizes Indian customs and values, Indian languages, and the contributions which the Indian people have made to Canadian history. Steps can be taken to remedy this situation by providing in provincial/territorial schools special auxiliary services in cultural development, curriculum development, vocational guidance, counseling, in-service training of teachers, tutoring and recreation. Evidently many of these services can be provided under the regular school program. However, if services are introduced especially for the Indian children, the school board should have financial support from the Federal Government.

The success of integration is not the responsibility of Indians alone. Non-Indians must be ready to recognize the value of another way of life; to learn about Indian history, customs and language; and to modify, if necessary, some of their own ideas and practices.

### SUMMARY OF THE INDIAN POSITION ON EDUCATION

Indian parents must have FULL RESPONSIBILITY AND CONTROL OF EDUCATION. The Federal Government must adjust its policy and practices to make possible the full participation and partnership of Indian people in all decisions and activities connected with the education of Indian children. This requires determined and enlightened action on the part of the Federal Government and immediate reform, especially in the following areas of concern: *responsibility, programs, teachers, facilities.*

#### **RESPONSIBILITY**

##### **Local Control.**

Until now, decisions on the education of Indian children have been made by anyone and everyone, except Indian parents. This must stop. Band Councils should be given total or partial authority for education on reserves, depending on local circumstances, and always with provisions for eventual complete autonomy, analogous to that of a provincial school board vis-à-vis a provincial Department of Education.

##### **School Board Representation.**

It is imperative that Indian children have representation on provincial/territorial school boards. Indian associations and the Federal Government must pressure the Provinces/Territories to make laws which will effectively provide that Indian people have responsible representation and full participation on school boards.

##### **Transfer of Jurisdiction.**

Transfer of educational jurisdiction from the Federal Government to provincial or territorial governments, without consultation and approval by Indian people is unacceptable. There must be an end to these two party agreements between the federal and provincial/territorial governments. Future negotiations with Education Departments for educational services must include representatives of the Indian people acting as the first party. The Federal Government has the responsibility of funding education of all types and at all levels for all Indian people.

##### **Indian Control.**

Those educators who have had authority in all that pertained to Indian education have, over the years, tried various ways of providing education for Indian people. The answer to providing a successful educational experience has not been found. There is one alternative which has not been tried before: in the future, let Indian people control Indian education.



# FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

## PROGRAMS

### **Kinds.**

A wide range of programs is needed in the Indian community. The local Education Authority must take the initiative in identifying the needs for adult education, vocational training, remedial classes, kindergarten, alcohol and drug education, etc., etc. The local Education Authority must also have the authority to implement these programs, either on a temporary or long-term basis.

### **Language and Culture.**

Indian children must have the opportunity to learn their language, history and culture in the classroom. Curricula will have to be revised in federal and provincial/territorial schools to recognize the contributions which the Indian people have made to Canadian history and life.

### **Cultural Education Centres.**

Cultural Education Centres are desperately needed. Considering the vital role that these Centres play in cultural, social, and economic development, it is imperative that all decisions concerning their evolution, i.e., goals, structure, location, operation, etc., be the sole prerogative of the Indian people! The Minister is urged to recognize the rights of the Indian people in this matter.

He must insure:

- a) that the Indian people will have representatives on any committees which will decide policy and control funds for the Cultural Education Centers;
- b) that enough funds are made available for capital expenditure and program operation.

## TEACHERS

### **Native Teachers and Counsellors.**

The Federal Government must take the initiative in providing opportunities in every part of the country for Indian people to train as teachers. The need for native teachers is critical. Indian parents are equally concerned about the training of counsellors who work so closely with the young people.

### **Non-Indian Teachers and Counsellors.**

Federal and provincial/territorial authorities are urged to use the strongest measures necessary to improve the qualifications of teachers and counsellors of Indian children. This will include required courses in Indian history and culture.

### **Language.**

As far as possible, primary teachers in federal or provincial/ territorial schools should have some knowledge of the maternal language of the children they teach.

### **Qualification.**

It should be the accepted practice that only the best qualified teachers are hired for Indian schools, and always in consultation with the local Education Authority.

### **Para-Professionals.**

More Indian teacher-aides and more Indian counsellor-aides are urgently needed throughout the school systems where Indian children are taught. The importance of this work requires that the candidates receive proper training and be allowed to operate at their fullest potential.

## **FACILITIES**

### **Kinds.**

Education facilities must be provided which adequately meet the needs of the local population. These will vary from place to place. For this reason, there cannot be an “either-or” policy, which would limit the choices which Indian parents are able to make. In certain localities, several types of educational facilities may be needed: e.g., residence, day school, integrated school. These must be made available according to the wishes of the parents.

### **Substandard.**

Substandard school facilities must be replaced and new buildings and equipment provided in order to bring reserve schools up to standard. Financing of such building and development programs must be dealt with realistically by the Federal Government.

## **INTEGRATION**

Responsibility for integration belongs to the people involved. It cannot be legislated or promoted without the full consent and participation of the Indians and non-Indians concerned.

## **CONCLUSION**

There is difficulty and danger in taking a position on Indian education because of the great diversity of problems encountered across the country. The National Indian Brotherhood is confident that it expresses the will of the people it represents when it adopts a policy based on two fundamental principles of education in a democratic country, i.e.:

- parental responsibility, and
- local control.

If this policy is recognized and implemented by officials responsible for Indian education, then eventually the Indian people themselves will work out the existing problems and develop an appropriate education program for their children.

## **CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

This policy paper is subject to periodic review by the Executive Council of the National Indian Brotherhood. Additions or amendments may be initiated by a provincial/territorial Indian organization as the need arises.



# FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

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# FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

## APPENDIX II: RESOLUTION NO.13/2009

ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
July 21, 22, & 23, 2009, Calgary, AB  
Resolution no. 13/2009

Title: A Revised *Indian Control of Indian Education* Policy 2009

Subject: Education

**Moved By:** Tribal Chief Tyrone McNeill, Proxy Seabird Island Indian Band, BC

**Seconded By:** Chief Marianna Couchie, Nipissing First Nation, ON

**Decision:** Passed provisionally by AFN Executive Committee on September 10, 2009

### WHEREAS:

The National Indian Brotherhood adopted the policy paper of “*Indian Control of Indian Education*” in 1972 which was affirmed by the Minister of Indian Affairs in 1973.

The full spirit and intent of the policy of *Indian Control of Indian Education* has never been supported in a meaningful manner by the federal government which has failed to support a comprehensive First Nations learning environment and systems as envisioned by First Nations to lead to overall improved learning outcomes.

First Nations have been severely and inter-generationally impacted by the imposition of residential, provincial and territorial schools, as well as other imposed forms of forced assimilation and integration which still exist by maintaining chronic under funding despite a commitment and a federal fiduciary obligation to support adequately First Nations jurisdiction over education.

First Nations leaders and educators recognize the importance of updating the thirty-seven year old policy to reflect current circumstances and challenges and to use education as a tool to eradicate poverty by building the necessary skills for survival and future prosperity as First Nations peoples in Canada.

In February 21, 2007, the AFN Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE) and the National Indian Education Council (NIEC) recommended that the policy paper be updated and revised to address a First Nations vision of lifelong learning as a means of addressing language, culture and values with the underlying principles of respecting First Nations jurisdiction.

A Working Group of Chiefs and education technicians from the CCOE and NIEC are currently preparing a draft policy paper for a new *Indian Control of Indian Education* policy.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Chiefs-in-Assembly:

Endorse in principle the continued development of an updated policy paper reflecting First Nation control and jurisdiction of all aspects of lifelong learning including language, culture and values.

Direct the Assembly of First Nations Education Secretariat to work under the direction of the Chiefs Committee on Education and in cooperation with the National Indian Education Council in immediately distributing the draft policy paper to First Nations across Canada for additional regional input by November 1, 2009, which will be brought back to the Chiefs-in-Assembly for consideration for full adoption at the December Chiefs Assembly

Direct the Assembly of First Nations National Chief to inform federal, provincial and territorial governments in Canada to collaborate with the CCOE/NIEC to incorporate the updated policy of *Indian Control of Indian Education* in all aspects that influence or affect First Nations education.



# FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

## APPENDIX III: CHARACTERISTICS OF A COMPREHENSIVE FIRST NATIONS LEARNING SYSTEM

First Nations comprehensive learning systems include holistic programs and services that respond to current and future needs to improve learner outcomes. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

### LEARNING SYSTEMS

- *Pre- and post-natal*
- *Parenting programs*
- *First Nations daycares / Head Starts*
- *Early learning years*
- *Elementary and secondary learning*
- *Vocational high schools*
- *First Nations universities / colleges*
- *Literacy programs / adult learning*
- *First Nations languages / Language Nests*
- *Language of instruction / other languages*
- *Special education learning / services*
- *Gifted learning*
- *Cross-curricular e.g. music, dance, sports, leisure, fine arts, etc.*
- *E-learning and technology*
- *Sustainable development and environmental stewardship*
- *Library/archives*
- *Community learning authority*
- *Administration / coordination*
- *Student support e.g. Elders, guidance counsellors, etc*
- *Parent / community involvement*
- *Staff recruitment and retention*
- *Safe, healthy and adequate learning facilities*

### SECOND LEVEL SUPPORTS

- *Staff training / professional development*
- *Para-professional support*
- *Instructional support and service delivery*
- *Specialists and professional services*
- *Other community-determined programs/services*

### THIRD LEVEL SUPPORTS

- *Learning resource development and publishing*
- *Data collection and management*
- *Research and development*
- *Capacity development / training*
- *Accreditation / certification*





## IT'S OUR VISION, IT'S OUR TIME

- *Standards and measures of learning successes*
- *Assessment of learning institutions, programs and systems*
- *Employee pensions / benefit plans*
- *Other community-determined programs/services*

# FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

## APPENDIX IV: FIRST NATIONS HOLISTIC LIFELONG LEARNING MODEL

The First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning model represents the link between lifelong learning and community well-being. It also provides a framework for measuring success in lifelong learning for First Nations peoples.

The First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model is the outcome of a February 2007 workshop hosted by the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre of the Canadian Council on Learning. This meeting brought together First Nations learning professionals, community practitioners, researchers and governments to begin discussing and identifying the many aspects of lifelong learning that contribute to the success of First Nations learners. The First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model is a living draft that will be continually discussed and modified.

