

ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23





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ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

Contents

Message From the Presidents	1
Who We Are	2
Our Partnerships	5
Our Agreements	9
Our Information Sharing Efforts	15
Our Support for First Nations Education Governance and Parental Engagement in Education	19
Our First Nations Post-Secondary Education Work	23
Our Efforts to Promote First Nations Language Education	27
Our Additional Work to Support K4 - 12 First Nations Education	31
Conclusions	41
First Nations Education Steering Committee	43
First Nations Schools Association	55



Wagailus School

Message From the Presidents

FNESC President Tyrone McNeil and FNSA President Aaron Burgess

We are very pleased to present the 2022/23 Annual Report of the BC First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and BC First Nations Schools Association (FNSA). Our continued publication of a joint Annual Report reflects the long-standing close working relationship of our organizations, as well as our mutual responsibilities for implementing and reporting on the programs and services we manage for First Nations and First Nation schools.

2022/23 was another busy but rewarding year for FNESC and FNSA. In addition to welcoming over 1,000 participants to the FNESC and FNSA Annual Conferences, we were very excited to bring together 100 First Nations parents to discuss a range of issues that are relevant to our students and their families. Parental rights and responsibilities are the foundation of First Nations control of First Nations education, and the role of our parents is inseparable from the success of our students.

This year we were also very pleased to increase our support for effective First Nations education governance. We offered numerous workshops and information sharing sessions focused on important governance topics, and we were able to allocate over \$8 million in funding grants to help increase the capacity of First Nations for local control and education decision-making – another fundamental principle of First Nations control of First Nations education.

Yet 2022/23 was not without challenges. We recognize the ongoing difficulties caused by the two year COVID pandemic, which seriously impacted our students, their families, and our communities more generally. We appreciate the opportunities we had to consult with representatives of First Nations, First Nation

schools, and our education partners to plan a pro-active and comprehensive response to the lasting effects of the pandemic. To support First Nations and First Nation schools in addressing these issues, FNESC and FNSA were pleased to identify over \$12 million in funding to provide grants for local COVID response activities. We are confident that First Nations will continue to move forward in meaningful ways to address the COVID-related set-backs in our students' attendance, achievement, and health and wellness, so that our students are fully equipped to achieve their education and life goals.

To close, we would like to acknowledge all of the contributions that have supported our work to date. The successes of FNESC and FNSA have been achieved thanks to the outstanding commitment of BC First Nations leadership, the many members of FNESC and FNSA, our dedicated Boards of Directors, our education partners, and the invaluable work of our tireless staff.

We hope that this Annual Report provides a useful overview of our activities throughout the past year. We welcome questions and feedback at any time.

Who We Are



The BC First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) was created to promote improved educational outcomes for students attending First Nation schools by supporting the development and implementation of appropriate, meaningful and quality education programs and providing a forum for networking and information sharing amongst schools and other education partners. The FNSA is committed to designing programs to assist First Nation schools in creating effective and linguistically and culturally appropriate education environments that provide students with a positive foundation in all academic areas.

FNSA Mission

“The First Nations Schools Association will collaborate with First Nations schools to create nurturing environments that will develop learners’ pride and competence in their First Nations language and heritage and will equip them to realize their full potential, within self-governing First Nations communities.”

The BC First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) is a policy and advocacy organization that represents and works on behalf of First Nations in BC. FNESC has a mandate to support First Nations in their efforts to improve the success of all First Nations students and advance First Nations education in BC by disseminating information, undertaking research, administering programs and services, and advocating and negotiating with the provincial and federal governments and other key stakeholders at the direction of First Nations.

FNESC Mandate

“To facilitate discussion about education matters affecting First Nations in BC by disseminating information and soliciting input from First Nations.”

46

FNSA Authorized Representatives attended the 2022 FNSA virtual Annual General Meeting

47

voting Board members were in attendance at the July 2022 FNESC Annual General Meeting

128

First Nation schools were FNSA members in good standing as of March 31, 2023

130

First Nations had appointed members to the FNESC Board as of March 31, 2023





Chilliwack Landing Preschool and Kindergarten

Our Partnerships

FNESC and FNSA appreciate that efforts to improve outcomes for First Nations learners in BC are enhanced significantly by the range of partnerships that have been developed in the past several decades. Widespread contributions are enhancing the work being done by First Nations and First Nation schools, and continued collaboration will undoubtedly lead to the development of more relevant and meaningful policy, programs, and services, creating greater success in First Nations education. In particular, throughout 2022/2023, extensive work was undertaken with the Province of BC through joint policy and legislation tables for both K-12 and post-secondary education, focusing on the implementation of the UN Declaration Act Action Plan, as well as the advancement of other critical priorities for First Nations education.

Additional key relationships are highlighted below.

- FNESC and FNSA continually report to and seek direction from **First Nations leadership in BC** regarding all significant issues effecting First Nations education. Specifically, FNESC and FNSA appreciate the ongoing guidance provided by the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, the First Nations Summit, the BC Assembly of First Nations (AFN), and the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC). In addition, FNESC's activities are undertaken according to a formal Protocol signed in 2015 that confirms the close working relationship between FNESC and First Nations leadership in BC, and a mutual commitment to a continued positive relationship. The Protocol recognizes FNESC as the lead First Nations education policy and advocacy organization in BC.
- Through participation on the **Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Chiefs Committee on Education and National Indian Education Council**, FNESC representatives have been actively engaged in discussions about national education program guidelines and funding opportunities, including ongoing efforts to regionalize federal education programs and models to reflect the varying needs and circumstances of First Nations across the country and to support a BC specific model.
- FNESC works closely with the **Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA)**, which was created in 2002 to support and represent Aboriginal-controlled adult and post-secondary education institutes in BC. FNESC and IAHLA have agreed to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which acknowledges the respective roles of each organization in advancing an evolving BC Tripartite Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Model – described further in this report.

“Our mission is to support quality post-secondary educational institutes that leverage Indigenous language, culture and knowledge to create adaptable, competent, skilled citizens who are able to contribute to local, provincial, and national advancement.”

IAHLA Mission

- First established in 1998, the **K-12 Indigenous Education Partners Table** (formerly the BC Aboriginal Education Partners Group) has grown to include some of the most significant stakeholders in the BC education system, including FNEC, FNSA, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) BC Region, the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC), including the BC Teacher Regulation Branch, the BC Teachers' Federation, the BC School Trustees Association, the BC School Superintendents Association, the BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, the BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, the Association of BC Deans of Education, and Métis Nation BC. In 1999, the organizations signed a Memorandum of Understanding to formalize their relationship and their shared aims for Indigenous education, and they continue to work together to achieve key goals.
- The **BC Indigenous Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners Group (PSE Partners)** was formed in March 2005 to improve the BC public post-secondary system's relevance and responsiveness to the needs of Indigenous students in BC. The members of the PSE Partners include FNEC, IAHLA, the Association of BC Deans of Education, the BC AFN, BC Colleges, BC Aboriginal Training Employment Alliance Members, BC Association of Institutes and Universities, ISC BC Region, First Nations Public Service Secretariat, First Nations Summit, Métis Nation BC, BC Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, BC Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (formerly the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training), MECC, Research Universities' Council of BC, and Service Canada. In 2005, the Partners signed a Memorandum of Understanding committing them to work together to advance positive outcomes for Indigenous learners.

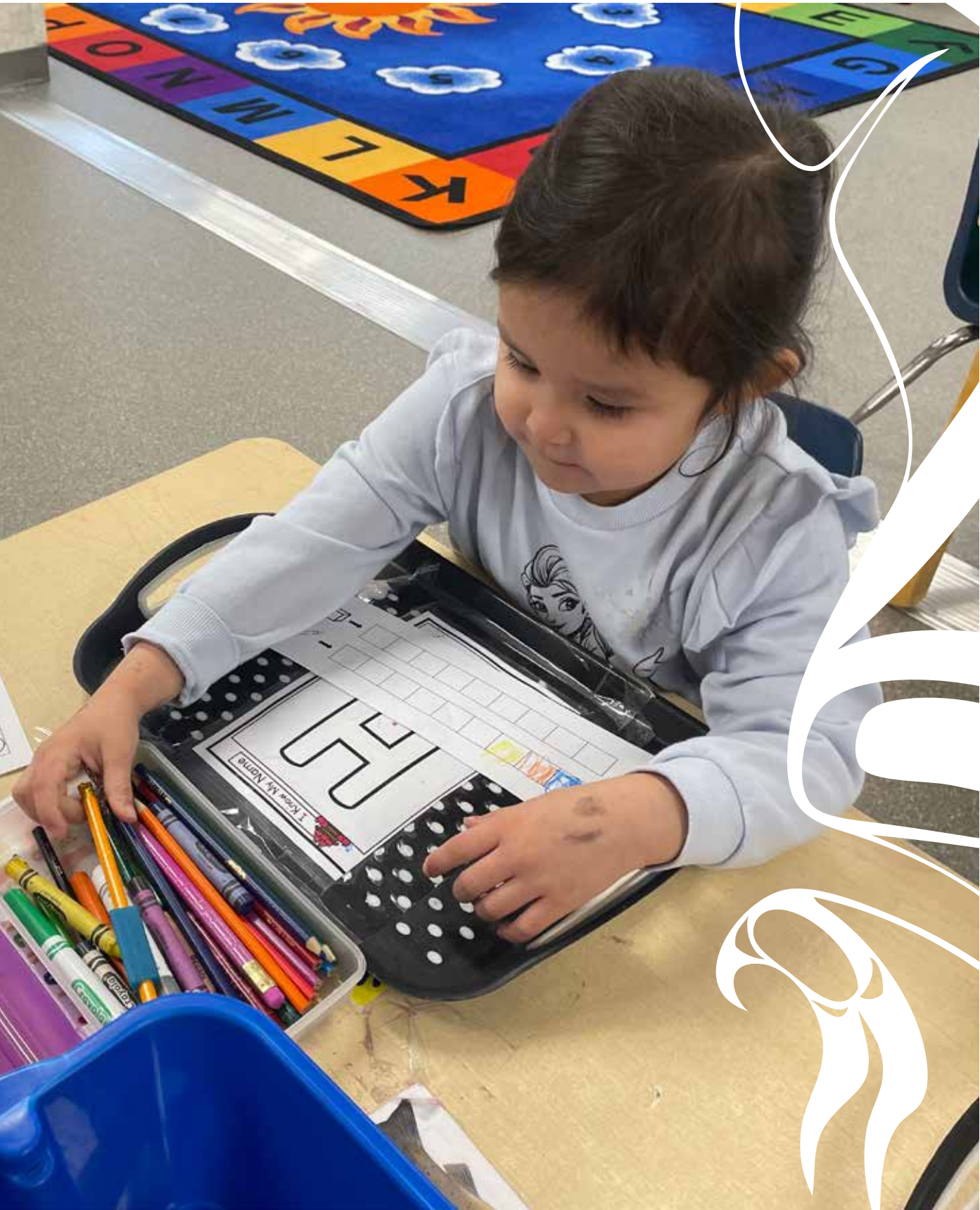
“We, the undersigned, acknowledge that Aboriginal learners are not experiencing school success in British Columbia. We state our intention to work together within the mandates of our respective organizations to improve school success for Aboriginal learners in British Columbia.”

1999 Memorandum of Understanding

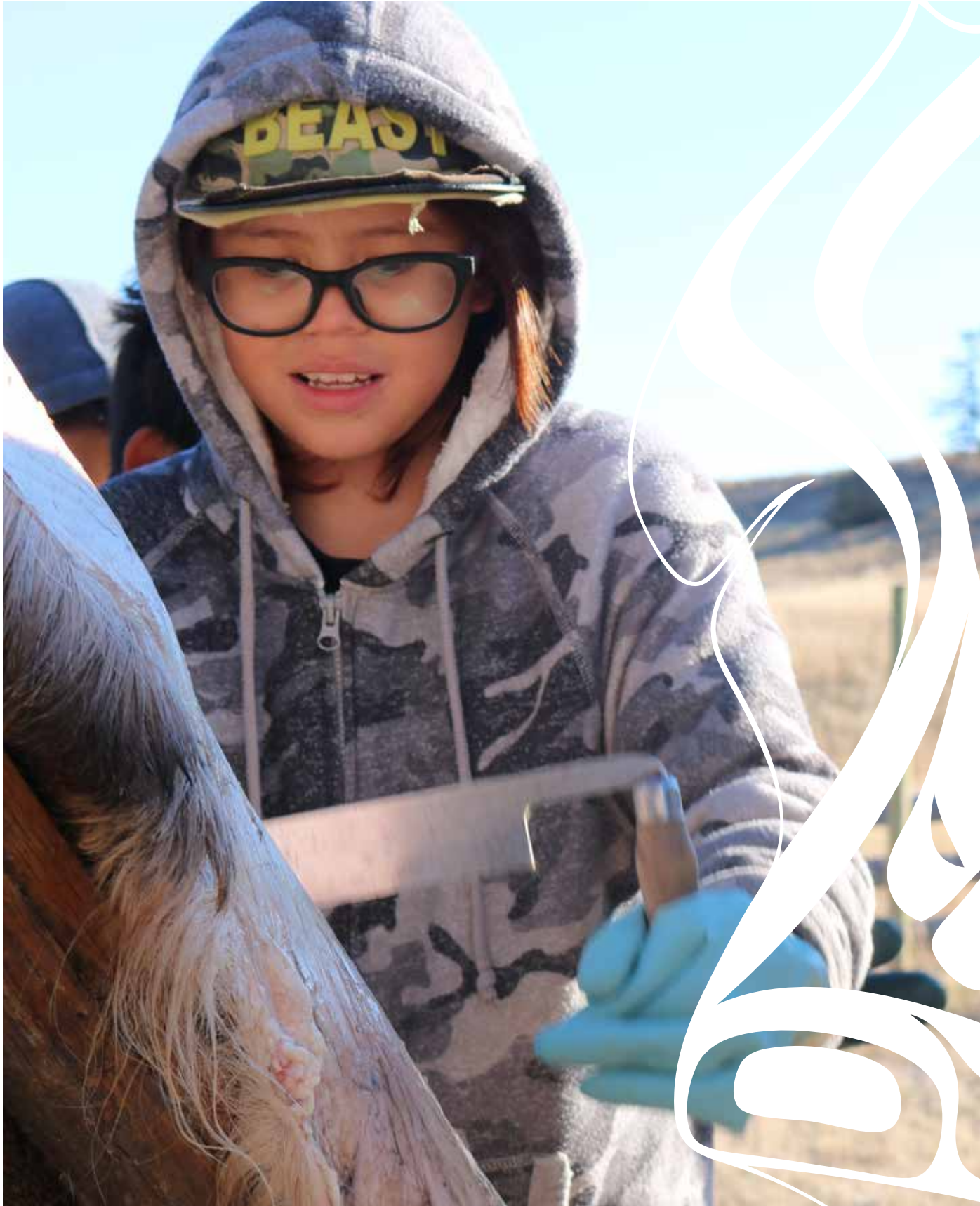
“We, the undersigned, acknowledge, that although there has been some progress in recent years there is a need for improved levels of participation and success for Aboriginal learners in post-secondary education and training in British Columbia. We state our intention to work collectively toward this goal within the mandates of our respective organizations and to bring in other partners as appropriate. This will be accomplished by building on our successes to date, collectively identifying needs, and implementing strategies to improve the success of Aboriginal post-secondary learners in British Columbia.”

2005 Memorandum of Understanding

In addition to the many partnerships described above, FNEC and FNSA have established important formal relationships with the following organizations, among many others: the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA); the BC Officer of the Human Rights Commissioner; the BC School Trustees Association (BCSTA); the Association of BC Deans of Education (ABCDE); the Representative for Children and Youth (RCY); Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI); Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Council (ISPARC); and the First Nations Technology Council (FNTC).



Okanagan Indian Band Cultural Immersion School



Sxoxomic Community School

Our Agreements

The BC Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA)

In June 2018, the *BC Tripartite Education Agreement: Supporting First Nation Student Success (BCTEA)* was signed by FNESC, Canada, and British Columbia (BC), and witnessed by the FNSA. BCTEA represents a cooperative commitment that formally recognizes the capacity of BC First Nations and First Nation schools to build and implement a relevant and research-based First Nations Education System.

“Making systemic shifts to support successful educational outcomes of all First Nation students, regardless of where they live or are enrolled in school in BC.”

2018 BCTEA Purpose

BCTEA provides a flexible funding model for First Nation schools based upon the BC public education funding formula, with adaptations to reflect First Nation schools' unique characteristics. The BCTEA funding model is updated annually to account for additional provincial investments as well as changes to the Nominal Roll, with funding protection to mitigate potential decreases in funding for First Nations. Importantly, funding levels for First Nation schools are updated within the same school year that new investments are made available in the provincial system.

BCTEA also provides funding for a comprehensive collection of second and third level services and for unique, First Nations designed and delivered special education and First Nations language and culture programs. Those programs and services are described throughout the remainder of this report.

In the spirit of partnership and respecting the government-to-government relationship between First Nations, Canada, and the Province of BC, BCTEA also commits FNESC, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), and the Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC) to ongoing collaboration that is intended to benefit all students in BC, regardless of where they attend school. The parties are working to significantly improve

outcomes for First Nations students through the following initiatives, among others.

- Reflecting FNESC's long-term advocacy, and now formalized as a BCTEA commitment, MECC annually publishes data to monitor the achievement of Indigenous students in BC, and also provides First Nations with community-specific data about their students' progress, which informs discussions between First Nations and School Boards about mechanisms to support First Nations learners.
- MECC and FNESC representatives have focused significant attention on the implementation of the Indigenous-focused graduation requirement for all students in BC, announced by MECC in March 2022. The model for this enhancement to the Graduation Program will allow secondary students to meet the new requirement through a variety of existing and new course options. This important change responds to commitments in the Draft Action Plan for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and BCTEA. An Indigenous-focused graduation requirement also reflects ongoing work by MECC, FNESC, and other education partners to build widespread understanding and appreciation of First Nations' rights, histories, and traditions.

- Each year, BC school districts are required to provide an Indigenous-focused professional learning day to all teachers in public schools. The purpose of this day is to prioritize Indigenous student achievement and to further integrate Indigenous worldviews and perspectives into public education learning environments. This commitment is also directly related to implementation of the ninth Professional Standard for BC Educators.

“Educators respect and value the history of First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Canada and the impact of the past on the present and the future. Educators contribute towards truth, reconciliation and healing. Educators foster a deeper understanding of ways of knowing and being, histories, and cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis.”

Professional Standards for BC Educators, June 19 2019, BC Teachers’ Council

- Since 2019, MECC and FNESC have co-hosted a Jointly Convened Annual Meeting (JCAM), which brings together Superintendents and Chairs of Indigenous Education Councils with First Nations representatives to discuss ways to support the success of First Nations students in BC public schools – reflecting BCTEA 4.14, which asserts that First Nation students should receive at least the same level of services and programs that are generally available to all other students, recognizing that culturally relevant services and programs and additional supports designed to improve educational outcomes for First Nation students will be identified and implemented in collaboration with FNESC.

161

participants in the 2022/23 JCAM

First Nations Educational Outcome Improvement Teams:

Under section 4.16 of BCTEA, BC commits to “undertake a program to build capacity to improve outcomes for First Nation students within school districts, with a priority on those school districts having consistently low outcomes for First Nation students.” Reflecting that commitment, First Nations Educational Outcome Improvement Teams, comprised of MECC and FNESC representatives, have engaged with specific school districts to develop plans to improve First Nation student achievement – with three School Districts engaged in the process in 2022/23.

Local Education Agreements (LEAs):

BCTEA includes important commitments related to Local Education Agreements (LEAs) – which are formal agreements between BC First Nations and School Boards that outline strategies both parties agree will result in greater student success. LEAs also are a mechanism through which federal funding for identified First Nations students is distributed to school districts and non-First Nation independent schools through First Nations. BC First Nations and the BCTEA parties support effective LEAs as a practical expression of First Nations control of First Nations education.

“The Parties recognize Local Education Agreements as an integral part of the delivery of education services to First Nation students attending BC Schools, as they are an important mechanism for building relationships between First Nation communities and boards of education and schools, or independent school authorities, to support improved First Nation student outcomes.”

2018 BCTEA 4.11

The BCTEA partners have developed guiding principles to apply to the negotiation, interpretation, and implementation of LEAs, and to inform relevant legislative and policy changes. The BCTEA parties are also working on a draft Provincial LEA template, with a goal of having the Provincial LEA apply, at the request of a First Nation, where there is no existing LEA between a First Nation and School Board. An LEA Manager provides direct support to First Nations, assisting with research and student data analysis,

facilitating workshops, and helping First Nations identify priorities and develop strategies for LEA negotiations and implementation. Additionally, relevant materials are included on the FNEESC website, and an LEA Toolkit is updated regularly.

Transportation: As outlined in BCTEA, the BCTEA partners are responding to challenges regarding the transportation of First Nations students living on-reserve who attend BC public schools, recognizing that transportation issues too often impede the ability of First Nations students to actively participate and flourish in public education settings. Following the signing of BCTEA, Boards of Education and First Nations have worked together to determine the transportation needs of First Nation students and develop joint transportation plans, which have facilitated efforts to reduce travel times, improve transportation safety and reduce bullying concerns, and increase First Nations students' participation in extracurricular activities and sporting events in order to build student engagement and ultimately result in improved overall student outcomes. In order to support the co-development and submission of joint transportation plans, in 2022/23, the BCTEA parties organized an Annual Meeting on Transportation and two drop-in information sessions, which were open to representatives of First Nations and school districts.

169 joint transportation plans were received, reviewed and (if applicable) funded

4,600 students (approx) benefited from joint transportation plans

113 participants (approx) attended the Annual Meeting on Transportation in March 2022

127 registrants (approx) attended the three drop-in information sessions



Sxoxomic Community School

First Nation Schools Capital Research: First Nations have consistently shared concerns with FNEESC about the lack of adequate funding for education facilities on reserve – assertions that are supported by over a decade of studies and reviews demonstrating significant funding gaps for building First Nation schools.

In response to that evidence, in March 2021 the BC AFN, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, and First Nations Summit passed resolutions supporting FNEESC's development of a made-in-BC funding model for First Nation school capital. FNEESC has established a Capital Advisory Committee to undertake related research, including gathering better information about the current condition of First Nations schools, and FNEESC partnered with the Engineers and Geoscientists of BC (EGBC) to develop a plan for conducting Seismic Risk Assessments (SRAs) for all First Nation schools in BC. FNEESC then engaged DNA + Associates and Herold Engineering to conduct SRAs for all school facilities in ten communities (Phase 1). Phase 1 is essentially complete, and preparations are underway for another group of assessments (Phase 2). This research will continue in the 2023/24 fiscal year, and FNEESC looks forward to sharing the results with First Nations in the coming months.



Sik-E-Dakh School

First Nations Education Jurisdiction Agreements

In 2006, FNESC, Canada and the Province of BC signed an Education Jurisdiction Framework Agreement, with associated enabling legislation passed by Canada in 2006 and BC in 2007. Implementation of the agreement was delayed for some time while associated financial issues were resolved, but between 2018 and 2022 several Negotiating First Nations (NFNs) actively worked with Canada and BC to finalize the suite of accompanying agreements. Concurrently, FNESC assisted the NFNs with their efforts to build local capacity and prepare for community ratification processes to advance the jurisdiction initiative.

In 2022, four NFNs – ʔaq'am, Cowichan Tribes, Lil'wat Nation, and Seabird Island – completed successful community ratification votes and signed individual agreements with Canada, thereby becoming Participating First Nations (PFNs). The signing of those agreements represents a landmark step in enacting First Nations control of First Nations education in BC. The PFNs began implementing jurisdiction in July 2022, and the First Nations Education Authority (FNEA) was formally established at that time. The FNEA is the regulatory body responsible for key First Nations education jurisdiction responsibilities, including assisting PFNs in building their education capacity and implementing delegated authority for PFN schools' teacher certification (other than language and culture teachers), graduation requirements, approval of courses required for graduation, and school certification.

As part of the jurisdiction initiative, a new process for certifying and regulating specific teachers who work in PFN schools has been created, and legislative changes were passed in 2022 that will make it possible for MECC to provide operational assistance for the new FNEA Teacher Certification and Regulation Process. Additionally, a new graduation certificate for PFNs has been created, which represents a unique certificate option for PFN schools to complement the Dogwood Diploma.

Three additional First Nations have since completed community ratification votes and became PFNs in July 2023 – Canim Lake Band, Ditidaht First Nation, and Skwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), and it is expected that the jurisdiction initiative will continue to grow in the coming years.

FNESC provides ongoing support for First Nations that are interested in pursuing jurisdiction, including sharing information, providing networking opportunities, and managing grants to assist interested First Nations in undertaking necessary preparations at the local level.

17

First Nations representatives participated in an information sharing meeting for First Nations that are interested in becoming PFNs

Indigenous Children and Youth In Care Protocol

First Nations in BC are committed to ensuring that Indigenous children and youth in government care and former youth in care receive consistent and reliable support at school and in their homes and communities so they have every opportunity possible for educational and lifelong success. Accordingly, a First Nations Children and Youth in Care Protocol was signed on May 26, 2020, which commits BC and First Nations to engage in dialogue and joint action on specific issues and initiatives, seeking to improve the educational outcomes and well-being of Indigenous children and youth in care and former youth in care through legislative, policy, and practice reform.

“This Protocol confirms and sets out a mutual commitment of the Parties to engage in dialogue and joint action on specific issues and initiatives to improve the education outcomes of all First Nations children and youth in care, and former youth in care, in British Columbia, including those First Nations children and youth who are or have been under temporary or continuing custody orders or youth agreements.”

Protocol Between the First Nations Leadership Council (BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and Union of BC Indian Chiefs) and FNEC and the Province of British Columbia (represented by the Minister of Education, the Minister of Children and Family Development, and the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training)

Work facilitated through this Protocol will include easing students’ transitions into the school system, from grade to grade, and out of the school system to post-secondary or the workforce. The Protocol is also intended to ensure supports and services are tailored to the needs of each child and their specific circumstances, in a way that connects them to their language and culture.

FNEC / BC Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC) Protocol Agreement

In June 2015, MECC and FNEC signed a Protocol agreement to formalize their long-standing bilateral relationship and provide a clear framework for continued joint efforts. Associated with this Protocol, FNEC continues to be an active participant in provincial policy discussions, and FNEC and MECC work together to identify opportunities to integrate First Nations’ perspectives into public education decision-making processes and to share resources and expertise. Work is being undertaken to update this agreement to align with commitments in the Declaration Act and related Action Plan.

“This Protocol confirms the ongoing relationship between the Parties and formalizes an effective bilateral process to assist the Parties to improve the educational outcomes of First Nations students through collaborative efforts.”

BC / FNEC Protocol Agreement

Post-Secondary Education and Training Protocol Agreement

On July 8, 2016, the Minister of Advanced Education, FNEC President, and IAHLA Chair signed the Post-Secondary Education and Training Protocol Agreement, which formalizes the positive working relationship between the signatories and establishes a commitment to meet regularly in order to advance First Nations post-secondary education and training in BC. Work is also being undertaken to update this agreement to align with commitments in the Declaration Act and related Action Plan.

“The Parties seek to formalize a process for their ongoing relationship by articulating a process by which they will continue to cooperate on matters related to improving educational outcomes and participation of First Nation and Aboriginal adult and post-secondary students, including the advancement of the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework and other matters as agreed.”

Post-Secondary Education and Training Protocol between British Columbia as represented by the Minister of Advanced Education, the BC First Nations Education Steering Committee, and the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association, July 8 2016.



Penelakut School

Our Information Sharing Efforts

FNESC Regional Sessions

Each year, FNESC – with participation from ISC and MECC – reports on important First Nations education issues at a series of workshops known as Regional Sessions. These sessions provide important opportunities to discuss emerging priorities and seek direction from First Nations, with the goal of increasing the capacity of First Nations and their partners to address education matters affecting First Nations learners. The sessions also are a key component of FNESC’s accountability to First Nations in BC.

Although the 2021/22 Regional Sessions were delayed beyond the end of the fiscal year due to COVID travel restrictions, beginning in April 2022 a return to seven in-person sessions was possible with appropriate health and safety protocols in place. A virtual session was also offered in the spring for those who could not attend in-person.

Additionally, a second series of Regional Sessions, with one virtual and six in-person events, was hosted between January and April 2023.

200+ participants joined the two series of Regional Sessions in 2022/23

Of the participants who responded to a feedback survey for the 2023 Regional Sessions

92% rated the sessions as **Excellent** or **Very Good**

93% found the content **Very Valuable**

Sample Participant Comments

- *The information was excellent!*
- *The session was informative, supportive, and solution driven.*
- *Clear and organized information. It was easy to follow.*



Sik-E-Dakh School

The FNSA 2022 Annual General Meeting (AGM), Conference, and Authorized Representative Meetings

Due to the ongoing effects of the COVID pandemic, the 2022 FNSA Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held virtually, allowing FNSA members to come together using Zoom for information sharing and to elect a new Board of Directors for the 2022/23 school year.

In addition to its virtual AGM, throughout 2022/23 the FNSA hosted several additional opportunities for Authorized Representatives of FNSA member schools to come together to share their ideas and experiences. In October 2022, a one-day hybrid meeting was organized – with participants given the option of participating in-person in Vancouver or joining virtually. In January and February 2023, the Authorized Representatives were again presented opportunities to come together for collaborative discussions through the organization of eight regional meetings.

Approximately 350 people also participated in a virtual 2022 FNSA Conference, which focused on the theme *Extraordinary Schools: It Takes a Community*. The 2022 event was offered through Zoom videoconferencing to ensure the health and safety of schools, communities, and staff members while the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic remained a concern.

The 2022 virtual Conference included a keynote presentation by internationally recognized author and spoken word artist Shane Koyczan – a creator of poetry who, among many other accomplishments, collaborated with animators to make the anti-bullying viral video, *To This Day*, which has had over 17 million views. Shane also displayed his talents as a multi-media spoken word artist in his latest collaboration with the Vancouver Opera on his novel in verse, *Stickboy*. The work premiered to a sold out audience at the Vancouver Playhouse theatre.

The FNSA Conference participants were also invited to join virtual workshops on topics that included, among many others: Technology Infused Classrooms: the How and Why; Balancing Learning and Teaching as Emerging Language Speakers; Blending Learning in Any Classrooms; Ways of Being on the Land; Honouring the Spirit in Our Classrooms; and Indigenous Trauma-Informed Practices: Practical Applications for the Classroom.

52

Authorized Representatives of FNSA member schools joined the hybrid Authorized Representatives gathering in October 2022

40

Authorized Representatives participated in one of five regional meetings for Authorized Representatives held in January and February 2023

350

Authorized Representatives of FNSA member schools participated in the Virtual FNSA AGM in June 2022

350

people participated in the 2022 FNSA Conference

Of the participants who shared responses to the 2022 Conference

90%

found it **Very Valuable** or Valuable

89%

found the keynote speaker **Very Informative** or Informative

Sample Participant Comments

- *What a fantastic keynote. I was captivated for the full hour. LOVED hearing him speak. He made me cry, laugh, think about my own life and the lives of others in my world.*
- *The speakers and subjects were varied and very knowledgeable.*
- *I left with much to think about and great ideas in my head.*

The FNEESC Annual First Nations Education Conference

In December 2022, FNEESC excitedly held its first in-person First Nations Education Conference since the COVID pandemic, focusing on the theme of *Resilience and Self-Determination: a Vision For The Future*.

The Conference began with an evening auction to benefit the Seventh Generation Club, as well as a performance by the Sts'ailes Sasquatch Dancers, a multiage performance group from the Sts'ailes First Nation near Agassiz.

The Conference participants enjoyed a keynote address from University of British Columbia Chancellor, the Honourable Steven Lewis Point, OBC, Xwě lī qwěł tēl. Steven, BC's former Lieutenant-Governor, is highly respected for his commitment to working for First Nations and the people of British Columbia, his dedication to the legal profession and land rights, and his support for the revival of traditional languages and cultures.

The second day of the Conference included a Celebration of the New Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement, with a song by Victor Harry, Ray Natraoro, and Swo-wo Gabriel, Squamish Nation, as well as comments by the Honourable Jennifer White-side, Minister of Education and Child Care, and Hugh Braker, First Nations Summit Political Executive.

The FNEESC Conference also offered a range of workshops on topics including the Indigenous Focused Graduation Requirement, Land and Language-Based Learning, the First Nations Language Fluency Degree, Using FirstVoices and Language Technology in the Classroom, Indigenous Digital Storytelling, Decolonization Through Reciprocal Learning, DRIPA Action Plan and Interim Approach, Preparing Youth for Transitions to Post-secondary and Careers, Local Education Agreements – and many others.

650+

people participated in the FNEESC 2022 Annual Conference

Of the participants who shared responses to the event

94%

were **Very Satisfied** or **Satisfied** with the overall experience

86%

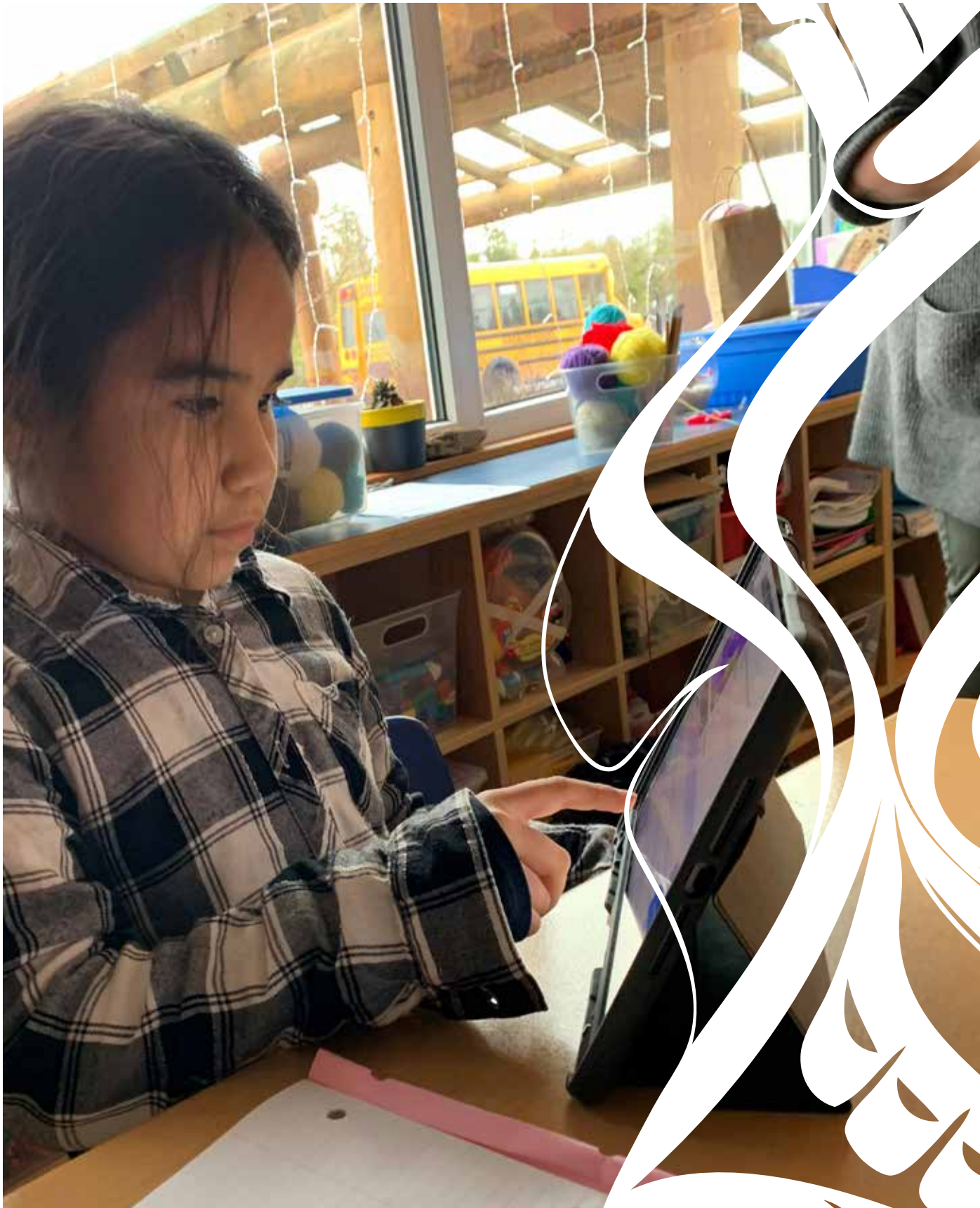
were **Very Satisfied** or **Satisfied** with the workshops

Sample Participant Comments

- *I am very grateful for the entire experience and walked away feeling supported and feeling stronger in holding space for myself and what I am teaching.*
- *Thank you for all that you do! One suggestion would be to see if there is a way to increase capacity so that it doesn't fill up so quickly and more can attend because the interest is definitely there!*
- *Delighted it was hosted in person this year. Gathering together, sharing food and space was important. It was extremely well organized.*
- *Can't wait for the next one!*

Other Information Sharing and Consultation Efforts

Each year, FNEESC and FNSA regularly organize a broad range of information sharing sessions, maintain websites, implement media strategies, and provide regular communications to help representatives of First Nation communities and schools stay informed about arising First Nations education issues.



Wagailus School

Our Support for First Nations Education Governance and Parental Engagement in Education

FNESC and FNSA recognize that strong governance is a crucial factor in the success of First Nations primary, elementary, and secondary students, wherever they attend school.

- First Nations can have a critical and positive influence over the education programs and services provided to their learners by public schools and Independent schools that are located off-reserve.
- In addition, First Nations School Governing Authorities are crucial for the success of students enrolled in their community schools.

First Nations education transformation is led at the school and community level, responding to the visions of First Nations for their citizens. Meaningfully facilitating First Nations' decision-making for the education of their learners – wherever they attend school – and the right of First Nations to establish and control their educational systems and institutions are fundamental principles of First Nations control of First Nations education and a crucial component of First Nations' inherent rights of self-determination and self-government – rights protected under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* and affirmed in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration), an important human rights framework.

FNESC and FNSA are therefore proud to support First Nations education governance to the greatest extent possible.

Education Governance Grants: 2022/23 represented the second year of grant allocations to support First Nations in building their capacity for education governance, made possible by accessing \$7 million in funding through ISC's Education Partnership Program (EPP). All interested First Nations in BC were

provided an opportunity to access a grant, which were calculated using a base-plus-per-capita formula for all K-12 students included on the ISC nominal roll, regardless of where they live or are enrolled in school in BC.

A few examples of the work undertaken with those grants include:

- "We developed an Education Committee that integrates our Nation's current political structures with our traditional and cultural structures so the education committee will be successful and will be of the people, including all families to make sure no one is left behind."
- "We researched and distributed a survey to gather information from school staff, parents, and the community about governance issues, and we hosted a community meeting focused on parent and school staff responsibilities, organized to discuss the survey results and prepare for the drafting of school policies."

- “We created terms of reference for education governance and policies for our education committee.”
- “We organized community consultation meetings to discuss the role of the Education Authority, using governance information shared by FNESC and FNSA – particularly the principle that ‘School Governing Authorities work toward a clear purpose, ensuring and overseeing the development of a shared school vision, mission, goals and values to support high levels of learning and achievement for all students.’”
- “We established a Parents Advisory Committee to support student learning, with training provided to support and grow the parent group.”
- “We hired a consultant to help us review our current LEA and we had ongoing meetings with the School District to improve the LEA.”

Information Sharing Initiatives: In addition to the grant allocations, FNESC and FNSA have been working to support First Nation School Governing Authorities through a range of information sharing activities.

- In 2020, an Advisory Committee with representatives of First Nations and First Nation schools was created to guide the development of a *Handbook for First Nation School Governing Authorities*. That Handbook reviews a range of governance topics, such as defining the school’s purpose and mission, working effectively with the school principal, advocacy, communications, financial management and school policies, and School Governing Authority procedures and professional development.
- Based on the positive response to the Handbook, numerous virtual workshops have been organized to provide an overview of the Handbook, and in 2022/23 that effort was expanded into a series of information sharing workshops for First Nation School Governing Authorities, including sessions focused on: the Importance of Student Attendance: What Schools Can Do; the Importance of Family Involvement: What Schools Can Do; What School Governing Authorities Should Know About the Special Education Program for First Nation Schools; What School Governing Authorities Should Know About Funding

for First Nation Schools; and Considerations for First Nation Schools: Policies and Guidelines for Student Behaviour Issues. School Governing Authorities can also request individual virtual information sessions, which are offered depending on time availability.

110

First Nations accessed an Education Governance grant in 2022/23, totaling **\$8,394,511** allocated for this work

100

people (approx) participated in a First Nation School Governance Workshop Session in 2022/23

Of the people who responded to a feedback survey about the Governance Workshops

100%

of the participants found the sessions **Useful**

100%

of participants found the topics **Relevant**

100%

of participants agreed that the information sessions should be presented again next year, as *“all information should be shared annually as there will always be new principals and governing authorities”* PARTICIPANT COMMENT

In addition to governance, parents and families play a key role in the education of their children.

- Parents and families are their children’s first and most important teachers.
- Parents and families are the primary shapers of children’s social skills.
- Parents and families are fundamental to children developing self-confidence and a positive self-identity.
- Parents transmit their values and culture to their children, which is key to children’s overall development and educational success.

First Nations parents and guardians also have a *right* to be involved in all decisions about their children's education. Parental rights are the foundation of First Nations control of First Nations education, and parents must be fully informed and involved in determining and guiding their children's education.

- For over two decades, FNEC and FNSA have organized a **First Nations Parents Club** to promote the key role of parents and caregivers in the educational success of their children by sharing information and parenting resources. Locally-based Parent Clubs receive newsletters, calendars for participating parents, and Parent Kits with practical resources to support parental engagement and advocacy. In addition, funding grants are distributed each year to sponsor local Club activities, such as sponsoring guest speakers, training opportunities, and other initiatives to encourage parental engagement in education.
- The biennial **First Nations Parents Conference** took place in February 2023, bringing together almost 100 First Nations parents. Participants enjoyed a keynote address from Kasari Govender, BC's first independent Human Rights Commissioner, who offered a thought-provoking talk about how a human rights lens can inform efforts to transform K-12 schools and address inequities and systemic racism faced by First Nations learners. The parents also participated in workshops on topics including family involvement in First Nations language and culture programs, parent support for early language development, parent advocacy, and many other key issues for families.
- A new **Parents Toolkit** was distributed in 2022/23, which includes a series of short, reproducible papers that can be adapted and shared with parents to provide information about topics in three general areas.
 - Appreciating the importance of parental involvement in education
 - Understanding the structure of the school system, how to build positive relationships with school staff for the benefit of students, and what to do if difficulties arise
 - Thinking about how to create healthy and supportive learning environments at home



- In 2023, FNEC and FNSA updated **Guiding Your Education Journey: A Handbook for First Nations Families**, which provides information to help families decide what courses students should take – especially in Grades 10, 11, and 12 – and to assist with planning for post-secondary education, training, and future careers. The Handbook complements the *Career Journeys First Nations Role Model Program*, which includes posters and videos featuring successful role models sharing their experiences in their jobs and describing their career paths and inspirations. All of those resources are available from the FNEC website.

61 Parents Clubs in 2022/23

1,590 Parents Clubs members in 2022/23

41* Parents Club grants were awarded

100 participants in the 2023 Parents Club Conference

** While this initiative broadly supports First Nations parents in a variety of situations, grants are provided only to those clubs that can demonstrate direct affiliation with a First Nation.*



Okanagan Indian Band Cultural Immersion School

Our First Nations Post-Secondary Education Work

“First Nations assert their right and responsibility to direct and make decisions regarding all matters relating to First Nations lifelong learning as an Inherent and Treaty Right and Post-Secondary Education is a fundamental element of this continuum.”

Assembly of First Nations Policy Proposal: First Nations Post-Secondary Education

Grounded in the principle of First Nations control of First Nations education, FNEESC is committed to supporting the priorities that First Nations have identified for post-secondary education (PSE), including working with key partners to make systemic changes that will advance positive outcomes for First Nations post-secondary learners.

Post-Secondary Sub-Committee (PSSC): FNEESC’s PSE advocacy and engagement with First Nations on PSE matters is supported by a PSSC, which consists of five members of the FNEESC Board of Directors. The PSSC met three times in 2022/23, and participated in additional meetings with staff of the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (formerly the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training) to provide feedback on various provincial initiatives.

The BC First Nations Tripartite Post-Secondary Education Model (BC PSE Model): Since 2018, FNEESC and IAHLA have been working under the direction of BC First Nations on the development of a BC Tripartite Post-Secondary Model (BC PSE Model). FNEESC has organized ongoing engagement with First Nations and First Nations-mandated institutes to ensure that the BC PSE Model addresses the needs and priorities identified by First Nations, through provincial PSE Gatherings, PSE Coordinator Workshops and FNEESC’s annual Regional Sessions, and IAHLA’s Annual Conferences. The work on the BC PSE Model has been formally endorsed by First Nations leadership through resolutions of the First Nations Summit, BC Assembly of First Nations, and Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

The draft BC PSE Model has four pillars:

1. **First Nations Learners:** First Nations-developed guidelines and allocation methodology to ensure that First Nations have funding for all learners to receive the supports they need to pursue post-secondary education and training.
2. **First Nations-Mandated Post-Secondary Institutes:** First Nations-mandated institutes have ongoing core and capacity development funding, anchored in legislation recognizing their integral role in the BC PSE system.
3. **Community-Based Program Delivery:** Funding for the delivery of community-based programming that is responsive to First Nation priorities, supported by a First Nations-controlled funding process that is fair, equitable, and transparent.
4. **Respectful and Responsive Public Post-Secondary System:** Systemic change within public post-secondary institutions (PPSIs) based upon shared decision-making with First Nations to ensure that PPSIs are more responsive to the needs of First Nations learners.

On March 10, 2023, FNEC hosted a provincial PSE Gathering, involving 116 participants from 64 First Nations in BC who came together to discuss legislative, policy and funding considerations related to all four pillars of the BC PSE Model, providing the following feedback.

- 97% of the meeting participants believe that increasing funding for learners should be FNEC's highest post-secondary priority
- 100% support the need for full provincial funding for former youth in care for provincial programs
- 93% believe that funding for community-based programs should be administered by local First Nations under guidelines that have been developed by First Nations
- 99% support the development and implementation of BC-specific post-secondary policies and guidelines to be approved by First Nations

As work continues on the development and implementation of the BC PSE Model, FNEC and IAHLA have been successful in securing funding and commitments that advance related activities, including the following.

- FNEC, working with IAHLA, allocated \$4 million in core funding provided by the Government of BC to 10 First Nations-mandated institutes for the 2022/23 academic year. FNEC and IAHLA continue to work together to secure ongoing core and capacity development funding for all First Nations-mandated institutes, anchored in legislation, consistent with the second pillar of the BC PSE Model and Action 1.8 of the DRIPA Action Plan.
- In 2022/23, FNEC combined federal and provincial funding to allocate over \$9 million through the Post-Secondary Partnership Program (PSSP), sponsoring 30 projects designed to support First Nation learners' access to community-based programming.
- Since its launch in 2017, FNEC has advocated for expanding the eligibility criteria for the Provincial Tuition Waiver Program for former children and youth in care, and in March 2023, the

BC government announced the elimination of the program's age requirement. FNEC continues to advocate for additional expansions to the program and to secure full funding for former children and youth in care pursuing post-secondary education.

PSE Policy and Legislation Table: In Summer 2022, FNEC and IAHLA called for the creation of a First Nations-specific policy table to support the development of legislation consistent with action 1.8 of the *Declaration Act Action Plan*: "Recognize the integral role of Indigenous-led post-secondary institutes as a key pillar of BC's post-secondary system through the provision of core funding, capacity funding and the development of legislation." FNEC and IAHLA are meeting regularly with the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills on implementing this action.

Support for PSE Coordinators: Throughout 2022/23, FNEC continued to assist PSE Coordinators with the administration of PSE funding and the provision of supports for First Nations PSE students. FNEC hosted five regional in-person and one virtual PSE Coordinator Workshops, to update communities about recent developments in PSE and to seek direction to inform the development of the BC PSE Model. FNEC also continues to provide support to PSE Coordinators through a PSE Resource Line.

127

participants from 121 First Nations attended the 2022/23 PSE Coordinator Workshops

Of the PSE Coordinators who provided feedback on the workshops

95%

rated the event as either **Excellent** or **Very Good**

95%

reported that the information shared was **Very Valuable**

95%

said the presenters were **Very Informative** and answered their questions



Chilliwack Landing Preschool and Kindergarten



Penelakut School

Our Efforts to Promote First Nations Language Education

The BC First Nations Education System is built on a recognition that First Nations languages and cultures are central to First Nations' identities, distinctive traditions and ways of life, and are inherently derived. First Nations across Canada are striving to revitalize their languages and language fluency in their communities, as their languages and cultures are central to First Nations' distinctive laws, traditions, and ways of life. First Nations' connections to their lands are embedded in their languages, and as set out in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems, and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons. First Nations' inherent rights to language are constitutionally protected, and are recognized by the Government of Canada in the federal *Indigenous Languages Act*, S.C. 2019, c.23.

“Based on the authority and direction of First Nations, FNEC and the FNSA have worked to establish an effective and relevant education system to support First Nation Students and First Nation Schools that ... is founded upon the priority of exercising and revitalizing First Nations' languages and cultures, and reflects the cultures, values and traditions of the communities they serve”

2018 BCTEA

Recognizing those important principles, FNEC and FNSA continue to make every effort possible to assist First Nations in advancing their language education goals.

First Nation Languages Sub-Committee: Since its establishment, FNEC has included a First Nations Languages Sub-Committee, which guides FNEC's language-related advocacy, professional development, research, and services. The First

Nations Languages Sub-Committee includes dedicated representatives of First Nation communities and schools, as well as partner organizations.

First Nations Language Teacher Mentor Apprenticeship Program: 2022/23 represented the sixth year of a First Nations Language Teacher Mentor Apprenticeship Program (FNLTMAP), which is intended to assist language teachers in increasing their language fluency in order to enhance the quality of instruction and learning within First Nations language education programs, and to support the development of more immersion programming by interested First Nations. The FNLTMAP supports one-on-one teams that match a First Nation language mentor with a language learner, who together complete 300 hours of language immersion work over a one-year period. In 2022/23, a total of seven teams registered to participate in the FNLTMAP.



Jurisdiction Celebration at Seabird Island

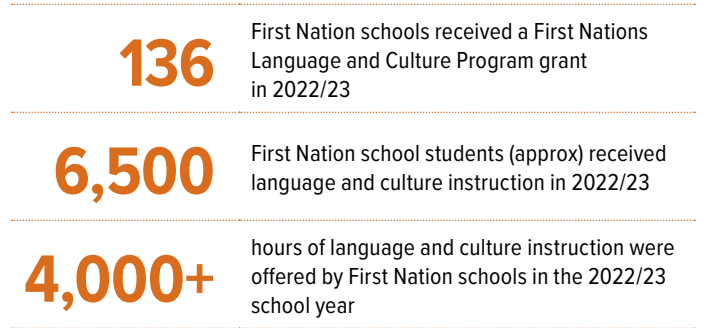
First Nations Languages Fluency/ Proficiency Degree: In partnership with a consortium of IAHLA institutes and public post-secondary institutions, FNESC and IAHLA have continued to advance a framework for a four-year Indigenous Language Fluency Degree that has fluency in an Indigenous language as its primary learning outcome and purpose. In 2022/23, FNESC and IAHLA allocated funding from the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, which built on previous investments and provided an additional \$1.7 million to six First Nations and First Nations-mandated institutes that are developing degree programs aligned with the framework. Funding is available through this investment for years 1 and 2 of the programs, and public post-secondary institutions fund years 3 and 4.

In November 2022, the Bachelor of Nl̓eʔkepmx Language Fluency, delivered by First Nations in the Nicola Valley area in partnership with Nicola Valley Institute of Technology and the University of British Columbia Okanagan, became the second program developed through the framework to receive Ministerial approval.

BCTEA Language and Culture Initiatives: BCTEA acknowledges that the revitalization, preservation, and maintenance of First Nations languages is integral to the well-being of First Nations people, and the agreement includes provisions for a comprehensive First Nations Language and Culture Program (FNLCP) for First Nation schools, as well as important policy and program commitments related to First Nations language programming in the public education system.

Through the FNLCP, FNESC and FNSA provide grants to First Nation schools totaling approximately \$14 million annually – which is in addition to the funding that is provided directly to schools for language education through the BCTEA funding formula. An online portal has been developed to improve access to these grants. FNESC and FNSA also implement First Nations language support services, such as school visits by language coaches, information sessions, and professional development opportunities for language teachers.

Guide to Language Revitalization: Promising Education Practices for Consideration by First Nations Schools: In 2023, FNESC and FNSA published a new resource that provides an overview of possible language revitalization efforts, which was developed through interviews with language champions and contributions from the First Nations Languages Sub-Committee and a focus group of First Nation school representatives. FNESC and FNSA are grateful for the extensive input into the writing of this Guide, which is now available on the FNESC website.





Sik-E-Dakh School



Sxoxomic Community School

Our Additional Work to Support K4 - 12 First Nations Education

“Canada and British Columbia recognize FNEESC, working with the FNSA, as having demonstrated the capacity to administer education programs and services on behalf of First Nations and First Nation Schools in British Columbia, to implement research-based and relevant programs to support First Nation Schools to deliver quality education and improve student outcomes, to provide Second and Third Level Services to First Nations and First Nation Schools, and to advocate for and advance the interests and needs of First Nation Students attending BC Schools.”

2018 BCTEA, 4.1

COVID Impact Supports

Throughout the past year, FNEESC and FNSA worked closely with First Nations leadership, First Nation communities and schools, and other education partners to respond to the continued effects of the COVID pandemic on schools and student learning. BCTEA data from 2021/22 highlights serious student learning loss and attendance challenges that resulted from COVID’s disruption of schooling and its impacts on the mental health and wellness of students, families, and school staff.

To respond, FNEESC and FNSA distributed **COVID-related learning loss grants**, intended to sponsor local activities to supplement regular K-12 school programming, such as summer learning programs, extra-curricular programs and tutoring initiatives, home learning support initiatives, and on-the-land and cultural opportunities to increase students’ social and emotional well-being in response to the stress of the COVID pandemic.

154

First Nations accessed a COVID response grant in 2022

\$12.8

million in funding was allocated for COVID response grants

First Nation Schools Assessment and Certification Process

The First Nations Schools Assessment and Certification Process is a five-year cycle of review, improvement planning, and follow-up that was established over two decades ago by First Nation schools in BC. The Process supports participating schools in implementing a year-long review of their operations, including considering school programs and administration structures, student outcomes data, as well as survey input from School Governing Authority members, students, parents / caregivers, and school staff. The overall goal of the process is to identify school strengths and areas for growth, leading to the creation of a School Growth Plan (i.e. a strategic plan for improvement). Upon completion of the internal review, participating schools are visited by a team that reviews the assessment findings and School Growth Plan to provide suggestions and feedback. First Nation schools are sponsored for participation in the process and receive ongoing support through project workshops, assistance from FNEESC staff, and funding grants for the implementation of School Growth Plans.

Interested schools also may request “Certification” as part of the assessment process. This component requires meeting a set of collectively established standards related to school operations



Sxoxomic Community School

and climate, education programs and services, and family and community engagement. Certification through the First Nation Schools Assessment and Certification Process is now a primary component of several key education agreements and opportunities, including BCTEA, Reciprocal Tuition, First Nation schools' access to the Dogwood and Adult Dogwood Diploma, and the jurisdiction initiative.

21 First Nation schools participated in the School Assessment and Certification Process in 2022/23

32 schools received a School Growth Plan Grant in 2022/23

74 First Nation schools are now Certified by the FNSA

Curriculum Resource Development and Promotion

First Peoples Resources: Including First Peoples' content in education programming is an important component of efforts to address colonial legacies, ensuring that First Peoples' cultures and perspectives are portrayed accurately and authentically, and providing opportunities for diverse voices in Canada to be recognized and celebrated. The inclusion of authentic First Peoples content in classrooms supports all students in developing an understanding of the significant role of First Peoples within the historical and contemporary fabric of the province, and it provides culturally relevant materials for Indigenous learners in BC.

Recognizing the importance of supporting educators in integrating First Nations perspectives and content into their classrooms, FNEC and FNSA, in collaboration with teachers and partners, have developed a Learning First Peoples series of teacher resources to support English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies and Mathematics courses. The resources reflect the First Peoples Principles of Learning, as well as the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including the call to "integrate Indigenous Knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms" and "build student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect." Given the dramatic increase in the number of Indigenous texts available, FNEC and FNSA also have developed tools to help educators in

BC make decisions about which resources might be appropriate for use with students. A variety of workshops and meetings are sponsored each year to promote the First Peoples Principles of Learning, First Nations specific courses, and the numerous teacher resource guides available for pre-service and in-service professional development efforts. More information about all of these resources and opportunities is available at www.fnesc.ca.

Credit Option Resources: Throughout the past several years, work has been undertaken to promote a number of options for students in First Nations schools to earn credits toward graduation with the BC Graduation Certificate (the Dogwood Diploma), as determined by their School Governing Authority. In addition to earning credits by successfully completing MECC courses, FNEsc, FNSA, and MECC collaboratively developed and approved policy that allows students to be awarded credits by taking First Nations Authorized Courses, as well as through external credentials, challenge, equivalency, and independent directed studies. A new *Guide to Options For Students In Non-Independent First Nation Schools To Access Credits for the BC Graduation Certificate* is now available, which outlines these options in more detail.

Modular Courses: In 2022 a new initiative was introduced to assist First Nation schools with the development of modular courses – i.e. short-term, session-based, high-interest learning opportunities that cover a portion or all of the Learning Standards for an approved course that counts towards a student’s graduation. Using funding available through ISC’s Research and Learning Program, BC First Nation schools and Adult Secondary Education Centres that offer grade 10-12 courses were invited to request a grant of up to \$10,000 for the design and implementation of a modular course, and given the very positive response to this initiative, a new *Handbook for Modular Courses* is being developed and additional grants will be available in the 2023/24 school year.

13

schools accessed a grant and designed courses focused on topics including traditional carving and woodworking, culinary arts, remotely operated vehicles and drones, fine arts, traditional food practices, music and video production, and land-based life sciences.

Special Education Program

For almost two decades, a FNEsc/FNSA Special Education Program (SEP) has helped First Nation schools meet the needs of their students with exceptionalities, and through BCTEA approximately \$24 million is available annually to enhance the schools’ capacity to help all students succeed.

Funding Grants: The majority of the funding available for SEP is allocated to First Nation schools in BC through grants to support their local programming, and a portion of the SEP funding is available through a proposal process to address extraordinary student needs. Additionally, in 2022/23 a new funding grant was introduced to support schools in accessing services of Speech and Language Pathologists (SLPs) and Occupational Therapists (OTs). First Nation schools can use all three of these funding opportunities to supplement their core funding and cover the costs associated with providing special education services to their students who have exceptionalities. In the past two years, FNEsc and FNSA have worked to make access to these funding grants as easy as possible through the expansion on an online portal for the submission of workplans and reports.

Support Services: The funding provided for school-based services is complemented by a range of collective initiatives to create economies-of-scale and increase access to necessary expertise and special education materials.

- First Nation schools can access advice and programming support from SEP Specialists – staff who have expertise related to specific types of exceptionalities, who are available to help schools consider strategies and interventions for students with suspected or diagnosed exceptionalities. The specialists can also connect schools with relevant service providers, implement regional professional development sessions, and share information and respond to questions as needed.
- Individual Education Plan (IEP) coaches are available to provide professional development opportunities, as well as in-person or virtual support, to assist with the development and implementation of IEPs for students with exceptionalities. Additionally, in 2022/23 five regional workshops were organized to share information related to the establishment of Student Support Teams at the school-level, including the role of those teams in supporting IEPs.

- Additionally, SEP SLP and OT staff can support First Nation schools by sharing advice about accessing SLP and OT professionals who can provide regular supports for students who have exceptionalities, and consulting with schools about relevant strategies and interventions. The SEP SLP and OT are also able to provide limited direct student services in situations where immediate needs exist.
- SEP also facilitates a Learning Assistance Teacher (LAT) Network, through which LATs meet regularly for networking and information sharing.

122 First Nation schools accessed a School Funding Grant

74 schools accessed an Additional Funding Grant

89 schools accessed an SLP/OT Grant

51 representatives joined one of five regional workshops designed to facilitate discussion about the development and implementation of effective IEPs for students who have exceptionalities



Jurisdiction Celebration at Seabird Island

Professional Development Supports

Professional Learning Series: In 2022/23, FNEC and FNSA hosted a second virtual Professional Learning Series for First Nation school educators, support staff, Governing Authority representatives, and community education staff. Over a six-week period from late August until the end of September 2022, professional development sessions were offered on topics including, among many others, information for principals who are new to First Nation schools, language program planning, report card writing, hiring certified teachers, DRUMS training, and information sessions on the FNEC and FNSA Special Education and First Nations Language and Culture Programs.

Professional Networks: In the past year, FNEC and FNSA continued to organize Professional Networks, which involve cohort groups meeting regularly to engage in focused discussions and share their experiences and ideas – with Networks for principals, Education Assistants (EAs), teachers who are new to First Nation schools, K4 educators, and Learning Assistant Teachers, as well as a Math Teaching Network and a Network for teachers focused on transforming instruction. FNEC and FNSA are now planning Networks for the 2023/24 school year.

228+ people registered to participate in some portion of the 2022 virtual Professional Learning Series.

400+ educators from First Nation schools were involved in 2022/23 Professional Networks

The following in-person professional development events, in addition to numerous virtual events, were organized in 2022/23.

90 First Nation school staff attended regional workshops focused on the implementation of reading and math programs

90 First Nation school representatives travelled to Vancouver in September 2022 to participate in a First Nation school professional development day, which featured presentations about First Nations language and culture teaching, math instruction, and supports for students who have exceptionalities

37 principals from First Nation schools participated in a one-day workshop presented by Tom Hierck, which focused on Where Passion Meets Purpose: Moving From Believe to Achieve – a session that explored how educators can commit to every child, every day



Okanagan Indian Band Cultural Immersion School

Professional Development Services from School Support Staff

Regional Principals: First Nations schools in BC can request support from Regional Principals, who can assist school principals with supervision of instruction practices (including effective teacher observations and follow-up), scheduling, planning effective school structures, accessing relevant services and professional development opportunities, and designing and implementing frameworks for monitoring and responding to student data.

Instructional Coaches: First Nations schools in BC also can request support from Instructional Coaches and First Nations Language and Culture Coaches, who are available to work with teachers to support effective instruction and assessment practices for the benefit of First Nation school students.

45 First Nation schools received direct support from Regional Principals in 2022/2023

112 First Nation schools received direct support from a Coach in 2022/23

Promoting Assessments for Evidence-Based Decision Making

FNESC and FNSA continue to support First Nation schools with the collection and analysis of student performance data by sponsoring professional development and follow-up for the effective use of the Acadience Reading Assessment, Canadian Achievement Test 4 (CAT4), and the Preschool Early Literacy Intervention (PELI) assessment. In September and October 2022, four regional CAT4 training workshops were hosted, intended to help First Nation school educators and school principals better understand how to effectively implement the CAT4 assessment. In addition, in September and October 2022, three workshops were hosted for First Nation school staff to support them in using the Acadience Reading Assessment.

66 First Nation schools were supported in implementing CAT4 in 2022/23

54 First Nation school representatives participated in a CAT4 training workshop in 2022/23

30+ participants joined an Acadience Reading Assessment workshop in 2022/23



Wabsuwilaks'm Gitselasu School

Information and Communications Technology Support Programs

Data Records and User Management System (DRUMS): First developed in 2010, the Data Records and User Management System (DRUMS) provides an integrated infrastructure for First Nation schools to manage student information and produce report cards. FNEC and FNSA provide training for schools that use DRUMS and regularly communicate with participating schools to ensure that the system remains relevant and effective.

75 First Nation schools used DRUMS in 2022/23

School Technology Support Assistants: In 2018/19, FNEC and FNSA began offering support for First Nation schools through in-person visits or remote assistance from IT staff who can provide: technology, software and networks advice; suggestions related to technology and software procurement; connectivity problem solving; computer, software and device troubleshooting; server and console administration support; computer, printer, and/or smartboard set up and training; and mentorship for community staff to help build local capacity.

84 First Nation schools were directly assisted by School Technology Support Assistants in 2022/23

Connected Classrooms Program

The Connected Classroom Program was created almost two decades ago to address serious difficulties First Nation schools experience in recruiting and retaining secondary teachers who have specialized content knowledge, as well as the challenge of having very small cohorts of students for some grade 10 - 12 courses that lead to graduation and/or are often required as pre-requisites for post-secondary.

The Connected Classrooms Program provides an innovative opportunity for collectives of First Nation schools to offer high school courses jointly. The Program uses a combination of technologies to create an integrated, interactive classroom environment for students to join from various locations throughout the province. Students enrolled in Connected Classrooms Program courses participate in a real time virtual classroom with a qualified educator who has the subject matter expertise needed to instruct the course, who co-teaches with a certified educator who supports students on-site. All First Nation schools and adult education centres in BC that offer grades 10 – 12 are invited to participate in the Program when they have students who would benefit from accessing this unique and flexible learning option.

20 First Nation schools and adult education centres participated in the Connected Classrooms Program in 2022/23

141 students were involved in the Connected Classrooms Program

317 course registrants (as some students took more than one course through Connected Classrooms)



Sik-E-Dakh School

Bus Capital Program

Consistent with BCTEA, a Transportation Capital Policy developed collaboratively with First Nation representatives guides the allocation of BCTEA funding for the purchase of school buses for First Nation schools.

23	new buses were purchased in 2017/18 (costing \$1.61 million)
18	new buses were purchased in 2018/19 (costing \$1.59 million)
14	new buses were purchased in 2019/20 (costing \$1.21 million)
17	new buses were purchased in 2020/21 (costing \$1.62 million)
18	new buses were purchased in 2021/22 (costing \$1.42 million)
16	new bus purchases were approved in 2022/23 (costing \$1.79 million)

Guns and Gangs Resources

With support from MECC and the BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, FNEC and FNSEA developed the *FNEC/ FNSEA Gang Prevention Toolkit: Preventing Violence and Gang Involvement among Indigenous Youth*. The toolkit was created to assist BC First Nations and First Nation schools in developing strategies to help prevent youth participation in gangs and serious violence. The Toolkit includes an overview of the risk factors that may lead youth to become gang-involved, as well as considerations for schools, communities, families, and youth to assist with the development of gang awareness and prevention programs. As part of this awareness initiative, FNEC and FNSEA also distributed sports equipment to over 100 First Nation schools to support programs or strategies that promote school engagement and healthy lifestyles.



Human Resources Supports

HR Coach: Recognizing that effective human resource practices are fundamental for operating strong schools, BCTEA funding is used to employ a Human Resources Coach, who provides day-to-day advice through email and a telephone helpline. Resources available from the Coach include template Human Resource policies and procedures, as well as letters, forms, agreements, and toolkits related to: occupational health and safety; employee terminations; employee attraction, selection and retention; employee performance management; workplace relationships (harassment and bullying); and succession planning. In 2022/23, a monthly newsletter was distributed to schools with information about job fairs and current issues, and a new resource was developed – *The Principles of Success: Employee Retention Stories from BC First Nation Schools*, which contains successful employee retention ideas. This collection of stories, as well as additional resources, are available from the FNSA website.

Make a Future BC: Since 2012/13, FNESC and FNSA have also facilitated First Nation schools' access to the recruitment platform Make a Future BC, which promotes schools' employment opportunities to a broad audience and connects schools with teachers who are seeking work. In 2022/23 two new capabilities were added: an online application system and a database to search resumes.

65+ Make a Future accounts in 2022/23

10 new First Nation school employer accounts in 2022/23

5 new school profiles in 2022/23

287 jobs posted in 2022/23

276 average number of views per job posting

Circle of Well Being Challenge

The *Circle of Well-Being Challenge* (CWBC), sponsored by the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), is intended to promote good health by encouraging students to be physically active, eat healthy foods, and focus on mental health. The project distributes grants to support school-level activities and shares resources for student use.

31 First Nation schools participated in the CWBC in 2022/23

1,621 students participated in CWBC activities

The Seventh Generation Club Stay in School Initiative

With support from the FNHA and the Vancouver Canucks, since 1997 FNESC and FNSA have organized the Seventh Generation Club – an initiative that is intended to promote the importance of regular school attendance, engagement in school, participation in physical activities, healthy nutrition and lifestyle choices, and engagement in school. All Club members receive newsletters that share information related to higher education, career planning, nutrition, wellness, and organization skills, featuring artwork and photos contributed by schools and students. The Seventh Generation Club is open to all First Nations students in BC, and Clubs can be associated with First Nations, First Nation schools, public schools, or independent schools.

10,000 students (approx) participate in the Seventh Generation Club

First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy Initiative

The First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy consists of two distinct programs: 1. the Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP), which supports opportunities for summer work experience and training for in-school secondary and post-secondary First Nations students; and 2. the Skills Link Program, which supports First Nations youth participants in the following initiatives.

- **The Career Promotion and Awareness Program**, which sponsors career development activities such as career fairs and leadership projects.
- **The Cooperative Work Placements Program**, which funds First Nation schools' career readiness activities.
- **The Science and Technology Program**, which sponsors activities to promote science and technology as a career choice by providing first-hand experience in various science and technology disciplines.
- **The Mentored Work Placement Program**, which supports work experience opportunities for out-of-school, unemployed, or under-employed First Nations youth.
- **The Information Communication Technology (ICT) Work Placement Program**, which sponsors ICT work experience opportunities for out-of-school, unemployed, or under-employed youth.

163 communities were funded through SWEP in 2022/23

3,431 youth were supported through the Career Promotion and Awareness Program in 2022/23

33 First Nation schools were provided a Cooperative Education Program grant

1,271 students were included in 2022/23 Cooperative Work Placements

2,806 students participated in 2022/23 Science and Technology Programs

146 students were sponsored through the Mentored Work Placement Program in 2022/23

First Nations Health and Science Promotion Initiative

With generous sponsorship from the FNHA, in 2022/23 FNEESC continued the First Nations Health and Science Career Promotion (FNHSCP) Program, which provides grants to assist First Nations in offering their students health and science education and career planning opportunities. The program is intended to encourage students to consider and prepare for health and science related careers through activities such as tutoring and homework clubs, parent information sessions, workshops to promote career planning, relevant field trips, student visits to post-secondary institutes, science camps, and student attendance at health career fairs.

54 First Nations were provided a grant in 2022/23

1,163 students participated in 2022/23 FNHSCP activities

Artists in Education Initiative

Since 2003, funding has been provided annually for First Nation schools in BC by ArtStarts in Schools – a charitable organization that collaborates with educators, artists, families and communities to promote art as an essential part of learning and life. Artstarts-sponsored grants allow First Nation schools to provide exciting art opportunities for students by hosting programs involving local BC First Nation artists who are recognized by their communities for their talents and gifts.

20 schools requested an Artstarts grant in 2022/23



Wabsuwilaks'm Gitselasu School

Conclusions

BC First Nations remain committed to the principles of First Nations control of First Nations education, which is reflected in their development of a comprehensive, community-driven and research-based BC First Nations Education System that is intended to support lifelong learning for all First Nations learners.

As demonstrated in this report, in the past year significant work was implemented to collectively advance the BC First Nations Education System, and FNEESC and FNSA were proud to assist First Nations' efforts through advocacy, communications, policy development and research, and the implementation of programs and services intended to promote quality education for all First Nations students.

FNEESC and FNSA look forward to continuing our work with First Nations and First Nations schools to ensure that the First Nations Education System evolves and improves to meet the needs of First Nation learners in BC. For example, a new racism review and associated research will be used to guide important transformations of the BC education system. We also look forward to participating in ongoing joint efforts to promote a range of systemic reforms, built on strong partnerships and always under the guidance of First Nations. We are confident that our collective commitment to build on our successes to date will result in increased achievement for First Nations students in BC.

First Nations Education Steering Committee

Financial Statements – March 31, 2023

INDEX TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Auditor's Report

Statement Financial Position Statement 1

Statement of Operations Statement 2

Statement of Changes in Fund Balances Statement 3

Statement of Cash Flows Statement 4

Notes to the Financial Statements

Summary Schedule Of Operations & Changes In Fund Balances By Program Statement 5

Note: Schedules of Program Operations Available on Request

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**Independent Auditors' Report**

To the Board of directors of
First Nations Education Steering Committee Society

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of First Nations Education Steering Committee Society (the "Society"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2023, and the statements of operations, changes in fund balances and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Society as at March 31, 2023, and the results of its operations, its changes in fund balances, and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (ASNPO).

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the Society in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the basic financial statements of Society taken as a whole. The supplementary information included on the schedules on pages 11 - 60 is presented for the purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the basic financial statements. Such supplementary information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and, in our opinion, is fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the basic financial statements taken as a whole.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with ASNPO, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Society's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Society or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Society's financial reporting process.



Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements. As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- ◆ Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- ◆ Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Society's internal control.
- ◆ Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- ◆ Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Society's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditors' report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditors' report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Society to cease to continue as a going concern.
- ◆ Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements

As required by the Societies Act of British Columbia, we report that, in our opinion, the accounting policies applied in preparing and presenting financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations have been applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding period.

REID HURST NAGY INC.
CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS



RICHMOND, B.C.
JULY 6, 2023

FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE SOCIETY**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**

As at March 31	2023	2022
ASSETS		
Current		
Cash	\$ 40,518,594	\$ 42,886,704
Term deposits	-	7,377,461
Interest receivable	-	43,000
Accounts receivable	12,465,820	6,414,486
GST/HST receivable	13,431	8,679
Prepaid expenses	165,608	226,493
Due from First Nation Schools Association (Note 3)	143,573	235,929
	53,307,026	57,192,752
Capital assets (Note 4)	1,797,420	690,195
	\$ 55,104,446	\$ 57,882,947
LIABILITIES		
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 5,517,898	\$ 4,977,941
Wages and benefits payable	142,546	56,209
Current portion of capital lease obligations (Note 5)	1,346	8,077
	5,661,790	5,042,227
Capital lease obligations (Note 5)	-	1,895
	5,661,790	5,044,122
FUND BALANCES		
INVESTED IN TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS	1,796,072	680,222
UNRESTRICTED FUND	4,790,610	5,335,582
INTERNALLY RESTRICTED FUND (Note 6)	7,726,000	3,788,000
RESTRICTED FUND	35,129,974	43,035,021
	49,442,656	52,838,825
	\$ 55,104,446	\$ 57,882,947

Commitments (Note 7)

APPROVED ON BEHALF OF THE FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE SOCIETY

 , President
 , Treasurer

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements

FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE SOCIETY

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

For the year ended March 31	2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2022 Actual
REVENUE			
Indigenous Services Canada	\$ 86,761,790	\$ 86,761,790	\$ 81,859,940
Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills	4,200,000	4,200,000	8,775,000
Ministry of Education and Child Care	4,120,000	4,120,000	7,010,000
Interest income	1,500,000	2,549,868	490,787
First Nations Health Authority	400,000	335,856	380,084
BC School Superintendents Association	150,000	150,000	-
Other	385,750	383,417	42,882
	97,517,540	98,500,931	98,558,693
EXPENSES			
Invested in tangible capital assets	-	240,379	132,953
Restricted	125,416,897	101,656,721	88,523,678
	125,416,897	101,897,100	88,656,631
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	\$ (27,080,363)	\$ (3,396,169)	\$ 9,902,065

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements

FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE SOCIETY

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES

For the year ended March 31

	Unrestricted	Internally Restricted	Invested in tangible capital assets	Restricted	2023 Total	2022 Total
BALANCE, BEGINNING OF YEAR	\$ 5,335,582	\$ 3,785,000	\$ 680,222	\$ 43,035,021	\$ 52,838,825	\$ 42,936,760
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	(544,972)	3,938,000	1,115,850	(7,905,047)	(3,396,169)	9,902,065
BALANCE, END OF YEAR	\$ 4,790,610	\$ 7,726,000	\$ 1,796,072	\$ 35,129,974	\$ 49,442,656	\$ 52,838,825

FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE SOCIETY

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended March 31, 2023	2023	2022
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	\$ (3,396,169)	\$ 9,902,065
Items not involving cash		
Depreciation	240,379	132,953
	(3,155,790)	10,035,018
Change in non-cash operating working capital		
Accounts receivable	(6,051,334)	33,698
GST/HST receivable	(4,752)	7,421
Due from First Nation Schools Association	92,356	(64,968)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	539,956	(6,637,617)
Wages and benefits payable	86,337	835
Prepaid expenses	60,885	(124,763)
Interest receivable	43,000	(13,000)
	(8,389,342)	3,236,624
FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Acquisition of capital assets	(1,347,603)	(539,511)
Repayment of capital lease obligations	(8,626)	(15,936)
	(1,356,229)	(555,447)
INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Purchases of term deposits	-	(146,618)
Proceeds from redemption of term deposits	7,377,461	-
	7,377,461	(146,618)
INCREASE IN CASH	(2,368,110)	2,534,559
CASH, BEGINNING OF YEAR	42,886,704	40,352,145
CASH, END OF YEAR	\$ 40,518,594	\$ 42,886,704

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements

FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE SOCIETY

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

March 31, 2023

1. OBJECTIVE AND PURPOSE OF THE SOCIETY

The First Nations Education Steering Committee Society (the "Society") was incorporated on April 20, 1999 under the Societies Act of British Columbia.

The purpose of the Society is to facilitate discussions about education matters affecting First Nations in British Columbia by disseminating information and soliciting input from First Nations. The Society will work to provide a forum for networking, communication and liaison among First Nations schools, other educational institutes, and the federal, provincial and other governments.

2. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

(a) Fund Accounting

The Society follows the restricted fund method of accounting for contributions. The Society records accounting transactions using the fund accounting method generally in use for not-for-profit organizations. A fund is determined for the purpose of carrying on specific activities or attaining certain objectives in accordance with regulations, restrictions, or limitations. Each fund has its own statement of operations which presents the results of operations for the fund. To meet the objectives of financial reporting and stewardship over assets, certain interfund transfers are necessary to ensure the appropriate allocation of assets and liabilities to the respective funds. These interfund transfers are recorded in the statement of changes in fund balances.

The First Nations Education Steering Committee Society maintains the following funds and reserves as part of its operations:

- The Restricted Fund which reports activities pertaining to funds with a designated purpose.
- The Capital Fund which reports the capital assets and their associated activity.
- The Internally Designated Fund which reports the activity pertaining to the Contingency Reserve Fund to an internally set cap of \$7,726,000. Any amounts in excess of this cap are allocated to the Unrestricted Fund.
- The Unrestricted Fund which reports activities in the Core Projects Fund.

(b) Revenue Recognition

Restricted and unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue of the appropriate fund when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

(c) Capital Assets

Capital assets are recorded as expenditures in the appropriate fund and are also reported on the statement of financial position as capital assets at cost. Amortization is charged to the capital fund on a straight-line basis over the expected useful life of the assets as follows:

Assets under capital lease	5 years
Computer equipment	3 years
Furniture and equipment	5 years
Leasehold improvements	5 years
Program management applications	3 years

Capital assets are impaired when conditions indicate that they no longer contribute to First Nations Education Steering Committee Society's ability to provide goods and services, or when the value of future economic benefits associated with the tangible capital assets are less than their net book value. If such conditions exist, an impairment loss is accounted for as an expense on the statement of operations.

FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE SOCIETY

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

March 31, 2023

2. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES, continued

(d) Financial Instruments

(i) Measurement of financial instruments

The Society initially measures its financial assets and liabilities at fair value. Financial assets and liabilities are subsequently measured at cost or amortized cost. The Society has not designated any financial assets or financial liabilities to be measured at fair value.

Financial assets measured at cost include cash, term deposits, amounts due from the First Nations Schools Association, accounts receivable and sales tax receivable

Financial liabilities measured at cost include accounts payable and accrued liabilities, wages payable, and capital lease obligations.

(ii) Impairment

For financial assets measured at cost or amortized cost, the Society determined whether there are indications of possible impairment. When there is an indication of impairment, and the Society determines that a significant adverse change has occurred during the period in the expected timing or amount of future cash flows, a write-down is recognized on the statement of operations. A previously recognized impairment loss may be reversed to the extent of the improvement but cannot exceed the carrying amount of the financial asset. Reversals of previously recognized impairment losses are recognized in net income.

(iii) Transaction Cost

Transaction costs related to financial instruments that will be subsequently measured at fair value are recognized in net income in the period incurred. Transaction costs related to financial instruments subsequently measured at amortized cost are included in the original cost of the asset or liability and recognized in net income over the life of the instrument using the straight-line method.

(e) Measurement Uncertainty

In preparing the financial statements for the Society, management is required to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities, and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities, at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the period. Items requiring the use of significant estimates include collectibility of accounts receivable, useful lives of capital assets, accounts payable and accrued liabilities, and wages and benefits payable. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

3. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The Society, the First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) and the Indigenous Adult Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) are separate organizations, each with their own Board of Directors. The Society is related to FNSA and IAHLA pursuant to an administrative arrangement whereby the Society provides administrative and financial support, including staffing and office premises to the related parties.

Unless otherwise noted, transactions with related parties, if any, are in the normal course of business, and are measured at the exchange amount which is the amount of consideration established and agreed to by the related parties.

FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE SOCIETY

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS March 31, 2023

4. CAPITAL ASSETS

	Cost	Accumulated amortization	2023 Net book value	2022 Net book value
Assets under capital lease	\$ 130,669	\$ 130,669	\$ -	\$ 9,973
Computer equipment	618,620	449,046	169,574	169,999
Furniture and equipment	260,231	161,424	98,807	54,321
Leasehold improvements	892,055	407,245	484,810	321,262
Program management applications	1,088,660	44,431	1,044,229	134,640
	\$ 2,990,235	\$ 1,192,815	\$ 1,797,420	\$ 690,195

5. CAPITAL LEASE OBLIGATIONS

	2023	2022
Office equipment lease, repayable at \$673 per month at 0% interest per annum and due on May 1, 2023	\$ 1,346	\$ 9,972
Current portion	(1,346)	(8,077)
	\$ -	\$ 1,895

Interest expensed in the statement of operations for the year relating to capital lease obligations was \$Nil (2022: \$39)

6. INTERNALLY DESIGNATED AND UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

The Society currently holds internally designated funds as a contingency reserve (see Schedule 2). The funds are to be used in the event, funding is delayed or drastically reduced by funding agencies. The fund balance is capped at \$7,726,000 (2022 - \$3,788,000), which approximates six months of operations, legal fees, travel and meeting costs for further negotiations. The balance of the contingency fund in excess of the cap is considered to be unrestricted, along with the Core Projects program (see Schedule 1). These unrestricted funds will be spent according to priorities set out in a plan approved by the Board.

7. COMMITMENTS

The Society has committed to leasing its current office premises. The Society is obligated to make the following minimum lease payments exclusive of common area maintenance charges in each of the next four fiscal years as follows:

	\$
2024	\$ 325,788
2025	323,847
2026	316,742
2027	164,629
	\$ 1,131,006

FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE SOCIETY

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

March 31, 2023

8. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Transactions in financial instruments may result in an entity assuming or transferring to another party one or more of the financial risks described below. The required disclosures provide information that assist users of financial statements in assessing the extent of risk related to financial instruments.

(a) Fair Value

The fair value of the Society's cash, term deposits, accounts receivable and accounts payable and accrued liabilities are believed to equal their carrying amounts due to their short term to maturity. The fair value of the amount due from First Nations Schools Association is not readily obtainable.

(b) Credit Risk

The Society does have credit risk in accounts receivable of \$12,465,820 (2022 - \$6,414,486). Credit risk is the risk that one party to a transaction will fail to discharge an obligation and cause the other party to incur a financial loss. The Society reduces its exposure to credit risk by performing credit valuations on a regular basis and performing reviews of aged accounts receivable listings on a regular basis. In the opinion of management the credit risk exposure to the Society is low and is not material.

(c) Liquidity Risk

The Society does have liquidity risk in accounts payable and accrued liabilities of \$5,517,898 (2022 - \$4,977,941). Liquidity risk is the risk that the Society cannot repay its obligations when they become due to its creditors. The Society reduces its exposure to liquidity risk by ensuring that it documents when authorized payments become due. In the opinion of management the liquidity risk exposure to the Association is low and not material.

9. ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE

First Nations Education Steering Committee Society receives a significant portion of its revenue pursuant to a Comprehensive Funding Arrangement (CFA) with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). ISC provides annual funding under a 5 year commitment through BCTEA.

10. SOCIETIES ACT DISCLOSURE

Pursuant to the Societies Act of British Columbia, the Society is required disclose the number of, and total remuneration paid to employees and subcontractors, who receive remuneration or payments for services rendered, in excess of \$75,000 in the fiscal year.

In the current year, the Society had 49 (2022 - 43) employees and subcontractors who received remuneration or payments in excess of \$75,000 and paid remuneration totalling \$7,540,311 (2022 - \$5,064,738) to these individuals and subcontractors.

During the year, the Society paid \$15,850 (2022 - \$14,625) to the First Nations Tribal Council as a reimbursement for services rendered by the president of the board.

11. COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS

Certain of the comparative amounts have been reclassified to conform with the current year presentation. There has been no changes to the fund balances.

First Nations Schools Association

Financial Statements – March 31, 2023

INDEX TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Auditor's Report

Statement Financial Position Statement 1

Statement of Operations Statement 2

Statement of Changes in Fund Balances Statement 3

Statement of Cash Flows Statement 4

Notes to the Financial Statements

Summary Schedule Of Operations & Changes In Fund Balances By Program Statement 5

Note: Schedules of Program Operations Available on Request

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**Independent Auditors' Report**

To the Members of
First Nations Schools Association

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of First Nations Schools Association, which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2023, and the statements of operations, accumulated surplus, change in net financial assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Association as at March 31, 2023, and the results of its operations, its changes in its net financial assets, and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations ("ASNPO").

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the Association in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Other Matter

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the basic financial statements of Association taken as a whole. The supplementary information included on the schedules on pages 8-10 is presented for the purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the basic financial statements. Such supplementary information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and, in our opinion, is fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the basic financial statements taken as a whole.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with ASNPO, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Association's financial reporting process.

Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements. As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:



- ◆ Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- ◆ Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Association's internal control.
- ◆ Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- ◆ Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Association's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditors' report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditors' report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Association to cease to continue as a going concern.
- ◆ Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

REID HURST NAGY INC.
CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS

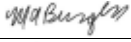
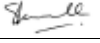
RICHMOND, B.C.
SEPTEMBER 18, 2023

FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at March 31	2023	2022
ASSETS		
Current		
Cash	\$ 820,235	\$ 743,417
Accounts receivable	114	433
Prepaid expenses	14,197	15,000
	\$ 834,546	\$ 758,850
LIABILITIES		
Current		
Unearned revenue	\$ 3,800	\$ -
Due to First Nation Education Steering Committee Society (Note 3)	143,573	235,928
	147,373	235,928
FUND BALANCES		
Restricted Fund (Schedule 1)	218,190	92,613
Unrestricted Fund (Schedule 2)	468,983	430,309
	FUND BALANCES 687,173	522,922
	\$ 834,546	\$ 758,850

APPROVED ON BEHALF OF THE FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION


 _____, President

 _____, Treasurer

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements

FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

For the year ended March 31	2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2022 Actual
REVENUE			
Indigenous Services Canada - BCTEA, transfer from First Nations Education Steering Committee Society	\$ 233,000	\$ 233,000	\$ 221,000
ArtStarts contributions	24,820	24,820	24,820
Membership fees	18,379	18,148	18,475
Interest income	18,000	24,198	3,088
Other revenue	-	5,508	2,429
	294,199	305,674	269,812
EXPENSES			
Advisory services	4,000	40	24,782
Annual general meeting	11,475	11,475	9,800
Artists in education program	34,000	34,000	40,800
Directors' costs	212,000	81,167	-
Insurance	2,800	2,616	2,616
Materials and supplies	3,000	1,295	1,147
Professional fees	11,200	10,830	10,313
School grants	-	-	197,751
	278,475	141,423	287,209
ANNUAL EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	\$ 15,724	\$ 164,251	\$ (17,397)

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements

FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF ACCUMULATED SURPLUS

For the year ended March 31

	Restricted	Unrestricted	2023 Total	2022 Total
BALANCE, BEGINNING OF YEAR	\$ 92,613	\$ 430,309	\$ 522,922	\$ 540,319
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	125,577	38,674	164,251	(17,397)
	\$ 218,190	\$ 468,983	\$ 687,173	\$ 522,922

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements

FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended March 31, 2023	2023	2022
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
ANNUAL EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	\$ 164,251	\$ (17,397)
Change in non-cash operating working capital		
Accounts receivable	319	1,892
GST/HST receivable	-	293
Prepaid expenses	802	-
Unearned revenue	3,801	-
	169,173	(15,212)
FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Due to First Nations Education Steering Committee Society	(92,356)	64,967
INCREASE IN CASH	76,817	49,755
CASH, BEGINNING OF YEAR	743,417	693,662
CASH, END OF YEAR	\$ 820,234	\$ 743,417

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements

FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

March 31, 2023

1. STATUS AND PURPOSE OF THE ASSOCIATION

First Nations Schools Association (the "Association") was incorporated under the Society Act of British Columbia on December 18, 1996. The Association registered as a charity under the Canadian Income Tax Act, effective April 1, 1998.

The Association serves First Nations schools by promoting quality education and maximizing the available resources in order to improve the quality of education of First Nations students. The Association directs its energy and resources towards supporting the work of First Nations schools in developing and implementing culturally appropriate, meaningful and high quality educational programs. The Association will work to provide a forum for networking, communication and liaison amongst First Nations schools, other educational institutes, and federal, provincial and other governments.

2. BASIS OF PRESENTATION AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (ASNPO).

(a) Fund Accounting

These financial statements have been prepared following the restricted fund method of accounting, where revenues are recorded in the period in which they were assessed or earned and expenditures are recorded in the period in which they became an obligation.

The First Nations Schools Association ("FNSA") operations include program delivery and administrative activities. The Association maintains the following funds in its course of operations:

- Core Projects (unrestricted fund)
- BCTEA Core & Conference (restricted fund)

(b) Revenue Recognition

Restricted and unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue of the appropriate fund when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

(c) Income tax status

For income tax purposes, the Association is a non-profit organization exempt from income taxes under Section 149(1)(l) of the Canadian Income Tax Act.

(d) Measurement Uncertainty

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reporting period. By their nature, these estimates are subject to measurement uncertainty. The effect of changes in such estimates on the financial statements in future periods could be significant. Accounts specifically affected by estimates in these financial statements are collectability of accounts receivable. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

March 31, 2023

2. BASIS OF PRESENTATION AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES, continued

(e) Financial Instruments

(i) Measurement of financial instruments

The Association initially measures its financial assets and liabilities at fair value, subsequently measures all its financial assets and financial liabilities at cost or amortized cost. The Association has not designated any financial assets or financial liabilities to be measured at fair value.

Financial assets measured at cost includes cash, accounts receivable.

Financial liabilities measured at cost includes amount due to First Nations Education Steering Committee.

(ii) Impairment

For financial assets measured at cost or amortized cost, the Association determines whether there are indications of possible impairment. When there is an indication of impairment, and the Association determines that a significant change has occurred during the period in the expected timing or amount of future cash flows, a write-down is recognized in the statement of operations. A previously recognized impairment loss may be reversed to the extent of the impairment. The carrying amount of the financial asset may not be greater than the amount that would have been reported at the date of the reversal had the impairment not been recognized previously. The amount of the reversal is recognized in the statement operations.

(iii) Transaction costs

Transaction costs related to financial instruments that will be subsequently measured at fair value are recognized in the statement of operations in the period incurred. Transaction costs related to the financial instruments subsequently measured at amortized cost are included in the original cost of the asset or liability and recognized in net income over the life of the financial instrument using the straight-line method.

3. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The Association and the First Nations Education Steering Committee Society ("FNESC") are separate organizations, each with their own Board of Directors. The Association is related to FNESC pursuant to an administrative agreement whereby the Association receives administrative and financial support, including staffing and office premises, from First Nations Education Steering Committee.

Unless otherwise noted, transactions with the related party are in the normal course of business, and are recorded at the exchange amount.

FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

March 31, 2023

4. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Transactions in financial instruments may result in an entity assuming or transferring to another party one or more of the financial risks described below. The required disclosures provide information that assist users of financial statements in assessing the extent of risk related to financial instruments.

(a) Fair value

The fair value of current financial assets and current financial liabilities approximates their carrying value due to their short-term maturity dates. The fair value of long-term financial liabilities approximates their carrying value based on the presumption that the Association is a going concern and thus expects to fully repay the outstanding amounts.

(b) Credit risk

Credit risk is the risk that one party to a transaction will fail to discharge an obligation and cause the other party to incur a financial loss. The Association reduces its exposure to credit risk by performing credit valuations on a regular basis. In the opinion of management the credit risk exposure to the Association is low and is not material.

5. ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE

First Nations Schools Association receives a significant portion of its revenue from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) transferred from the First Nations Education Steering Committee Society (FNESC). In the current year, 76.2% of the Association's total revenue originated from ISC (2022 - 81.9%).

6. SOCIETIES ACT DISCLOSURE

Pursuant to the Societies Act of British Columbia, the Association is required disclose the number of, and total remuneration paid to employees and subcontractors, who receive remuneration or payments for services rendered, in excess of \$75,000 in the fiscal year.

In fiscal 2023, the association had no employees and did not incur any expenditures related to salaries and benefits (2022:nil).



FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE
FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

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