



First Nations Education Steering Committee | First Nations Schools Association

ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

FRONT COVER IMAGES (LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM)

Chalo School; Shihya School; Kumsheen Secondary; Kinnikinnik Elementary; Sen Pok Chin; Sk'elep School of Excellence

BACK COVER IMAGES (LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM)

Fraserview Learning Centre; Boston Bar Elementary; Shihya School; Gold River Secondary; Barriere Elementary; Stein Valley Nlakapamux

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OPENING COMMENTS

We are very pleased to present the 2014/2015 Annual Report of the BC First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNEC) and the BC First Nations Schools Association (FNSA). Once again, we are proud to present this report as a collaborative document, reflecting our mutual responsibility for a number of key programs, as well as the overlapping interests and goals of our organizations.

In fact, FNEC and the FNSA have always worked together through a cooperative arrangement, and FNEC provides staff, financial, administrative, and communications support to the FNSA. More recently, FNEC signed important agreements with government that significantly affect our provision of services to First Nations schools and communities and extend our long-term partnership approach to program design and delivery.

This report is intended to inform First Nations communities, schools, and post-secondary institutes, as well as our many education partners, about the activities being undertaken by FNEC and the FNSA. This document also complements the numerous reports we submit to funding agencies for specific programs, by describing individual projects within the context of our full range of activities. Additionally, in the spirit of reduced reporting requirements for First Nations, this report outlines the explicit performance measures required from FNEC according to the Tripartite Education Framework Agreement, which Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) has agreed to extract and use as necessary.

**MESSAGE FROM
FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION (FNSA) PRESIDENT**

Pamela Lee Lewis



As President of the FNSA, I am very pleased to introduce our Annual Report for 2014/2015. The past year has proven to be another very exciting one for the FNSA, and we welcome this opportunity to highlight some of the key activities we have undertaken – many of them in cooperation with our long-standing partner, FNEESC.

First Nations schools in BC began working toward the development of a collective support organization over two decades ago, culminating in the formal establishment of the FNSA in 1996. It has been an honour to have been involved with the FNSA throughout that long history, and now as President I am especially proud to be building upon the work of the many Board members and Presidents who came before me.

In establishing the FNSA, First Nations schools responded to the benefits we knew would result from collaborative action, and the value that comes from sharing information, support and programs – all with the goal of advancing quality education in our schools.

The FNSA is a regionally-representative organization, with our ten-member Board of Directors elected by our membership at each Annual General Meeting. But I believe the real strength of our organization comes from our commitment to truly hearing the voices of all of our members.

That principle was the basis for an exciting new opportunity in 2014 – our first-ever Authorized Representatives Meeting, which was held the day prior to our 2014 Annual General Meeting. This special meeting provided a forum for direct input and feedback from our members, and the day proved to be a wonderful opportunity for informed and thoughtful discussions. We enjoyed the chance to provide our members with an update about our latest strategic goals, and to participate in round table discussions on key topics related to First Nations schools. Based on the feedback from our members, we hope to make this day an annual event.

As always, throughout the past twelve months the FNSA has continued its efforts to support First Nations schools in ensuring that quality and culturally appropriate educational opportunities are available for our students. In order to support that goal, we have undertaken research, shared information, organized collective professional development opportunities, supported schools with assessments and data gathering, and we have taken every opportunity to celebrate and bring attention to the significant achievements of First Nations schools in BC.

I hope this Annual Report provides a useful overview of our efforts. Please remember that the FNSA welcomes suggestions and feedback at any time, and we very much look forward to working with our members and partners in the year ahead.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "P. Lewis". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a long, diagonal slash mark.

MESSAGE FROM
FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE (FNESC) PRESIDENT

Tyrone McNeil



On behalf of FNESC, I welcome this opportunity to introduce our 2014/2015 Annual Report. Once again, the past year has involved significant challenges and also meaningful opportunities for growth, and we are very excited by the progress that has been achieved. We have particularly enjoyed our opportunities to meet with hundreds of people who came together through FNESC sponsored meetings, conferences and workshops. The dedication shown by our members and our partners truly inspires us to continue our important work on behalf of First Nations learners throughout BC.

In keeping with the spirit of the Tripartite Education Framework Agreement, we have been working very closely with the BC Ministry of Education to explore innovative approaches to supporting our learners in both public and First Nations schools. We have been actively engaged on numerous Ministry of Education curriculum and policy tables, which has been very informative for everyone involved. With much-appreciated support from First Nations leadership, we have been involved in ongoing discussions with our public education partners about ways to improve accountability mechanisms related to First Nations student achievement.

Additionally, positive advances have been made with the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, and FNESC has enjoyed opportunities to take part in policy and program developments in support of our learners pursuing adult and post-secondary education. We also have worked with our education partners at both the K-12 and post-secondary levels to create a Transitions Working Group, which is intended to promote seamless transitions for First Nations learners who are moving beyond high school. In particular, FNESC has very much appreciated our involvement in the advancement of the Ministry of Advanced Education's *Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Action Plan, 2020 Vision for the Future*.

And of course we are proud of our work with our close partners, the FNSA, the First Nations Early Childhood Development Council (FNECDC), and Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA), in implementing joint initiatives and participating in collaborative discussions about ways to support First Nations learners in BC.

Overall, being involved with FNESC continues to be an extremely rewarding experience, and I encourage everyone interested to join us in our efforts to ensure that all First Nations learners are able to achieve their goals. We are very pleased to welcome new Board members, and it is with pleasure that I acknowledge the new individuals who have joined FNESC, bringing our total Board to include 111 First Nations representatives. I truly believe that by working together and combining our expertise and resources in effective ways, we will continue to make great progress toward success for all students.

As we now prepare for another year of activities, we look forward to building upon our many successful partnerships and promote even further improvements in First Nations education.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tyrone McNeil', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.



ABOUT THE FNESC

The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) was founded in 1992 by participants at a provincial First Nations education conference at the Vancouver Friendship Centre. That visionary group of people determined the need for a First Nations-controlled collective organization focused specifically on advancing quality education for all First Nations learners, and they set out FNESC's commitment to supporting First Nations in their efforts to improve the success of all First Nations students in BC.

FNESC works at the provincial level to provide services in the areas of research, communications, advocacy, program administration and networking. FNESC also strives to share up-to-date information about available programs, government policies and initiatives, and local, provincial and national education issues that effect First Nations learners. In addition, FNESC strives to build partnerships with federal and provincial government agencies and other relevant stakeholders in order to communicate the issues and concerns of BC First Nations and to ensure that they are addressed in a meaningful way. Finally, FNESC provides staff, administrative, and communications support to the FNSA and IAHLA.

FNESC MANDATE

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



ABOUT THE FNSA

First Nations schools in BC began working toward the establishment of a collective support organization many years ago and the FNSA was formally established as a non-profit society in 1996.

The FNSA represents and works on behalf of First Nations controlled schools in BC, and almost all of the 128 BC First Nations schools in 67 First Nations communities are members of the Association. The FNSA has a mandate to support those schools in creating effective, nurturing, and linguistically and culturally appropriate education environments that provide students with a positive foundation in all academic areas.

The FNSA works directly with its constituents and reports to its members at its Annual General Meeting (AGM). The FNSA Board of Directors includes 10 individuals selected at each AGM.

FNSA MISSION

"The First Nation Schools Association will collaborate with First Nation 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."

WHO WE ARE

FNSA Executive and Board Members As of March 2015

Pamela Lee Lewis, President
Kwakwaka'wakw/Heiltsuk/Nuxalk/Oweekeno

Colleen Austin, Vice-President
Haida/Tsimshian/Haisla/Nisga'a Region

Kirsten Barnes, Secretary
Region: Gitksan/Wet'suwet'en

Janice Antoine, Member
Secwepemc/St'at'imc/Nlaka'pamux Region

Kathi Dickie, Member
Kaska/Dene/Tahltan/Tagish/Inland Tlingit/Tsek'ene Region

Heather Kelliher, Member
Kootenay/Okanagan Region

Sheila McKee, Member
Nuu-chah-nulth/Coast Salish Region

Monty Palmantier, Member
Tsilhqot'in/Carrier/Sekani Region

Verna Stager, Member
Secwepemc/St'at'imc/Nlaka'pamux Region

Vacant, Member
Nuu-chah-nulth/Coast Salish Region



Shihiya School



Lalme'eiwesawtexw Parent's Day Tea

WHO WE ARE

FNESC Executive Board & Members

Tyrone McNeil, FNESC President
Stó:lō Tribal Council

Kendra Underwood, FNESC Vice-President
Tsawout First Nation

Jeneen Hunt, FNESC Treasurer
Kwicksutaineuk Ah Kwa Mish First Nation

Joe Pierre, Jr., FNESC Secretary
St. Mary's Indian Band

Emily Aikten Tlowitsis Tribe
Jim Angus Kispiox Band Council
Janice Antoine Coldwater Indian Band
Lisa Anwar Kwakiutl District Council
Grant Alphonse Tl'etinqox-t'in Government Office
Barbara Barltrop Nanoose First Nation
Verna Billy-Minnabarriet IAHLA Representative
Nita Bobb Spuzzum First Nation
Melissa Boles Nazko First Nation
Mary Brown Heiltsuk Band
Ron Brown Jr. Old Massett Village Council
Chantal Burt Cheslatta Carrier Nation
Rob Cahill Quatsino First Nation
Angie Chapman Skawahlook First Nation
Cindy Charleyboy Soda Creek Indian Band
Lynne Charlton Lower Nicola Indian Band
Char Crocker Cowichan Tribes
Elizabeth Davidson Da'naxda'xw First Nation
Terrie Davidson Boothroyd Indian Band
Terry Deneault Skeetchestn Indian Band
Kathi Dickie Fort Nelson First Nation
Marlene Erickson Carrier Sekani Tribal Council
Charlene Everson K'ómoks First Nation
Thelma Florence Chawathil First Nation
Theresa Gabriel Osoyoos Indian Band
Wendy Gallic Tseshaht First Nation
Christian González Becerra Tsay Keh Dene Band
Adele Gooding Skin Tyee First Nation
Leanna Gravelle Tobacco Plains Indian Band
Deanna Lisa Green Lax Kw'alaams Indian Band
Charlotte Guno Kitsumkalum Band Council
Tim Harris Stz'uminus First Nation
Ernie Hill Gitga'at First Nation
Marion Hunt Kwakiutl Band Council
Cindy Inrig We Wai Kai Nation
Sandra M. Jack Taku River Tlingit First Nation
Vern Jacks Jr. Tseycum First Nation
Deborah Jacobs Squamish Nation
Susan James Lillooet Tribal Council
Edward Jensen Tk'emlups te Secwepemc

Darrell Jones Splatsin First Nation
 Kathleen Jumbo Nooaitch Indian Band
 Sue Ketlo Nadleh Whut'en Band
 Yvonne LaRochelle Cayoose Creek Indian Band
 Brenda L. Leighton Metlakatla First Nation
 Debra Manuel Shackan Indian Band
 Robert Matthew Adams Lake Indian Band
 Brenda McDonald Ts'kw'aylaxw First Nation
 Pamela Lee Lewis FNSA Representative
 Fran L'Hirondelle Songhees First Nation
 Sharon Lindley Upper Nicola Band
 Niki Lindstrom Lheidli T'enneh Band
 Jody Linklater Dease River First Nation
 Darlene Louie Canoe Creek Indian Band
 Robin Louie Lower Kootenay Indian Band
 Jolene Louie Iskut Band Council
 Greg Louie Ahousat First Nation
 Diane Louis Okanagan Indian Band
 Claudette Lucas Hesquiaht First Nation
 Marlene Marasco Squiala First Nation
 Diane Mattson Moricetown Indian Band
 Heather McKenzie Williams Lake Indian Band
 Marjorie McRae Gitanmaax Band Council
 Nina Minnabarriet Bonaparte Indian Band
 Bianca Michell Yekooche First Nation
 Faye Mitchell Musqueam Indian Band
 Deborah Moore Kitselas Band Council
 Julia F. Morris Nee Tahi Buhn Indian Band
 William Morris Tsartlip First Nation
 Deanna Nyce Nisga'a Lisims Government
 Dolores O'Donaghey Boston Bar First Nation
 Nicole Ogen Wet'suwet'en First Nation
 Curits Olsen Saanich Indian School Board

Phyllis Peters Seton Lake Indian Band
 Marcia Piercy Skidegate Band Council
 Gwen Point Stó:lō Nation
 Randal L. Russell Gitsegukla Band Council
 Isabel Reid Tahltan Band Council
 Angela Reynolds Stellat'en First Nation
 Andreas Rohrbach Kwadacha Nation
 Ragina Sam Penelakut Tribe
 Stephanie Sam Akisqnuq First Nation
 Nancy Seward Snuneymuxw First Nation
 Cynthia Sewid Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em Band
 Nina Shaw Kitamaat Village Council
 Monica Simms Gitksan Government Commission
 Grace Smith Gwa'sala - 'Nakwaxda'xw Nation
 Lauren Terbasket Lower Similkameen Indian Band
 Julie Thevarge N'Quatqua Band Council
 Peter Tallio Nuxalk Nation
 Faith Thomas Saik'uz First Nation
 Tammy Thomas Neskonlith Indian Band
 Sandra Victor Cheam Indian Band
 Ken Watts Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council
 John Waldie Gitxaala First Nation
 Thelma Wenman Yakwekwioose First Nation
 Bessie West Lake Babine Nation
 Leslie Williams Skwah First Nation
 Melanie Williams Tzeachten First Nation
 J. Curtis Wilson Campbell River Indian Band
 Amanda Zettergreen Gitwangak Band Council
 Vacant Tl'azt'en Nation

Number of voting participants at the July 2014
 FNEC Annual General Meeting

56

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Creating Systemic Changes in the BC Public Education System

For the past two decades, FNEESC and First Nations in BC have worked collectively and with a variety of partners to achieve a number of critical advancements. In doing so, First Nations have continually promoted a focus on First Nations languages, cultures, traditions, and current realities, understanding the importance of First Nations students having a positive sense of self-identity, the need for more widespread awareness of First Nations concerns and circumstances, and the important role of education in revitalizing and transmitting First Nations languages and cultures.

- In 1998, FNEESC and the FNSA helped establish the *BC Aboriginal Education Partners Group*, which brings together a range of education organizations and government agencies relevant to the K-12 education system with the goal of improving the success of Aboriginal students.
- In March 2005, key stakeholders in Aboriginal post-secondary education (PSE) agreed to work together to improve access and success for all Aboriginal post-secondary students in BC, creating the *Aboriginal PSE and Training Partners*.
- FNEESC, the FNSA and the BC Ministry of Education have worked in partnership to create and promote the use of important *new curricular materials*, such as Residential Schools Curriculum, English First Peoples courses, and information about authentic First Peoples texts. There is also a joint commitment to create additional resources to help better inform all students about First Nations issues and realities.
- FNEESC actively participates on a number of key Ministry of Education working groups that are influencing evolving changes to the BC public education system, and FNEESC has been integrally involved in discussions about how the Ministry of Education's accountability framework can better contribute to the shared objective of improved student outcomes.

- After successfully highlighting the need for adequate representation of First Nations in all components of the BC education system, in 2011 *FNESC was included on the new BC Teachers Council* – the agency responsible for teacher certification and regulation in BC.
- Due in part to FNESC’s advocacy, the Ministry of Education annually publishes data to *monitor the achievement of Aboriginal students in BC* – shared each year through the Ministry’s *How Are We Doing?* Report.
- FNESC has promoted a *wider commitment to quality Local Education Agreements* focused on improving student success, and has raised awareness about how well-constructed LEAs can help to improve working relationships and lead to successful joint strategies.
- FNESC, along with IHALA, was integrally involved in developing the Ministry of Advanced Education’s *Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Action Plan, 2020 Vision for the Future*.

Outma Sqilx’w Cultural School



?A’q’amnik Elementary School, Artists in Education



KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Creating a BC First Nations Schools System

Based upon the principles of First Nations control of First Nations education, and reflecting a commitment to providing their students locally-based, relevant, and high quality educational opportunities, many First Nations have created their own schools, which are located within and operated by First Nations communities. Today, there are 128 First Nations controlled schools in 67 First Nations communities, all of which are committed to providing quality instruction, sound academic programs, as well as supportive environments for children. The schools are founded upon First Nations cultures and languages, and they strive to reflect the values and traditions of the communities they serve.

THE BC FIRST NATIONS SCHOOL SYSTEM IN BRIEF

Overall, First Nations schools are working individually and together to implement effective programming at the classroom, school, regional, and provincial levels.

The system that has been created for collective activities is founded upon efforts to identify, gather and use relevant information and data for the purpose of monitoring instructional and program effectiveness, meeting school planning needs, and determining priorities for services and support activities, as described below.

- An emphasis on First Nations language and culture learning is integrated, as appropriate, into all activities.
- All activities include a relevant focus on accountability and monitoring.
- Reflecting emerging educational research and the realities of First Nations schools, significant efforts are underway to promote effective school leadership – including coaching for school governing agencies, as well as mentoring and professional development support for school principals.
- Recognizing the fundamental effect of teacher quality on academic achievement, a comprehensive network of programs to enhance teachers' professional growth has been established, including in-school coaching, conferences and workshops, and professional learning communities for grade level teachers.
- The system of support activities has been designed to consider the needs and special strengths and challenges of all students, promoting the fundamental importance of strong instruction at the classroom level, with careful screening and formative assessment use to identify the specific needs of each student.

Specific components of the system are described in Section 4 of this report.

Key First Nations Education Agreements in the BC Region

TRIPARTITE EDUCATION FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

Since September 2012, Canada, BC, FNEC and the FNSA have been working together to implement a five-year Tripartite Education Framework Agreement (TEFA), which has the primary purpose of improving achievement rates for First Nation students in BC. TEFA formally recognizes the capacity of First Nations in BC to create and implement a relevant and research-based First Nations education system that will improve student outcomes.

A fundamental component of TEFA is Canada's commitment to a more flexible funding model for BC First Nation schools that is consistent with the BC Ministry of Education's funding formula for public schools, with specific adaptations to reflect the unique characteristics of First Nations schools. Since the signing of TEFA, ongoing discussions have been underway to realize the full level of resources outlined in the agreement and to clarify other necessary adaptations to the funding model.

TEFA also includes an agreement from Canada and FNEC to develop BC-specific policies and guidelines that better reflect the needs of First Nations schools, and to consult about federal education policy, guidelines, standards, or legislation that materially affect First Nations education in BC.

In addition, TEFA provides resources to extend and build upon FNEC and the FNSA's long-standing efforts to assist First Nations communities and schools through meaningful program and service implementation, and it promotes relevant data collection and accountability mechanisms that will inform ongoing programming and improve education results.



Cataline Elementary School

Through TEFA, FNEC and the Province of BC have reiterated their mutual commitment to increase success for all First Nations students in BC. This commitment recognizes that two thirds of students from First Nations schools transition to public schools, as many First Nations do not have high schools. As envisioned in TEFA, FNEC is an active participant in provincial policy discussions and regular meetings. FNEC and BC also are working together to establish beneficial educational initiatives by sharing resources and expertise, and by extending relevant services and programs between the First Nations and public education systems. This Annual Report highlights numerous examples of this commitment being put into action.

TEFA is set to expire in 2017, and FNEC, the FNSA and BC have formally expressed strong support for extending this very important agreement beyond that time. Ideally, Canada will also confirm its commitment soon. It is critical to sustain the progress being achieved through TEFA, which will further strengthen the widely-acknowledged BC First Nations Education System.

Number of meetings of the TEFA Working Group, Oversight Committee,
and Funding Working Group

50



David Stoddart School

FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION JURISDICTION AGREEMENTS

Canada, BC and FNEC signed a package of First Nations education jurisdiction agreements on July 5, 2006, which was soon followed by the passage of enabling legislation by Canada (2006) and BC (2007).

Since that time, the jurisdiction agreement reached with the provincial government has resulted in significant benefits. For example, reflecting a commitment made in the jurisdiction negotiations, in November 2009 the Province of BC and FNEC reached a new Reciprocal Tuition Agreement. Under that landmark and unique Agreement, the Ministry provides full per-pupil funding for students living off-reserve who are enrolled in First Nations schools, and for eligible non-status students living on reserve lands. Additionally, the Province of BC and FNEC have worked together in a positive way to extend provincial cost-effective, bulk purchasing opportunities to First Nations schools, and FNEC has been increasingly involved in the Ministry of Education's consultations and policy development efforts.

Unfortunately, progress in implementing the jurisdiction agreement with Canada has been hindered by an inability to finalize the financial component of the arrangement. This important issue remains a priority, and all parties signed an extension of the agreements in 2013 to allow more time to mutually determine the funding that will accompany jurisdiction. FNEC and the Negotiating First Nations will persist in exploring all opportunities for advancing the jurisdiction agreements in a meaningful way. For example, a Costing Sub-Committee has continued to direct detailed research and facilitate ongoing discussions about the financial requirements associated with the full realization of education jurisdiction.

At the same time, FNEC has been supporting First Nations' efforts to build capacity and better prepare for the implementation of the agreements. In particular, considerable progress has been made in terms of enhancing community governance structures and promoting community awareness of key education matters. In 2014/2015, FNEC undertook a number of specific activities:

- FNEC implemented a survey to assess the readiness of First Nations for jurisdiction implementation, the results of which will be used to plan for new strategies and approaches to support First Nations and to inform the development of a Jurisdiction Readiness Toolkit for distribution in the upcoming year.
- Information related to jurisdiction is maintained on the FNEC website and updates on the status of negotiations are regularly prepared and distributed to all First Nations. FNEC also regularly informs First Nations leadership about progress being made, and provides information to assist Negotiating First Nations in informing their communities about the education jurisdiction negotiations.
- Finally, FNEC managed the distribution of grants for Negotiating First Nations to allow them to undertake community-based activities to prepare their Nations for the implementation of these landmark agreements.

Work toward the full realization of this initiative will continue.

Working with First Nations Communities and Schools

BC FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP

First and foremost, FNEC and the FNSA continually seek advice and direction from First Nations leadership in BC regarding all significant issues effecting First Nations education. Specifically, FNEC and the FNSA appreciate the ongoing guidance and support provided by the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, the First Nations Summit, the BC Assembly of First Nations, and the First Nations Leadership Council.

THE FNEC REGIONAL SESSIONS

FNEC and its education partners (including the FNSA and IAHLA) annually report on their activities and important First Nations education issues at a series of workshops known as Regional Sessions. These sessions represent a fundamental component of FNEC's efforts to maintain accountability to the 203 First Nations in BC, to discuss emerging issues with a range of education stakeholders and partners, and to facilitate input from community and school representatives. They also fulfill an important function in increasing the capacity of First Nations to address education issues.

REGIONAL SESSION LOCATION AND DATE	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Williams Lake	12
Kelowna	9
Prince Rupert	19
Prince George	23
Campbell River	11
Kamloops	38
Cranbrook	12
Vancouver	35
Nanaimo	30
Total	189

- The majority of participants in the Regional Sessions represented a First Nations community/school (70%), approximately 16% worked in a K-12 public school, and 8% a higher learning or adult education agency.
- Approximately 50% of the participants were education coordinators. Of the other participants, most worked in a school, in education administration, or represented First Nations leadership.



ʔA'q'amnik Elementary Preschool

THE 2014 FNE SC ANNUAL ABORIGINAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Each year, FNE SC organizes a province-wide conference that brings together educators and education administrators to share effective practices in Aboriginal education and to promote networking.

Last year, the 20th FNE SC Annual Aboriginal Education Conference, *20 Years: Transforming Education*, took place December 4–6, 2014 in Vancouver. The event brought together a range of representatives from public schools, school districts, First Nations schools, and provincial partner organizations. Highlights of the Conference included keynote addresses from Dr. Jo-ann Archibald, Associate Dean for Indigenous Education, NITEP Director and Professor in Educational Studies, University of British Columbia, as well as Tomson Highway, esteemed Cree playwright, novelist, and children's author. Additionally, the conference offered a number of well-received workshops and a panel presentation on transforming education.

The Conference also included Toonie, live and silent auctions, which raised over \$7,000 for the Seventh Generation Club.

Number of participants
at Annual Aboriginal
Education Conference

800

THE FNSA 2014 CONFERENCE AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The FNSA held its 18th Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM) on April 25 and 26, 2014. The theme of the event, *Sharing What We Know*, reflected the sharing of knowledge and professional networking that took place at the Conference, as well as the FNSA's goal of advancing collective action to support excellence in BC's 128 First Nations schools.

The Conference participants enjoyed an opportunity to hear keynote speaker Dr. Anthony Muhammad, best-selling author of the books *The Will to Lead and the Skill to Teach: Transforming Schools at Every Level* and *Transforming School Culture: How to Overcome Staff Division*. Dr. Gordon Neufeld, an authority on child development and a leading interpreter of the developmental paradigm, also provided a keynote address, and Damian Cooper presented workshops focused on improving instructional and assessment skills.

The 2014 FNSA event also included an Authorized Representative Meeting the day prior to the Conference, providing a forum for direct input from FNSA members into the Association's work. That day allowed for informed and thoughtful discussion to guide the FNSA's ongoing efforts and to prepare for decisions at the FNSA AGM, which took place during the Conference.

Number of participants
at April 2014 FNSA AGM
and Conference

435

OTHER INFORMATION SHARING, CONSULTATION, AND RESEARCH EFFORTS

In addition to all of the major events described above, FNE SC and the FNSA regularly organize information sharing sessions as issues arise, as described throughout the remainder of this report. Further, FNE SC and the FNSA maintain websites and provide regular communication updates in order to share information and ensure that representatives of First Nations communities and schools are informed of relevant and evolving educational issues. In particular, a TEFA e-Bulletin updates schools and communities about emerging TEFA-related topics. The organizations also implement media strategies as appropriate to promote more widespread awareness of the educational needs of First Nations.

Joint Efforts with Key Partners

INDIGENOUS ADULT AND HIGHER LEARNING ASSOCIATION

The Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) was created in 2002 by Aboriginal-controlled adult and post-secondary education institutes in BC. IAHLA is an independent non-profit society directed by a regionally representative ten-member Board of Directors. IAHLA contracts administrative services from FNSC, and the two organizations often cooperate on post-secondary matters.

IAHLA's membership includes community-based institutes that offer a range of courses and programs that include: college and university programs leading to certificates, diplomas and degrees; adult education; language instruction; occupation-specific training and upgrading; and life-long learning activities. Working together through IAHLA, Aboriginal institutes are striving to increase recognition of their unique and successful approaches to community-based, culturally-relevant learning, and to raise awareness of their successful efforts to increase opportunities for adult learners.

FNSC and IAHLA work together on a number of key issues, resulting in more efficient engagement with government and partners that are seeking input from First Nations communities and post-secondary institutes, and avoiding any unnecessary overlap of relevant efforts.

More information is available at www.iahla.ca.



Boston Bar Elementary



Barriere Elementary

FIRST NATIONS EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Research has shown that, without question, high-quality, age-appropriate early childhood education can have a lasting impact and bring enormous future benefits, not only to the children who participate, but also to their communities and to society at large. In fact, connections have been shown between quality early learning opportunities and higher educational achievement throughout K-12, increased graduation rates, and greater success well into adulthood.

Reflecting these understandings, FNEESC is pleased to provide administrative support to the First Nations Early Childhood Development Council (FNECDC). The FNECDC was created in 2007, when stakeholders began discussing the need for a provincial BC First Nations early childhood agenda and action plan aimed at improving the well-being of First Nations children from prenatal to six years. On March 24, 2010, representatives from over 40 organizations, including FNEESC and the FNSA, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together to improve Early Childhood Development programs and services, and since then, the Council has been endorsed by BC First Nations Leadership and has grown to include more than 60 members who collaborate on an evolving agenda and action plan.

The FNECDC's key documents are available at www.fnecdc.ca.

Among its recent key accomplishments is the joint release, with the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS), of a research report titled *Summary Report: Occupational Standards and Fair Wages for First Nation Early Childhood Educators*. A follow-up *First Nations Early Childhood Educator Occupational Standards Report* will be released in the near future. The FNECDC has also published a *Human Resource Management Best Practices Toolkit*, and an *Early Childhood Training Strategy*.

POLICY AND PROGRAM DISCUSSIONS WITH GOVERNMENT

On a regular basis, FNEESC and the FNSA participate in policy development discussions with the Province of BC and Canada. Those discussions are intended to lead to meaningful changes in provincial and federal initiatives that effect First Nations education, such as information sharing protocols with the BC Teacher Regulation Branch to support First Nations schools' employment practices, and the creation of a provincial Superintendent of Aboriginal Achievement position in 2012.

K-12 ABORIGINAL EDUCATION PARTNERS

In 1994, FNEESC began meeting regularly with representatives of the federal and provincial governments on a tripartite basis to discuss strategies for working together to improve the success of First Nations learners. Those discussions provided opportunities for FNEESC to have valuable input on policy and legislative changes that could affect First Nations education.

Growing from those discussions, in 1998 the original Tripartite Education Committee founded the BC Aboriginal Education Partners Group, which grew to include some of the most significant stakeholders in the BC education system, including FNEESC, the FNSA, AANDC, the BC Ministry of Education, the BC Teachers' Federation, the BC College of Teachers, the BC School Trustees Association, the BC Superintendents Association, the BC Confederation of Parents Advisory Councils, the BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, United Native Nations, and the BC Métis Nation. In 1999, the organizations signed a Memorandum of Understanding to solidify their partnership.

The Partners are working together to achieve the following goals.

1. Increase collaboration among the partners
2. Increase the number of qualified Aboriginal educators
3. Increase understanding and respect for First Peoples' knowledge, cultures and histories
4. Incorporate Aboriginal perspectives into all education decision-making

FNEESC and the FNSA also work with individual Education Partners on specific initiatives, as appropriate.



Valley View Elementary



Kumsheen Secondary



Chalo School

ABORIGINAL POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING PARTNERS

In March 2005, several stakeholders in Aboriginal post-secondary education (PSE) agreed to work together to improve access and success for all Aboriginal post-secondary students in BC, formalizing their commitment in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The resulting Aboriginal PSE and Training Partners continue to meet regularly to share information and implement joint strategies, including working to transform post-secondary education in this province by implementing the BC Ministry of Advanced Education's *Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Action Plan: 2020 Vision for the Future*.

Signatories to the Aboriginal PSE and Training MoU include FNEESC, IAHLA, the First Nations Summit, Métis Provincial Council of BC, United Native Nations Society, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, BC Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, University Presidents' Council of BC, University College Presidents, and the BC College Presidents. Other contributing members include the BC Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agencies Society, the BC Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, and the BC Ministry of Education Learning Division, Aboriginal Education.

FNEESC and IAHLA support the Partners and coordinate their efforts to advance positive changes in Aboriginal PSE in BC, through both the leadership of the Partners Group and through the work of the member organizations.

JOINT PARTNER GROUP MEETINGS

In an exciting new development, the BC Aboriginal Education Partners Group and the Aboriginal PSE and Training Partners meet to discuss issues of common concern. In the past year, the Joint Group met twice, identifying and discussing critical issues requiring collective attention, including First Nations education funding. Further, a Transitions Working Group has been established and has created a workplan to promote more seamless transitions for students moving from secondary to post-secondary.

MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING

Overall, FNEESC and the FNSA have established important formal relationships with the following organizations, among many others.

- First Peoples' Cultural Council (formerly the First Peoples Heritage, Language and Culture Council)
- First Nations Health Authority (formerly the First Nations Health Society)
- Association of BC Deans of Education
- Representative for Children and Youth
- First Nations Technology Council
- BC K-12 Aboriginal Education Partners Group
- BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners

Programs and Services to Support First Nations Schools

TEFA IMPLEMENTATION

TEFA represents a crucial commitment by all three TEFA parties to promote higher levels of achievement for all First Nations students in BC.

Reflecting this joint agreement, there have been significant advancements in accountability mechanisms related to First Nations education in the provincial education system, including annual reports on outcomes for Aboriginal and First Nations students, joint discussions of graduation credentials for First Nations students and ways to address the over-representation of First Nations students leaving school with Evergreen (non-graduation) certificates, local education agreements, and other important components of the Ministry's approach to accountability.

FNESC also is working closely with the Province of BC to better articulate First Nations-specific data in a way that will contribute to relevant accountability mechanisms for student results.

For example, FNESC and the Ministry of Education have been collaboratively developing a standardized procedure through which First Nations can access achievement data specific to their students, even when First Nations have small populations. This data will empower First Nations to have informed discussions with school districts when participating in decisions about the education their children receive. When First Nations are able to access this information it will further their ability to act on the principle of local control at the school district level. Access to outcomes for status on-reserve First Nations students attending public schools will increase accountability and support both First Nations and school districts in the development, monitoring, and implementation of meaningful educational goals.

A finalized backgrounder and template letter for data requests will be included as an appendix in the updated LEA toolkit (described more in the Education Partnership Program (EPP) section below). FNESC will raise awareness about the availability of this resource through regional sessions and LEA sessions. The Ministry has raised the possibility of communicating the availability of this resource through existing Ministry communication channels.

In addition, reflecting commitments included in the TEFA, in the past year FNESC has been invited to join a number of Ministry of Education committees that are working towards the advancement of the new BC Education Plan. FNESC provided detailed feedback regarding changes to BC curriculum, and FNESC and FNSEA representatives participated in many of the curriculum development teams for the BC K-9 and 10-12 curriculum redesign.



Nala'atsi Aboriginal Education

Specifically, FNEESC is a part of the following Ministry and related committees.

- Accountability Framework Review Advisory Group
- Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Working Group
- Advisory Group on Provincial Assessment
- Foundation Skills Assessment Redesign Working Group
- Competencies Consulting Group
- Graduation Prototype Committees
- Ministry of Education Safe Schools Committee
- Emergency Planning and Preparedness Committee
- Healthy Schools Committee (First Nations Health Authority)
- ITA Youth Apprenticeship Review Committee
- Steering Committee for Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) on Indigenous Education (University of British Columbia)
- Cuystwi: Indigenous Youth Wellness Online Training Advisory Group (Provincial Health Services Authority)
- Respectful Relationships Advisory Group (Ministry of Justice)
- Hiring committees for key Aboriginal education positions in the Ministry of Education

FNEESC also has participated in one-time meetings on topics such as scholarships and the piloting of cohort data, and FNEESC has initiated ad hoc working groups to consider issues such as data analysis of education outcomes for incarcerated youth and data reporting for First Nations communities with small populations.

FNEESC welcomes the opportunity to contribute to all important discussions of education issues.

Additional progress that has been achieved through cooperative efforts with the BC Ministry of Education are described throughout this Annual Report.

2014/2015 Number of Policy Meetings

65

Further, TEFA, as described above, represents an important platform for core and second level service delivery and collective support for First Nations education, and TEFA funding is used to sponsor a number of key collective programs and services intended to help schools build their capacity and ensure high levels of learning for all students. Those services are based upon an established framework of standards and models developed by and for First Nations schools in BC. This includes standards for:

- Teachers in BC First Nations Schools (complete and approved);
- Principals in BC First Nations Schools (complete and approved);
- First Nations School Governing Agencies (in draft and being shared for input);
- First Nations Schools Curriculum (in development); and
- A First Nations Graduation Certificate and Course Authorization Process (complete and approved).

Building upon the foundation that has been established by First Nations schools working together for over two decades, the following activities were implemented in 2014/2015.

The Professional Growth Process (PGP)

The Professional Growth Process (PGP) is intended to ensure appropriate and consistent supervision for learning in First Nations schools in BC. The PGP emphasizes a thorough, supportive process for identifying priorities for improvement and monitoring principals' and teachers' effectiveness and demonstrated progress.

In the PGP, Regional Principals and school-based principals collaboratively reflect upon and strengthen the principal's practice in relationship to the Standards for Principals in First Nations Schools. Regional Principals, as necessary, act as role models for instructional leadership, share supervisory tools and techniques, demonstrate specific skills, mentor principals, recommend professional readings, and help to facilitate networking and

professional development opportunities appropriate for each principal's unique needs.

The PGP has quickly become one of the most successful of the TEFA-sponsored support initiatives, and last year 57 schools were involved in the process. Additional schools also have expressed interest in future participation.

A survey used to evaluate the PGP implementation last year showed that participating principals perceive the process as having a positive impact on their leadership.

- All of the responding principals (27) found the support provided by the PGP staff to be very supportive (22 responses) or supportive (5 responses).
- The majority of responding principals indicated that their ability to undertake their role greatly (16) or somewhat improved (9) as a result of the PGP. Two principals were neutral.
- 24 of the 27 responding principals indicated that their teachers have greatly improved (6) or showed some improvement (18) as a result of the PGP. Two principals were neutral about this question, and one disagreed.

A small selection of comments from the survey respondents are included below.

- “This is the best support that I have had since I was first involved in administration. My Regional Principal supported me with staff. Exceptional assistance was given regarding instructional leadership. Now the teachers know what is

expected and they work very hard to give our students the best.”

- “I am better able to undertake my role as an instructional leader since I received support and training from my PGP Regional Principal. I am given direct support to become a better school leader using the FNSA teacher evaluation process. I viewed myself as an administrator or ‘acting principal,’ but now I am gaining confidence and skills in leading our school as an instructional leader. ... The Regional Principal reminds me to use a growth vs. a fixed mindset. Despite the challenges in my school I am always reminded to support staff in their professional growth and not take things personally. I have definitely grown as a professional school leader with the great support from FNSA’s PGP.”
- “Many principals of First Nations schools work in isolation. Speaking for myself, participation in this project has pushed me to grow professionally and to act in that capacity in ways that would likely not have happened had I not participated.”
- “The Regional Principal has worked with me to support teachers to improve their instruction. It is invaluable to have an experienced educator come in with ‘fresh eyes’ and take an objective look at instruction in classrooms. Teachers have reported that implementing the suggestions has improved their classroom management skills tremendously, allowing more students to be on task, engaged, and learning.”

Possibilities to expand the PGP, while also reducing staff travel time and costs, continue to be explored, including an increasing use of remote coaching, and a greater emphasis on video and teleconferencing strategies – as shown in the data below.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of schools involved in the PGP process	57
Number of school visits by PGP Regional Principals	335
Number of telephone calls, emails, remote coaching sessions etc. to support PGP participants	7,330

First Nations Schools Assessment and Certification Process

The FNSA Assessment and Certification Process involves a five-year cycle of review and follow-up. In year one, participating schools complete an “internal review” by considering all aspects of school operations, highlighting opportunities provided and indicators of success in areas such as school administration, language and culture programming, other academic programs, school/community relations, and library and technological resources. The internal process also involves surveying students, parents, school staff, and other community members to determine levels of satisfaction with the school and its programs. Schools then review all of the information collected, analyze their strengths and areas for improvement, and develop a School Growth Plan, which outlines intended activities for maintaining successful topics and addressing areas that require change.

Following that work, an FNSA-appointed external review team visits participating schools to assess the findings of the internal review and the School Growth Plan, and offer suggestions and feedback on the documents and the school’s programming.

The schools subsequently work to address the School Growth Plan during the next four years, before undertaking another School Assessment Project and beginning the cycle again.

Interested schools also may request “Certification” by the FNSA, which requires meeting a set of collectively established standards. Specifically, Certification by the FNSA is based on the external review team’s determination that:

- the Internal School Assessment Report has been adequately completed (including a review of performance measures to demonstrate student achievement);
- the school situation observed by the External Assessment Team is consistent with the content of the Internal School Assessment Report;
- there is clear evidence that the school is meeting expectations in Core Topic Areas (Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Science, First Nations Language and Culture Program, etc.); and
- the School Growth Plan is appropriate and feasible.

The FNSA strives to ensure the rigour and effectiveness of the assessment and certification activities by guiding First Nations schools through the step-by-step assessment process. In particular, the FNSA sponsors a mentoring initiative, which allows individuals with extensive experience with First Nations schools and the assessment process to directly assist the schools in undertaking their reviews. This support is meant to ensure that the process is implemented with fidelity, and with an appropriate integration of meaningful information and student performance data. The FNSA also facilitates the external assessment component of the project, by training and supporting external assessors in effectively fulfilling their roles.

Further, the FNSA supports schools that complete an assessment by providing funding grants in the year following the Assessment Project completion, to sponsor activities identified in School Growth Plans. A team of coaches hired and trained by FNSA and



SK'elep School of Excellence



Chief Dan George School

the FNSA assists in ensuring that the Growth Plan Grants are used as effectively as possible.

Responses from project participants to a feedback survey distributed in March 2015 showed that:

- 100% of the respondents found their internal review of school programs beneficial (45%) or very beneficial (55%);
- 96% found the collection of feedback from students and parents was beneficial (55%) or very beneficial (41%);
- 100% found the visit from the external review team was beneficial (45%) or very beneficial (55%);
- 82% found the project workshop beneficial (59%) or very beneficial (23%); and
- 94% found the project was somewhat helpful with school planning (14%) or greatly helped with school planning (82%).

Schools that had received a School Growth Plan grant reported that they had referred to their School Growth Plan occasionally (32%) or often (68%), and that they were making some progress (60%) or significant progress (40%) in implementing their plan.

The validity of the assessment process and accompanying certification component has been recognized by a variety of education stakeholders. In particular, the School Assessment and Certification Process was a central factor in the negotiation of the landmark reciprocal tuition agreement, which allows the provincial government to pay the tuition fees of off-reserve students attending First Nations schools. Additionally, the School Assessment and Certification Process has evolved over time to ensure that it adequately reflects emerging issues and priorities.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of schools in the school assessment and certification process	21
Number of schools that completed a school growth plan in 2013/2014	26
Number of those schools supported in growth plan implementation	26
Total number of schools now Certified by the FNSA	71



Shihiya School

Professional Development and Collective Curriculum Development: Events, Professional Learning Communities, and Essential Learning Outcomes

Research shows that teachers and principals matter. But research also shows that teachers and principals differ significantly in effectiveness, and the expertise of each school's teaching staff depends to a large extent on quality professional development. In fact, teachers, principals, and other staff in First Nations schools, who often work in significant isolation, have particularly noted the importance of professional development opportunities for their continued growth.

Conventional Professional Development Events

In response to this need, FNEC and the FNSA provide a broad range of professional development events for principals and teachers that are designed specifically to reflect the realities of First Nations schools, including the FNSA annual conference and periodic workshops on a range of topics identified by First Nations schools as priorities. Principals of First Nations schools in BC also are supported through an annual *Principals Short Course*, which allows for carefully selected presentations on topics of immediate and important concern to principals in First Nations schools, as well as critical networking amongst principals who might otherwise work in relative isolation – geographically and professionally.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of participants in Principal Short Course

51

In addition, an area of programming that requires more adequate support relates to the needs of *Education Assistants* (EAs) in First Nations schools. EAs supplement and support the work of certified teachers, and their work enhances children's experiences of learning in critical ways. EAs in First Nations schools in fact make a unique and invaluable contribution to their schools and students; anecdotal evidence suggests that EAs are often members of the communities they serve, and therefore tend to remain in their employment positions longer than some of the other education professionals working in the schools, providing much-needed stability for students, families, and long-term programming.

Reflecting the invaluable role they play, in 2014/2015 the FNSA offered its first-ever professional development opportunity specifically for EAs. Participants at that event were asked to provide feedback about their experience.

- Approximately 95% of the EAs who attended that event reported that it was very or somewhat relevant to the work they do.
- 99% of respondents found the event very (82%) or somewhat (17%) informative.
- The participants indicated that what they learned at the event will be very (71%) or somewhat (29%) useful for their work and will help them to improve student learning.
- When asked if they would attend another FNSA event for EAs if funding makes future events possible, 96% of respondents indicated "definitely yes" and an additional 2% said perhaps. (1 respondent out of 84 said no).



Nala'atsi Aboriginal Education

A sample of the comments shared include:

- “The event I attended was so awesome. I learned lots and everything was very useful to me. I would definitely attend another event.”
- “Enjoyed my first workshop as an EA. Look forward to more informative workshops in the future.”
- “Just loved the appreciation of our work....thank-you! Kukstemc!”

Based on this information, FNEsc and the FNsa are now exploring ways to continue to support these invaluable members of First Nations schools.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of participants in the EA Professional Development Event	210
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In-School Professional Development

The conventional forms of professional development described above are complemented by in-school support, consistent with the growing research consensus that systemic, locally relevant professional development is more effective than conventional one-time workshops alone.

For example, significant resources are devoted to support *in-school coaching*, involving direct assistance to schools from individuals with expertise in literacy development, language and culture programming, and the effective use of student assessments. The effort is consistent with widespread evidence that schools are increasingly looking to coaching and other relationship-based professional development strategies to improve the skills and performance of teachers and school leaders, and that such interventions lead to schools that are more happily and productively engaged in the work of student learning.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of school visits made by literacy coaches	60
Total number of schools that were visited by literacy coaches	20
Number of school visits made by school assessment coaches	71
Total number of schools that were visited by school assessment coaches	66
Number of school visits made by the First Nations language and culture coach	30

Overall, it appears that the coaching services are having positive results.

For example, in a survey of schools that received support from the First Nations Language and Culture Coach, all of the respondents found the services relevant and useful for their work, calling the support “awesome and informative” and “a whole day full of excellent information.”

In a survey of teachers who received literacy and school assessment coaching:

- 87% of the 68 responding teachers reported that the coaching services were very relevant (60%) or relevant (27%) to their work; and
- 83.5% of the respondents found the experience to be either very useful (61%) or somewhat useful (22.5%).

Some of the comments shared include the following.

- “It is very positive that we are able to receive coaching services by phone, email, conference call, and workshops. Thanks for the hard work.”
- “I was very happy with the quality of coaching we received. As previously mentioned, it would be better to have more regular school visits available.”



Ecole Puntledge Park

- “Our coach is a wonderful resource for our school, giving honest, forward moving feedback and always noting what the teachers are doing well. The coach is always welcome in our school and is of great support to our teachers and EAs.”
- “I find that the Coaches are very resourceful and will direct us to the right person if they know there is someone who can give us better assistance. I believe the system is truly operating to a high standard.”

Some of the survey respondents also shared helpful comments and suggestions that can be used to thoughtfully consider the future implementation of the coaching initiative – including timing and frequency of visits.

In addition, the FNSA is currently promoting the integration of the *Professional Learning Communities (PLC)* approach into First Nations schools in BC. The PLC model flows from the assumption that the core mission of formal education is not simply to ensure that students are taught, but to ensure that they learn. This simple shift — from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning — has profound implications for schools.

Generally, the PLC process involves organizing educators into collaborative teams, which meet regularly to consider important questions such as: What school characteristics and practices have been most successful in helping all students achieve at high levels? How could we adopt those characteristics and practices in our own schools? What commitments would we have to make to create such schools? What indicators could we monitor to assess our progress?

The FNSA is embracing the PLC model in a comprehensive way, supporting schools in establishing PLCs within their own settings, and also organizing provincial-level PLCs for principals and for grade level groups of teachers.

The principals involved in the FNSA’s PLC efforts are working together to consider the role of the principal in achieving change, including deconstructing the FNSA Standards for Principals in First Nations Schools to help make the standards come alive and ensure that they are being operationalized for the benefit of other staff, students, and families. In a survey of participating principals, 25 of the 27 respondents indicated that the professional development provided through the PLC initiative was relevant, and 24 of the 27 principals felt it was useful (2 principals were neutral). Some of the comments shared by the participating principals are:

- “Working in isolation is a challenge. The PLC allows me to discuss similar and diverse challenges and initiatives with other principals, which has given me new ideas and strategies and has given me a sense of belonging to a group of peers.”
- “The PLC is relevant because we deal with issues but draw on our varied experiences. It is also useful because information

is readily shared. We have a sense of belonging to a team of principals and professionals, and an association.”

The PLC grade level groups of teachers are collaboratively creating a set of essential learning outcomes, which are then resulting in collectively developed instructional strategies and assessment tools to outline what each student should learn, how that should be taught, how to know when students are learning what is intended, and what to do if students are experiencing difficulty learning the essential learning outcomes that are identified. This work represents a significant component of First Nations schools’ efforts to use data in a meaningful way to guide their practice and programming. The grade group teachers meet every three weeks, using face-to-face meetings twice each year, complemented by teleconferences and webinars to reduce costs and travel burdens. The meetings focus on developing kindergarten 4 to grade five ELOs, as well as First Nations Language ELOs.

In a survey of participating teachers:

- 88% of the 56 responding teachers reported that the PLC/ELO initiative was very relevant (61%) or relevant (27%) (9% of respondents were neutral);
- 87.5% of the respondents found the experience to be either very useful (54.5%) or somewhat useful (33); and
- 92.5 % of the responding teachers indicated that the PLC/ELO experience has helped them to greatly (54.5%) or somewhat (38%) improve their practice.

Some of the comments shared include the following.

- “It has been beneficial being able to share my students’ work with other teachers of the same grade. It is good to have new eyes look at my students’ work and my teaching practices, and to learn and try new ideas and share what worked and what didn’t.”
- “Seeing, sharing, and learning from one another ... what a great opportunity to improve my own teaching skills.”

- “Some members in my group are more experienced than I am; the sharing of their ideas and approaches to teaching has helped me improve”
- “I find that I have been able to adjust my teaching practice based upon what I learned when we pulled apart the ELOs (which I initially thought was a waste of time). It was an eye opening experience. I took a long look at what I was doing, listened to my group members, and reassessed how I taught. Being able to share and try to resolve problems with my group is keeping me from feeling overwhelmed. I’m so glad to be a part of this initiative.”
- “I really enjoy being a part of this process. I love being able to network with other teachers. I feel I am a more competent teacher with the skills I have acquired from the PLC training. I know there is always more I can learn, and I look forward to continuing in this work. ... The PLC initiative is supporting teachers in a way that was never done before, so I believe it is very worthwhile. Thank you for the opportunities I have been given to become a more informed and competent teacher. Our children are worth it.”
- “I have really enjoyed this experience and have learned a lot from it. I am from a remote community, so being in contact with other kindergarten teachers was very beneficial. It was great being able to share strategies, ideas and assessments. Having the opportunity to discuss challenges that arose in my classroom and getting feedback and ideas from other teachers was helpful. I took many of these ideas/strategies and was able to test and implement them in my own classroom. This is a great opportunity and I am happy I was able to be a part of it.”

Overall, the FNSA supports this initiative through ongoing gatherings of teachers from schools that are using the model, in order to facilitate a sharing of experiences and provide relevant information about PLCs and related instructional strategies. In addition, the FNSA uses webinars and in-school support through the PGP and Coaching initiatives to further promote the PLC efforts.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of schools involved in the PLC initiative	76
Number of participants in PLC meetings / training sessions	222
Number of in-person PLC/ELO workshops organized	13
Number of ELO group conference call meetings	296

Capacity Building for First Nations School Governing Agencies

The critical role of school governing agencies in promoting school success is well recognized, and is widely cited as an important issue for attention. Accordingly, the FNSA is working to provide school governing agencies with information to support effective educational decision-making. The support being provided primarily includes community-based coaching, which is founded upon a comprehensive *Capacity Building Handbook: Leading First Nations Schools in BC*. In addition, in each of the last two years, two collective workshops were offered in central locations to facilitate networking and information sharing with and between school governing agency members. Overall, the Capacity Building Coach facilitates collaborative discussions about the appropriate roles and responsibilities of a school authority, and the importance of prioritizing actions for monitoring and increasing student success.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of communities visited by the Capacity Building Coach	10
Number of participants in coaching workshops	79
Number of participants in 2 school governance collective workshops	41

Principal Evaluation Support

The FNSA supports the principle that an effective evaluation process can assist school principals in the realization of their full potential, resulting in improved leadership qualities and ultimately supporting a positive impact on instruction and student achievement, as well as an intentional and effective focus on the community's mission, vision, values and goals for the school. A comprehensive evaluation process will enhance professional growth, as well as confidence in the principal, which will benefit the principal, teachers, parents, and students.

The FNSA therefore has a newly endorsed Principal Evaluation Policy for sharing with First Nations School Governing Agencies, based upon the FNSA Standards for Principals in First Nations Schools. Additionally, staff are now available to support School Governing Agencies with the implementation of the FNSA Principal Evaluation Policy.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of school governing agencies provided principal evaluation support	3
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Chalo School

Promoting Evidence-Based Decision Making

Today, there is a growing recognition of the need to use data to inform decision-making and provide clear evidence of what is happening in schools, including monitoring instructional and program effectiveness, meeting school planning needs, and maintaining accountability to parents, communities, and funding agencies. Research has consistently highlighted the range of benefits that can result from thoughtful efforts to measure educational success. Data can help educators decide what actions to take to improve instruction, change practice, or reform schools. Data also provides quantifiable substance for meaningful, ongoing dialogue with the community. The FNSA and FNESC therefore are pro-actively supporting schools in thoughtfully using student assessment data and other clear sources of evidence for the purpose of program and achievement monitoring, informed decision-making, and identifying needed instructional improvements.

For example, as described above, a range of in-school coaching for school staff provides direct mentoring and assistance for the implementation of student assessments, as well as coaching on how to analyze student results in order to inform instructional choices. On a very practical level, the FNSA previously organized a number of in-service and training workshops and provided financial assistance for the purchase of recommended student assessment tools – the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), and Canadian Achievement Test 4 (CAT4). Finally, TEFA funding continues to be used to support collective scoring of CAT4 results.

Reflecting the efforts being made in this area, 69 of the 72 schools that can be using DIBELS are doing so (i.e. schools that offer relevant grade levels: K5 – 6), and 61 schools are now participating in the FNSA’s CAT4 collective services.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of schools supported with CAT4 Scoring

61

Data Records and User Management System (DRUMS)

Since 2010, FNESC and the FNSA have been developing the Data Records and User Management System (DRUMS) – an integrated infrastructure for managing student information at the school level and for analyzing and reporting aggregate data at the provincial level. DRUMS was designed by First Nations schools in order to meet individual school needs, to inform programming at the local and collective levels, and to support reporting to communities and parents.

Throughout the past year, ongoing training was provided for the schools that continue to take advantage of this important system. Also, a survey of schools participating in DRUMS was recently distributed to determine their school data needs. The results of that survey showed that the majority of participants find that participating in DRUMS is useful in supporting their school data and records management needs, and in assisting with reporting on TEFA performance measures and other types of reporting. A large majority of the respondents also indicated that DRUMS is generally user-friendly.

However, large numbers of the survey respondents expressed limited awareness of the available DRUMS support and training opportunities, and highlighted the need for continued information sharing to assist new school staff who are taking on responsibility for data management and reporting at the local level. In response, the DRUMS support team has created a new communications strategy to even more pro-actively build capacity in schools for the effective use of this very important tool.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of schools participating in the DRUMS initiative

66

Technology Support Line

A toll-free technology support line is available to support First Nations school staff who require assistance in the area of information and communications technology. Schools can call about ...

- Hardware – including trouble with computers (including Macs) / Smart Boards / PanaBoards / Tanbergs / SonicWalls / routers / videoconferencing, etc.
- Software – including upgrades, licensing, warranties, product suggestions and questions about software use
- Connectivity – such as trouble connecting to the Internet, connectivity speed, etc.
- Funding and Purchases – tips for accessing funding, estimating costs, and accessing bulk purchasing opportunities to save money
- DRUMS – questions about the First Nations schools student information system

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of phone calls/emails answered

3,253



Deroche Elementary

Connected Classrooms Initiative

For the past four years, the FNSA and FNEC have been piloting the Connected Classrooms initiative, which is designed to facilitate joint offerings of specific grade 8 through 12 courses by a number of First Nations schools. Participating schools use a combination of technologies, including real time video conferencing, to connect and create an interactive classroom environment for students located in a collective of First Nations schools throughout BC. This project differs from other Distance Learning initiatives because the students participate in a real time virtual classroom with an instructor qualified to teach the specific subject, complemented with in-person support from an on-site educator.

In 2014/2015, twelve schools participated in the Connected Classrooms initiative, and collectively offered Math 10 Foundations and Pre-calculus, Math 11 Pre-calculus, 2 sections of Science 10, Chemistry 11, Biology 12, and English First Peoples 12 courses. These courses were provided to a total of 129 students. Students attributed their success in these courses to their ability to see and interact with the teacher and other students.

Results for all of the 2014/2015 Connected Classrooms courses were not available at the time of writing this Annual Report, as the students just completed their final exams at the end of June. However, results from 2013/2014 are available to demonstrate the success of this initiative. In 2013/2014, there were 96 course registrants, representing 72 different students (as some students took more than one course). Of the 72 students, 58 completed their courses – an 81% course completion rate.

Further, the results from the courses completed in January 2015 showed that of the 53 students from nine different First Nations schools who completed Science 10, 83% (44) passed the course.

All of the schools that participated in the Connected Classrooms Initiative in 2014/2015 are committed to doing so again in the upcoming school year, and one new school has also asked to join. Several other schools have expressed interest in joining if space becomes available for new students. In addition, Pre-calculus 12 and English First Peoples 11 will be added to the Connected Classrooms offerings for the 2015/2016 school year.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of schools participating in Connected Classrooms initiative

12

Number of students taking courses through Connected Classrooms

129

Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Among the most widely recognized and least disputed findings of educational research is the primary role of teachers in the success of students, and numerous studies demonstrate persuasively that the potential effect of teacher quality on academic achievement is quite high. Therefore, as described throughout this part of the report, the FNSA is currently implementing a number of initiatives aimed at supporting teachers, which is expected to help facilitate greater teacher retention. In addition, the FNSA recognizes the importance of implementing specific, practical activities to directly address teacher recruitment and retention and support schools in implementing effective employment practices as a key priority.

Accordingly, two years ago the FNSA published an *Employment Handbook for First Nations Schools*, and employment workshops have been offered regularly on issues related to teacher recruitment and retention in the many conferences and special events the FNSA has hosted for First Nations schools.

In 2012/2013, the FNSA was able to extend those opportunities through the organization of workshops developed jointly with a new partner – Make a Future. Make a Future is a recruitment initiative created by the BC Public School Employers' Association as a joint venture among BC's 60 public boards of education and the Ministry of Education. The workshops developed with Make a Future have shared a wealth of information related to promoting job opportunities, writing effective job descriptions, successful interviews, and reference checking.

Make a Future and the FNSA are now furthering the positive relationship they have established to date by working together on additional projects. One specific activity is related to the Makeafuture.ca website. A new partnership between Make a Future and the FNSA provides First Nations schools with access to the Make a Future services and web site, which facilitates high quality, innovative promotion of employment opportunities to a broad audience, enhancing the recruitment efforts of First Nations schools. See www.makeafuture.ca for more information about this new opportunity for recruitment support.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of teacher recruitment workshops offered	2
Number of participants in teacher recruitment workshops	72
Number of schools accessing Make a Future teacher recruitment activities	59

Bulk Purchasing Opportunities

In 2014/2015, First Nations schools that were interested in purchasing a new school bus were once again able to take advantage of standing offer prices for various types of buses – creating an opportunity to purchase school buses at a much lower cost. This opportunity is being offered by the BC Ministry of Education, working with the Association of School Transportation Services of BC (ASTSBC), in the spirit of the July 2006 BC First Nation Education Jurisdiction Agreement and January 2012 TEFA. Additional opportunities for access to economies-of-scale for First Nations schools' purchases are being explored.

First Nations Language and Culture Planning for First Nations Schools

In the past year, an FNSA Language Focus Group created a Strategic Plan for First Nations Languages, outlining priority work to support communities and schools with language education programs. The framework will now serve as a guide for effectively directing resources to areas of greatest need, such as continuing to identify First Nations languages essential learning outcomes and providing professional development support for First Nations language teachers.



Kinnikinnik Elementary

2014/2015 EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

For the past five years, FNEC and the FNSA have managed the federal government's Education Partnerships Program (EPP) funding on behalf of First Nations in the BC Region. The activities undertaken through that program, which involves a close working relationship with the BC Ministry of Education (MEd), are outlined below.

Enhancement of Local Education Agreements in BC

Local Education Agreements (LEAs) between First Nations and School Boards describe mutually agreed upon goals aimed at supporting First Nations students attending public schools. In the agreements, First Nations and school district personnel commit themselves to a variety of strategies that both parties agree will result in greater student success. LEAs also are the mechanism through which federal funding for identified First Nations students is distributed through First Nations to school districts and Independent schools.

Many First Nations and school districts value the benefits that LEAs create, but the development and effectiveness of LEAs is inconsistent across the province. In response, EPP funding has been used to support a number of activities to address this situation.

For example, through the EPP funding, more than 500 people have attended workshops organized to exchange information about LEAs and how these agreements might better contribute to the success and achievement rates of First Nations students attending public or independent/private schools off reserve. The participants have included public school system representatives, including School Trustees, as well as First Nations' administrators, education coordinators, and First Nations and educational leaders. AANDC Funding Services Officers also have been formally invited to attend.

In addition, EPP funding has been used to sponsor the development of a comprehensive LEA Toolkit, which outlines issues associated with the negotiation of LEAs, including options for parties to consider in reaching mutual agreements for the benefit of students.

FNEC has also sponsored individual sessions involving experienced, professional facilitators who have assisted First Nations and school districts in areas of the province where negotiations have not been proceeding well, resulting in renewed commitments to conclude agreements that reflect promising practices being implemented in other parts of the province.

In 2014/2015, FNEC extended its ongoing LEA support activities, including additional information sharing workshops offered in response to requests from First Nations and school districts. In



Stein Valley Nlakapamux School



Boston Bar Elementary



Sardis Elementary



Diamond Vale Elementary

In addition, assistance was provided directly for First Nations that have experienced serious challenges in negotiating a relevant and effective agreement, by undertaking necessary research, collecting data related to the achievement of their specific students, and providing community-based capacity building sessions to help the First Nations prepare for informed LEA discussions, with the intention of advancing agreements in areas that have not experienced success in the past.

Additionally, a number of evolving issues necessitated specific research. For example, First Nations have identified the need for a new type of agreement between First Nations schools to address situations in which students from one community are attending a school operated by a neighbouring Nation. In response, a contractor was identified to develop a new draft template First Nations school-to-First Nations school education funding transfer agreement. Additionally, a new draft LEA template was created for use by the many First Nations that have students attending a BC Independent School.

Finally, significant effort was made to consider LEA issues within the context of proposed revisions to the BC Ministry of Education's accountability framework. While LEAs are not recognized in Ministry policy as a formal component of the accountability framework, they are strongly related to overall efforts to monitor and plan in response to evidence of First Nations students' needs, and it is very important to ensure that LEAs are consistent with other accountability measures. Therefore, FNESC has made relevant revisions to the LEA Toolkit to ensure its consistency with evolving Ministry policy.

All of the work outlined above was built upon and will be integrated into ongoing discussions. For example, meetings of the TEFA Working Group and TEFA Oversight Committee have continually highlighted LEAs as a priority for joint action and response, and additional activities are being planned to build upon the critical projects that have been implemented to date.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of LEA workshops

4 EPP funded + 1 at the FNESC Aboriginal Education Conference

Number of participants in LEA workshops

71 in workshops + 44 in the Aboriginal Education Conference Workshops



Amy Woodland School



Sen Pok Chin



Airport Elementary

Advancing the First Nations Graduation Certificate

For the past several years, First Nations schools have continually highlighted their need to offer a recognized graduation certificate to eligible students.

In response, since 2011 the FNSA has been working with school representatives to develop a First Nations Graduation Certificate that would be authorized and issued by the FNSA. Implementing a First Nations Graduation Certificate is consistent with First Nations education rights, and specifically with provisions included within the BC First Nations Education Jurisdiction Agreements.

Concurrently, the FNSA and FNEC have been promoting the importance of First Nations schools being able to offer the Dogwood Diploma, which would be a meaningful interim solution and long-term complement to a First Nations Graduation Certificate.

In the past year, significant progress was made in both of these areas. A 2014 focus group was organized to build upon earlier work, and that group affirmed the requirements for a First Nations Graduation Certificate, which will complement the Dogwood Certificate and represent an important new option for interested First Nations schools and students. A complementary First Nations Course Authorization Process has also been developed to appropriately review and recognize locally developed courses designed by First Nations, including First Nations language and culture courses offered in First Nations schools. The First Nations Graduation Certificate was then approved by the FNSA membership at the 2015 Annual General Meeting, and the FNSA will now begin promoting the First Nations Graduation Certificate with First Nations, parents, education partners and post-secondary institutes to increase its recognition as a legitimate graduation option. The Ministry of Education has also acknowledged the First Nations Graduation Certificate as a legitimate graduation

option for interested communities, schools and students, and is now considering offering students in BC public schools the opportunity to receive a First Nations Graduation Certificate, as well.

In addition, work toward First Nations schools being able to offer the Dogwood Diploma is well underway. In 2013/2014 – for the first time ever – non-Independent First Nations schools were able to offer their students the opportunity to write Ministry of Education provincial exams. The FNSA and the BC Ministry of Education are making every effort to ensure a continuation of this opportunity, and are cooperatively working toward a goal of having First Nations schools able to offer the Dogwood by 2016/2017. The finalized details for this new opportunity will be included within a formal Protocol Agreement now being developed by FNEC, the FNSA, and the BC Ministry of Education.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Since the 2001 announcement of the federal government's Special Education Program (SEP), First Nations schools in BC have directed the FNSA and FNEC to act as the Regional Management Organization (RMO) for AANDC's SEP funding for the BC Region. In doing so, the organizations have consistently supported all First Nations schools in this province to the fullest extent possible.

The BC SEP uses an intervention-based approach to special education delivery. This service delivery model involves a systematic process that begins in the classroom, with an extensive use of informal and formative assessment techniques for the purpose of program planning and for identifying students who might need more intensive assessments and support, and/or ultimately psycho-educational diagnoses and possibly assistance from one or more specialists. First Nations schools also have placed significant

emphasis on early identification of special needs, as identifying and addressing special needs as early as possible offers the best opportunity for mitigating challenges and giving students the greatest chance of long-term success.

In addition, First Nations schools in BC have consistently directed the FNSA and FNEC to maintain a program design that emphasizes funding at the school-level for direct support for students with special needs, complemented by collective initiatives to create economies-of-scale and increase access to necessary expertise and special education materials.

Accordingly, each year, all schools are provided an allocation to support their special education programming with responsibilities set out in their contribution agreements. In addition, a separate portion of the BC SEP funding is allocated through a proposal process to schools with specific students with high cost low incidence special needs who cannot be served using the annual base grant. Using these funds, First Nations schools have made great progress in terms of their special education programming.

In addition, collective activities are implemented to maximize the benefits of the SEP funding.

- SEP staff share information with schools, answer questions, organize services, and provide overall management to ensure the effective operation of the SEP program.
- The FNSA regularly sponsors a range of special education professional development activities, recognizing that geographic challenges and the time and expense required for attendance at distant training sessions make it necessary to support, as much as possible, community-based, or at least regionally-based, training opportunities.
- SEP Managers supervise all of the people providing SEP services, and also provide coaching, training and support to promote effective special education programming in schools. Generally, the Managers support the development, delivery, implementation and evaluation of strategies and programs aimed at increasing the quality of special education services throughout BC. Continued student, school and community support is provided on an on-going basis through emails, telephone and technology.
- FNSA/FNEC-sponsored Speech Language Pathologists are working in a number of First Nations schools in various regions of the province. The SLP services provide teachers with much-needed information and language development strategies, and assessment and intervention recommendations are provided for students with exceptional learning needs.
- Finally, for twelve years, the FNSA has coordinated a provincial-level approach to psycho-educational assessments for students referred for potential learning and behavioural disabilities. Each year, FNSA/FNEC hire specialists and assign them to visit schools to conduct appropriate assessments.

In implementing the SEP in the BC Region, FNEC and the FNSA have been able to develop positive partnerships that have extended the programming and services available in First Nations schools. For example, in 2014/2015, FNEC and the FNSA again worked collaboratively with Special Education Technology-BC (SET-BC), which has a mission to enhance student opportunities for success by providing access to curriculum through the use of appropriate educational and communication technologies. SET-BC was able to lend assistive technologies (reading, writing, and communication tools) where required to ensure students' access to educational programs, and assist in providing the necessary training for students and educators in the use of these technologies

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of schools that received SEP services	76
Total number of school visits by SEP Managers and Coaches	349
Total number smart goals facilitated/written	1,146
Total number of full IEPs facilitated	105
Total number of special education topic workshops facilitated	103
Total number of SEP support contacts through email/telephone/resource line	3,921

HIGHLIGHTS OF OTHER PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Curriculum Development and Support Workshops

Indian Residential School Resources

In 2014/2015, FNEC and the FNSA produced important new resources for public and First Nations schools to promote a greater understanding of the important issue of Indian Residential Schools and Reconciliation. Before finalization, the Residential Schools materials were subject to a rigorous pilot and review process, after which the curriculum was finalized and made freely available online. FNEC and the FNSA also have a three-year funding commitment from the Vancouver Foundation to support the implementation of these resources.

2014 Summer Institute for Teachers: Indian Residential Schools and Reconciliation

This summer institute assisted educators with teaching about Residential Schools in a well-informed and appropriate way, in keeping with the spirit of reconciliation and the call from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada for region-specific Residential Schools classroom resources.

Career Planning Materials

In addition to the new Residential Schools curriculum resources, FNEC also produced resource materials for teachers and parents/families to support effective career planning with First Nations learners. These materials include exciting print and video profiles of First Nations role models, which describe various pathways to a range of career options.

First Peoples Literature K-12 Workshop

At the Annual Aboriginal Education Conference, a workshop on First Peoples literature offered participants an opportunity to explore available resources and participate in professional conversations and networking related to authentic First Peoples resources for English Language Arts and English First Peoples courses.

Integrating First Peoples' Perspectives into Science

FNEC has begun developing a new workshop and supporting resources to help educators integrate the rich perspectives and knowledge of First Peoples into science courses at the grades 6 – 9 level. This work is expected to be complete by fall, 2015.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of participants in the Summer Institute for Teachers	42
Number of participants in the First Peoples Literature Workshop	48

First Nations Parents Club

The First Nations Parents Club is designed to support the key role that parents play in the educational success of their children. It provides parents with information, support, and rewards for their efforts, and it involves supporting locally-based clubs with newsletters, incentive prizes and parenting resources.

During 2014/2015, the Club continued to publish a regular newsletter and an annual calendar full of family activities. The Club also provided incentive prizes to parents for participating in club activities and for sharing local news. All Club members received First Nations Parent Club certificates at the end of the school year to acknowledge their participation. Each Parent Club is also awarded a small grant to sponsor parent-support activities, such as small field trips to educational settings, food for meetings, or speaker honoraria.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of Parents Clubs in BC	81
Number of Parents Club members in BC	2,009
Parents Club Grants of \$1500 Awarded *	35

* 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.

The Seventh Generation Club Stay in School Initiative

The Seventh Generation Club, established in 1997, is intended to provide a fun, age-appropriate and engaging opportunity for children to encourage them to make healthy choices, participate in sports and community activities, and, most importantly, regularly attend and stay in school.

This initiative has always offered an important opportunity for partnerships, such as the ongoing support provided by the Vancouver Canucks and the First Nations Health Authority. Those partners have helped make it possible to provide all Club members with Seventh Generation Club Daytimers, which are intended to help students develop organizational skills, and which also share information to help students succeed in school, prepare for higher education, and engage in career planning at an early age. The Daytimers feature art, photos and written submissions contributed by schools and students.

In addition to the Daytimers, the Seventh Generation Club sponsors regular newsletters, a sports day, and contests to promote the Club's goals.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Seventh Generation Club Members

7224 students
in 122 different schools
(52 First Nations
schools and 70 public
schools)



Gold River Secondary School

First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy Initiative

The First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy is part of the broader Youth Employment Strategy program. It consists of the Summer Work Experience Program and Skills Link Program.

The Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP) supports opportunities for summer work experience and training for in-school secondary and post-secondary First Nations students, providing communities with wage subsidies for short-term student work experience positions.

The Skills Link Program supports youth participants in the following initiatives through a proposal based application process.

- The Career Promotion and Awareness Program sponsors youth in First Nations schools to explore career development and supports schools in providing career fairs and leadership projects.
- The Cooperative Work Placements Program sponsors youth in First Nations schools to participate in mentored school-based work and study opportunities.
- The Science and Technology Program sponsors activities to promote science and technology as a career choice by providing First Nations youth with first-hand experience in various science and technology disciplines.
- The Mentored Work Placement Program sponsors work experience opportunities for out-of-school, unemployed, or under-employed First Nations youth.
- The Information Communication Technology (ICT) Work Placements sponsors information and communication technology work experience opportunities for out-of-school, unemployed, or under-employed youth.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of communities funded through SWEP	166
Number of youth supported through Career Promotion & Awareness Program	1,116
Number of students sponsored for Cooperative Work Placements	78
Number of student participants in Science and Technology Programs	1,738
Number of students sponsored through the Mentored Work Placement Program	100

First Nations Health and Science Promotion Initiative

For the past several years, the First Nations Health Authority has provided funding to sponsor a First Nations Health and Science Career Promotion (FNHSCP) Program, which has enabled First Nations to offer their students health and science educational and career planning activities. The program is intended to encourage students to consider and prepare for health and science related careers in positive ways, which ultimately will inspire them to pursue and access education and career options in those fields.

Specifically, this program provides First Nations with grants to sponsor projects such as tutoring and homework clubs to promote higher levels of student achievement – particularly in areas required for post-secondary acceptance – and/or parent information sessions, workshops to promote career planning, relevant field trips, visits to post-secondary institutes, science camps, and attendance at health career fairs. In the long-term, it is anticipated that these programs will contribute in a meaningful way to the broader efforts being made to increase the participation of First Nations students in health and science post-secondary programs and careers.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of communities provided a program grant	39
Number of student participants in program activities	2,705

Artists in Education Initiative

For almost two decades, the BC Arts Council and Artstarts, in partnership with the FNSA, have provided funding to First Nations schools in BC to support the Artist in Education initiative. Approximately \$1,500 funding grants are provided to First Nations schools on a rotating basis, allowing local BC First Nations artists to provide exciting art opportunities for students. Most of the artists included in the funded programs are recognized by their communities for their talents and gifts, and they usually teach their art in traditional ways that are embedded in their languages, cultures, stories, and/or teachings. Accordingly, this program has supported very relevant and much-appreciated opportunities that otherwise may not have been possible.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of schools provided an Artists in Education grant	19
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Fraserview Learning Centre

Act Now

The *First Nations ActNow Get Healthy Stay Healthy Challenge* is a project undertaken with funding from the First Nations Health Authority. The focus of the initiative is to promote physical health through daily physical activity and to promote healthy eating through activities that promote awareness of healthy foods. The project involves an ongoing sharing of information, documents, resources, and support from a Project Coordinator using information and communications technologies (ICTs), including a project web site. Additionally, specific resources and materials to be used by students are shared with participating schools, based upon their identified needs. Finally, visits to participating schools allow for direct contact between the Project Coordinator and students, teachers, and support staff, which provides for additional encouragement, information sharing, direct instruction, as well as project monitoring.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of schools that participated in ActNow	29
Number of students that participated in ActNow	1,320

BC FRIENDS For Life Program

In 2014/2015, the First Nations Health Authority continued its financial support for the implementation of the BC Friends For Life Program in First Nations schools. The BC FRIENDS program, sponsored by the Ministry of Children and Family Development, is a research-based anxiety prevention and resiliency program that is implemented at the classroom level. The program goal is to reach as many students as possible and provide them with life skills that will strengthen resiliency and reduce their risk of developing an anxiety problem.

Three program levels are available: Fun FRIENDS, the early years' version of the program, is an experiential, play-based curriculum for kindergarten and grade one students in BC; the FRIENDS Child Program, taught in grades 4 and 5 classrooms; and the FRIENDS youth program for grade 6 and 7 classrooms.

Implementing the FRIENDS program involves training for teachers, school counsellors, or other educators who will be delivering FRIENDS in the classroom. Following the training, the program facilitators guide students through a series of classroom-based activities designed to teach them how to deal with worrying situations by being prepared, rewarding themselves, and seeking support. Students complete home-based activities between sessions, and parents have an opportunity to help their children and learn more about what they are experiencing in the FRIENDS program by attending a short series of parent evenings arranged by the school.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of teachers trained to deliver the FRIENDS program	28
	14 Fun and 14 Youth



Sk'il' Mountain

FNESC

Sub-Committee Activities

FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGES SUB-COMMITTEE

Since its establishment, FNESC has actively promoted and supported a variety of First Nations language professional development opportunities, research projects, and services for First Nations and schools. These initiatives have been largely led by a First Nations Languages Sub-Committee comprised of community and partner organization representatives.

Planning for Long-Term Effectiveness and Success

Work is underway with the Ministry of Education to develop a joint work plan for supporting First Nations language learning in the public school system. Key topics in those important discussions could include topics such as language education policy, curricular support, and course accreditation processes. Ministry data related to existing First Nations language education programming is also being examined, which is expected to better clarify the state of First Nations language education programming in the BC public education system, ultimately providing an assessment tool for measuring the progress of the joint efforts being made and to inform the path forward.

Community Language Education Planning Guide

The First Nations Languages Subcommittee and the FNSA Language Focus Group have collaborated in the design and creation of a Community Language Education Planning Workbook. The intention of the workbook is to provide First Nations communities and schools with a framework and key information for completing First Nations language education planning. The workbook will provide practical tools in a very user-friendly format and will be ready for distribution in the fall of 2015.

First Nations Languages Fluency Degree

One of FNESC's key long-term goals involves supporting the work of a Language Degree Advancement Working Group (LDAWG), which was created by FNESC and IAHLA in 2011 to explore possible ways to address the need for more First Nations fluent language speakers. Research clearly shows that the number of professionally trained language teachers is in decline, and that language fluency among the adults who are eligible to enter language teacher training programs is also decreasing. In response, Dr. Jeannette Armstrong was asked to write a discussion paper in 2011, outlining a First Nations language degree framework. This framework proposes a stand-alone First Nations language fluency degree that could ladder into many different programs – including teacher education programs.



Kinnikinnick Elementary



Neqweyqwelsten School

In March 2015, the LDAWG hosted a Forum on the *Advancement of a First Nations Language Fluency Degree*, which provided an opportunity for representatives of public post-secondary institutions to discuss the language fluency degree framework and guiding principles. The forum was very well received, with over 30 representatives from 9 BC post-secondary institutions in attendance. Based upon the positive discussions that took place, the LDAWG will soon begin working with a specific partnering institution or institutions to make the fluency degree a reality.

First Nations Language Teacher Professional and Resource Development Grants

As in past years, FNEC organized the distribution of grants to support professional development opportunities for First Nations language teachers in BC, and for collaborative efforts to design and create much needed educational resources for First Nations language education programs. In total, \$150,000 in funding was distributed, resulting in successful projects by 17 First Nations communities and schools.

Review of Provincial First Nations Language Programs

FNEC has been working closely with the BC Ministry of Education to advance the Province's commitment to develop an appropriate policy on First Nations languages, involving a meaningful review of language programs in the public education system, including both those with and without a Ministry-approved Integrated Resource Package.

First Nations Languages Roundtable

In February 2015, FNEC and First Peoples' Cultural Council co-hosted a meeting of the First Nations Languages Roundtable – following previous successful Roundtable meetings in 2011 and 2012. These meetings have a stated purpose of encouraging collaboration and information sharing, identifying gaps in services,

and building a sustained partnership between all organizations that are working towards the revitalization of First Nations languages.

The meeting's 27 participants, representing 14 organizations, all supported a continuation of the Languages Roundtable meetings, and the Teacher Regulation Branch will be hosting the next meeting in September 2015. The First Nations Languages Roundtable also will now work to advance a sustained partnership through the creation of a formal memorandum of understanding and terms of reference.

Association of BC Deans of Education (ABCDE)

Since 2011, FNEC and IAHLA have had an MOU with the Association of BC Deans of Education, through which the parties commit to collaboration and information sharing to address the following key areas.

- Promotion of effective and appropriate Language Teacher Education programs in BC
- Promotion of teacher education programs that effectively address Aboriginal education
- Advancement of the principles of First Nations ownership, control, access, and possession of Indigenous knowledge, resources and materials

A small working group recently created a 2015/2016 Joint Action Plan for the practical implementation of the MoU principles. In the coming year, that working group will distribute a questionnaire to gather baseline data on student participation and completion of teacher education programs, including Developmental Standard Term Certificate programs, and the number of Aboriginal faculty members working in teacher education programs. This work will build upon the recommendations of the 2005 report: *Tracking Education Career Path and Employment Status of BC Teachers of Aboriginal Ancestry*.

BC First Nations Language Curriculum Building Guide

In the past year, FNEC has been working with Dr. Marianne Ignace to finalize a First Nations languages curriculum building guide. This new resource will provide information about language teaching pedagogy, program development options, building fluency through K-12 education, as well as an extensive overview of existing curriculum and assessment frameworks. This new guide will be launched at the First Nations Languages Conference in the summer of 2015, after which it will be more widely available.

POST-SECONDARY SUB-COMMITTEE

For many years, an active FNEC Post-Secondary Subcommittee (PSSC) has worked to address issues related to First Nations post-secondary education (PSE) and to develop united responses to provincial and federal PSE policies and programs. The overall goal of the work to date has focused on ensuring that all BC First Nations students have access to high quality post-secondary opportunities.

The PSSC is comprised of Board members who are selected based upon their experience and knowledge of First Nations PSE. The role of the PSSC is as follows.

- To participate in and contribute to discussions about PSE
- To identify areas requiring specific attention in the long and short term
- To advocate for post-secondary initiatives and services as necessary
- To seek community input to identify and prioritize post-secondary issues
- To develop unified responses to provincial and federal PSE issues

The PSSC meets regularly to discuss relevant issues and reports to the FNEC Board regarding PSE matters. The PSSC also provides policy and program advice and post-secondary support for First Nations communities – as described below.

Contributing to Action Planning for PSE and Training

In the past year, FNEC continued to work with its PSE partners to advance the implementation of the *Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Action Plan: 2020 Vision for the Future* – a document that was released in 2012 by the Ministry of Advanced Education (AVED) following years of close collaboration with FNEC, IAHLA, and other partners.

The Policy Framework has the following vision:

Aboriginal learners succeed in an integrated, relevant, and effective British Columbia post-secondary education system that enhances their participation in the social, cultural and economic life of their communities, the province, and global society; and the public post-secondary education system is relevant, responsive, respectful and receptive to Aboriginal learners and communities.

The PSSC has provided feedback and recommendations on all initiatives being carried out under the Policy Framework and has contributed to the establishment of priorities for implementation.

Overall, FNEC's PSE consultations in 2014/15 included participation in ...

- quarterly bilateral meetings with the AVED;
- quarterly meetings of the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners Table, as well as meetings of its working groups: Data Working Group, Funding Working Group (new in 2014-15), Policy Working Group, and Joint Partners Transitions Working Group (new in 2014-15);



Nala'atsi Aboriginal Education

- the development, implementation and adjudication of the former Aboriginal Community Based Delivery Partnerships Program (ACBDPP);
- feedback on the new Employment Services and Support Program with AVED and the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training;
- the development, implementation and adjudication of the Aboriginal Service Plan Initiative with AVED;
- work with the Association of BC Deans of Education on a Joint Action Plan;
- work with the IAHLA Executive to ensure post-secondary projects and initiatives are aligned and coordinated;
- the Aboriginal Awards Committee of the Irving K. Barber Society and the adjudication of the Aboriginal Student Awards; and
- the Aboriginal Languages Roundtable.

Supporting PSE Coordinators

First Nations have consistently highlighted the need for much greater support for First Nations PSE Coordinators, and in response FNEESC has developed a number of related resources and has sponsored important information sharing and professional development opportunities.

- FNEESC seeks direction from First Nation communities and strives to ensure that all post-secondary policy and program development is guided by First Nations' needs and concerns. FNEESC also shares information through a number of communication approaches, including:
 - maintaining a FNEESC PSE website (www.fnesc.ca/pse), including regularly posting news and events;
 - working with IAHLA to revise the Aboriginal Learning Links site (www.aboriginallearning.ca);
 - regularly contacting the FNEESC Board and PSE Coordinators to communicate current news and events – particularly sharing information about funding opportunities for institutes and students; and
 - distributing three joint newsletters with IAHLA, which are sent to IAHLA institutes, FNEESC Board members, First Nations Post-Secondary Coordinators, and partners across the post-secondary system.

- Communities are now required to have local operating guidelines in place for the administration of the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) and University and College Entrance Program (UCEP). In order to assist communities in meeting this requirement, a Local Operating Guidelines Toolkit is available, which provides template guidelines, samples, and best practices. PSE Coordinators have reported that the Toolkit has been very helpful for developing and revising their own policies.
- FNEESC held five regional workshops for post-secondary education coordinators to facilitate professional development and update communities on recent developments in post-secondary. The Regional Workshops provided information related to the administration of the PSSSP and UCEP, identifying changes in the AANDC guidelines, discussing challenges, and sharing suggestions and effective practices to improve post-secondary administration and reporting in order to better serve First Nations students and communities.
- FNEESC continued to operate a Post-Secondary Resource Line for First Nation representatives seeking information related to PSE. Through that service, First Nations are able to ask questions about administering the PSSSP and UCEP, scholarships and awards, and other relevant issues. Most inquiries are answered on the same business day they are received.

2014/2015 KEY ACTIVITIES

Number of post-secondary resource line inquiries and responses (phone and email)	500
Number of First Nations represented at pro-d workshops	105



Tumbler Ridge Secondary

Conclusions

FNESC and the FNSA are continuing to make every effort to support First Nations students, communities, and schools in a meaningful and effective way, and are striving to advance the BC First Nations Education System in a way that reflects their needs and priorities. The growth that has taken place in BC is very exciting, and FNESC and the FNSA remain optimistic that by continuing to work collectively and with our many dedicated education partners, even greater improvements in First Nations student achievement will be forthcoming.

FNESC Society

Financial Statements – March 31, 2015

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First Nations Education Steering Committee Society

March 31, 2015

Management's Responsibility for Financial Reporting

The accompanying financial statements of First Nations Education Steering Committee Society and all the information in this annual report are the responsibility of management and have been approved by the Board of Directors.

The financial statements have been prepared by management in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. Financial statements are not precise since they include certain amounts based on estimates and judgements. When alternative accounting methods exist, management has chosen those it deems most appropriate in the circumstances, in order to ensure that the financial statements are presented fairly, in all material respects.

The Society maintains systems of internal accounting and administrative controls of high quality, consistent with reasonable cost. Such systems are designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial information is relevant, reliable and accurate and the Society's assets are appropriately accounted for and adequately safeguarded.

The Board is responsible for ensuring that management fulfills its responsibility for financial reporting and is ultimately responsible for reviewing and approving the financial statements.

The Directors review the Society's financial statements and recommends their approval. The Board meets periodically with management, as well as the external auditors, to discuss internal controls over the financial reporting issues, to satisfy themselves that each party is properly discharging their responsibilities, and to review the annual report, the financial statements and the external auditor's report. The Board takes this information into consideration when approving the financial statements for issuance to the members. The Board also considers the engagement of the external auditors.

The financial statements have been audited by D&H Group LLP Chartered Professional Accountants in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards on behalf of the members. D&H Group LLP Chartered Professional Accountants have full access to First Nations Education Steering Committee Society.

President 

Treasurer 

Independent Auditor's Report

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

Report on the Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of First Nations Education Steering Committee Society, which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2015, and the statement of operations, statement of changes in fund balances and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, 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.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements 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 entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained in our audit is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

D+H Group LLP Chartered Accountants

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Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of First Nations Education Steering Committee Society as at March 31, 2015, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended, in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements

As required by the Society Act (British Columbia), we report that, in our opinion, the accounting principles in the Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations have been applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

Vancouver, B.C.
July 2, 2015



Chartered Professional Accountants

First Nations Education Steering Committee Society
Statement of Operations and Changes in Fund Balances - Operating Fund
Year ended March 31, 2015

		2015	2014
		\$	\$
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Revenue			
AANDC funding	21,575,455	21,575,455	22,271,468
Province of BC funding	240,000	247,000	251,000
Administration fee recoveries	668,562	668,562	701,834
New Relationship Trust funding	-	(7,000)	-
Other funding sources	<u>730,167</u>	<u>936,640</u>	<u>880,459</u>
	<u>23,214,184</u>	<u>23,420,657</u>	<u>24,104,761</u>
Expenditures			
Direct	19,039,523	18,610,918	18,626,380
Indirect	3,947,800	3,852,500	3,936,715
Transfers to First Nations Schools Association	<u>350,400</u>	<u>350,400</u>	<u>711,900</u>
	<u>23,337,723</u>	<u>22,813,818</u>	<u>23,274,995</u>
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures	(123,539)	606,839	829,766
Fund balance, beginning of year	6,269,208	6,269,208	5,574,926
Recoveries of surpluses	<u>(89,980)</u>	<u>(89,980)</u>	<u>(135,484)</u>
Fund balance, end of year	6,055,689	6,786,067	6,269,208

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

First Nations Education Steering Committee Society

Summary Statement of Operations and Changes in Fund Balances - Operating Fund

Year ended March 31, 2015

Schedule #	Description	AANDC funding		Province of BC funding	Total AANDC funding	Total revenue	Total expenditures	Excess (deficiency) for the year	Beginning fund balance (deficit)	Recoveries/transfers/reimbursements	Ending fund balance (deficit)
		AANDC funding	TEFA								
1	TEFA Core	-	4,148,200	-	4,148,200	4,150,867	4,202,900	(52,033)	1,037,655	(157,949)	827,673
2	First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy Program	2,884,536	-	-	2,884,536	2,884,536	2,884,536	-	5,963	(5,963)	-
3	First Nations Language Teacher Education Program	-	-	-	-	-	66,517	(66,517)	96,023	-	29,506
4	Annual Education Conference	-	-	-	-	294,087	250,575	43,512	156,354	-	199,866
5	Seventh Generation	-	-	-	-	65,829	65,339	490	10,817	-	11,307
6	Aboriginal Language	-	-	-	-	-	3,593	(3,593)	51,137	-	47,544
7	Contingency Reserve	-	-	-	-	164,590	164,590	-	3,509,141	-	3,673,731
8	Local Education Agreement	126,034	-	-	126,034	126,034	126,034	-	21,892	(21,892)	-
9	Post-Secondary Support to Communities	111,600	-	-	111,600	111,600	111,600	-	(554)	554	-
10	School Assessment	-	1,240,000	-	1,240,000	1,240,000	1,276,319	(36,319)	62,560	1,370	27,611
11	Indigenous Adult Higher Learning Association	-	-	25,000	25,000	25,000	55,477	(30,477)	231,137	(2,770)	197,890
12	EPP Projects	21,200	-	-	21,200	21,200	21,200	-	30,882	(30,882)	-
13	Tripartite Agreement	-	230,000	-	230,000	223,000	234,216	(11,216)	(4,087)	4,087	(11,216)
14	Jurisdiction Project	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	365,745	-	365,745
15	Teacher Recruitment and Retention	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16	Friends For Life	-	-	-	-	40,000	22,283	17,717	-	-	17,717
17	TEFA Curriculum	-	280,000	-	280,000	280,000	267,541	12,459	(635)	635	12,459
18	Parents Club	-	139,000	-	139,000	139,000	163,476	(24,476)	75,996	1,006	52,526
19	Enhancement Agreement Initiative	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20	Anti-Racism Initiative	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
21	Indigenous Adult Higher Learning Association - Core	102,900	-	-	102,900	107,401	107,401	-	(2,770)	2,770	-
22	Vancouver Foundation Projects	-	-	-	-	30,000	29,872	128	-	-	128
23	Special Education	9,971,582	-	-	9,971,582	9,971,582	9,971,582	-	74	(74)	-
24	New Paths for Education	735,118	-	-	735,118	735,118	735,118	-	2	(2)	-
25	Post-Secondary Education	-	-	107,000	107,000	107,000	124,851	(17,851)	100,421	(554)	82,016
26	Early Childhood Development	16,000	-	-	16,000	16,000	16,000	-	31,998	(31,998)	-
27	School Capacity Development	-	522,500	-	522,500	522,500	697,407	(174,907)	-	137,042	(37,865)
28	Jurisdiction Negotiation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
29	Jurisdiction Capacity Building	232,785	-	-	232,785	232,785	232,785	-	1,378	(1,378)	-
30	Education Partners Activities	-	-	115,000	115,000	115,000	-	115,000	21,882	-	136,882
31	Aboriginal Health Human Resources Initiative	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	928	(928)	-
32	Professional Growth Process	-	500,000	-	500,000	500,000	377,842	122,158	13,611	11,466	147,235
33	Information System	-	160,000	-	160,000	160,000	160,697	(697)	962	(962)	-
34	Connected Classroom	-	154,000	-	154,000	154,000	159,082	(5,082)	(6,442)	6,442	(5,082)
35	Youth Initiatives Coordinator	-	-	-	-	50,000	55,728	(5,728)	20,876	-	15,148
36	Health and Science Education	-	-	-	-	200,000	200,000	-	-	-	-
37	Core Projects	-	-	-	-	753,528	193,847	559,681	436,262	-	995,943
		14,201,755	7,373,700	247,000	21,575,455	23,420,657	22,813,818	606,839	6,269,208	(89,980)	6,786,067

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

First Nations Education Steering Committee Society

Statement of Changes in Fund Balances

Year ended March 31, 2015

				2015 \$	2014 \$
	Invested in capital assets	Restricted	Internally designated	Total	Total
Balance, beginning of year	52,518	2,760,067	3,509,141	6,321,726	5,676,694
Excess of revenue over expenditures	-	442,249	164,590	606,839	829,766
Recoveries of surpluses	-	(89,980)	-	(89,980)	(135,484)
Purchase of capital assets	59,344	-	-	59,344	121,481
Amortization of capital assets	(71,544)	-	-	(71,544)	(53,551)
Obligations under capital leases	-	-	-	-	(117,180)
Repayment of capital lease obligations	<u>29,295</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>29,295</u>	<u>-</u>
Balance, end of year	<u>69,613</u>	<u>3,112,336</u>	<u>3,673,731</u>	<u>6,855,680</u>	<u>6,321,726</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

First Nations Education Steering Committee Society

Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2015

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
Assets		
Current		
Cash	6,217,636	6,109,523
Term deposits (Note 3)	3,045,000	3,000,000
Accounts receivable	84,000	47,000
GST/HST receivable	62,030	45,507
Prepaid expenses	47,499	37,409
Due from First Nations Schools Association (Note 8)	<u>105,030</u>	<u>103,810</u>
	9,561,195	9,343,249
Capital assets (Note 4)	<u>157,498</u>	<u>169,698</u>
	9,718,693	9,512,947
Liabilities		
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	2,775,128	3,074,041
Current portion of obligations under capital leases	<u>23,436</u>	<u>23,436</u>
	2,798,564	3,097,477
Obligations under capital leases	<u>64,449</u>	<u>93,744</u>
	<u>2,863,013</u>	<u>3,191,221</u>
Commitments and contingency (Note 7)		
Fund balances		
Invested in capital assets	69,613	52,518
Restricted	3,112,336	2,760,067
Internally designated (Note 9)	<u>3,673,731</u>	<u>3,509,141</u>
	<u>6,855,680</u>	<u>6,321,726</u>
	9,718,693	9,512,947

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

Approved on Behalf of First Nations Education Steering Committee Society

 _____ President

 _____ Treasurer

First Nations Education Steering Committee Society

Statement of Cash Flows Year ended March 31, 2015

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
Cash flows from (used in) operating activities		
Excess of revenue over expenditures	606,839	829,766
Items not affecting cash		
Purchase of capital assets	59,344	121,481
Recoveries of surpluses	(89,980)	(135,484)
Changes in non-cash working capital		
Decrease (increase) in		
Accounts receivable	(37,000)	196,412
GST/HST receivable	(16,523)	48,737
Prepaid expenses	(10,090)	9,753
Due from First Nations Schools Association	(1,220)	(9,730)
Increase (decrease) in		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	<u>(298,913)</u>	<u>(2,862,753)</u>
	<u>212,457</u>	<u>(1,801,818)</u>
Cash flows from (used in) investing activities		
Purchase of capital assets	(59,344)	(121,481)
Purchase of term deposit	<u>(45,000)</u>	<u>(500,000)</u>
	<u>(104,344)</u>	<u>(621,481)</u>
Increase (decrease) in cash during the year	108,113	(2,423,299)
Cash, beginning of year	<u>6,109,523</u>	<u>8,532,822</u>
Cash, end of year	<u>6,217,636</u>	<u>6,109,523</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

First Nations Education Steering Committee Society

Notes to the Financial Statements

March 31, 2015

1. Society, aims and objectives

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

The Society is exempt from income taxes as long as certain criteria continue to be met.

2. Summary of significant accounting policies

Basis of presentation

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations which necessarily involves the use of estimates. The financial statements have, in management's opinion, been properly prepared within reasonable limits of materiality and within the framework of significant accounting policies summarized below.

For the purposes of the statement of operations (Statement 1), direct expenditures include expenditures, except administrative fees, incurred under all programs other than the Core and Contingency Reserve programs (Schedules 1 and 7). The Core program expenditures include the administrative and operating costs of the Society; the Contingency Reserve program reports the expenditure of unrestricted funds. Indirect expenditures include expenditures incurred under the Core and Contingency Reserve programs.

Use of estimates

The preparation of financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amount of assets and liabilities, and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amount of revenues and expenditures during the period. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

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 special regulations, restrictions or limitations. Each fund has its own statement of operations which presents the results of operations for the fund. The financial position of the Society is shown on the statement of financial position which includes the assets, liabilities and fund balances of all funds presented in the financial statements.

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.

First Nations Education Steering Committee Society

Notes to the Financial Statements

March 31, 2015

2. Summary of significant accounting policies - continued

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:

Automobile	- 10 years
Computer equipment	- 3 years
Computer software	- 2 years
Furniture and equipment	- 5 years
Leasehold improvements	- 5 years

Budget figures

All budget figures were prepared by management and are unaudited.

3. Term deposits

Term deposits consist of four guaranteed investment certificates ("GICs"), two in the amount of \$ 1,000,000 and two in the amount of \$ 500,000. The GICs have three year terms ending November 4, 2016 with interest rates of 1.75%, 2.50% and 3.00% in the first, second, and third years, respectively. The GICs are redeemable only on the anniversary date each year.

4. Capital assets	2015		
	\$		
	Cost	Accumulated amortization	Net
Capital leases	117,180	29,295	87,885
Computer equipment	248,501	229,879	18,622
Computer software	30,914	23,330	7,584
Furniture and equipment	174,191	134,309	39,882
Leasehold improvements	<u>102,803</u>	<u>99,278</u>	<u>3,525</u>
	673,589	516,091	157,498
	2014		
	\$		
	Cost	Accumulated amortization	Net
Automobile	28,664	28,664	-
Capital leases	117,180	-	117,180
Computer equipment	231,338	217,471	13,867
Computer software	20,342	14,871	5,471
Furniture and equipment	142,581	122,941	19,640
Leasehold improvements	<u>102,803</u>	<u>89,263</u>	<u>13,540</u>
	642,908	473,210	169,698

First Nations Education Steering Committee Society

Notes to the Financial Statements

March 31, 2015

5. **Financial instruments**

The Society's financial instruments consist of cash, term deposits, accounts receivable, an amount due from First Nations Schools Association, and accounts payable and accrued liabilities. These financial instruments are carried at amortized cost.

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

Unless otherwise noted, it is management's opinion that the Society is not exposed to significant interest, currency, or credit risks arising from these financial instruments.

6. **Economic dependence**

The First Nations Education Steering Committee Society receives the majority of its revenues pursuant to a Comprehensive Funding Arrangement with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC).

7. **Commitments and contingency**

The Society is committed to the minimum lease payments over the next four fiscal years for office premises and equipment in the following amounts:

	\$
2016	182,525
2017	188,844
2018	122,758
2019	25,077
2020	<u>18,807</u>
	<hr/> 538,011 <hr/>

The office premises lease expires October 31, 2017. The equipment lease expires December 1, 2019.

Surpluses in AANDC and the Ministry of Education funded programs are potentially refundable to AANDC and the Ministry of Education.

8. **Related party transactions**

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

Unless otherwise stated, related party transactions are measured at the exchange amount, being the amount of consideration established and agreed to by the related parties.

First Nations Education Steering Committee Society

Notes to the Financial Statements

March 31, 2015

9. **Internally designated funds**

During fiscal 2015 the Society redesignated its internally designated funds towards a contingency reserve plan. The fund balance is to be capped at \$ 3,088,600, which approximates six months of operation funding, and is to be used in the event that funding is delayed or drastically reduced by funding agencies.

10. **Comparative figures**

Certain 2014 figures have been reclassified to conform to the presentation adopted in the current year.

First Nations Schools Association Financial Statements – March 31, 2015

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Independent Auditor's Report

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Summary Statement of Operations and Changes in Fund Balances Statement 2

Statement of Financial Position Statement 3

Statement of Cash Flows Statement 4

Notes to the Financial Statements

Note: Schedules of Program Operations Available on Request

First Nations Schools Association

March 31, 2015

Management's Responsibility for Financial Reporting

The accompanying financial statements of First Nations Schools Association and all the information in this annual report are the responsibility of management and have been approved by the Board of Directors.

The financial statements have been prepared by management in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. Financial statements are not precise since they include certain amounts based on estimates and judgments. When alternative accounting methods exist, management has chosen those it deems most appropriate in the circumstances, in order to ensure that the financial statements are presented fairly, in all material respects.

The Association maintains systems of internal accounting and administrative controls of high quality, consistent with reasonable cost. Such systems are designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial information is relevant, reliable and accurate and the Association's assets are appropriately accounted for and adequately safeguarded.

The Board is responsible for ensuring that management fulfills its responsibility for financial reporting and is ultimately responsible for reviewing and approving the financial statements.

The Directors review the Association's financial statements and recommend their approval. The Board meets periodically with management, as well as the external auditors, to discuss internal controls over the financial reporting issues, to satisfy themselves that each party is properly discharging their responsibilities, and to review the annual report and the financial statements for issuance to the Association. The Board takes this information into consideration when approving the financial statements for issuance to the Association. The Board also considers the engagement of the external auditors.

The financial statements have been audited by D&H Group LLP Chartered Professional Accountants in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards on behalf of the members. D&H Group LLP Chartered Professional Accountants have full access to First Nations Schools Association.



Pamela Lee Lewis, President, Board of Directors



Kirsten Barnes, Treasurer, Board of Directors

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Board of Directors of First Nations Schools Association

Report on the Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of First Nations Schools Association, which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2015 and the statement of revenue and expenses and changes in fund balances and statement of cash flows for the year then ended and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, 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.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements 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 entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of First Nations Schools Association as at March 31, 2015, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended, in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

D+H Group LLP Chartered Accountants

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Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements

As required by the Society Act (British Columbia), we report that, in our opinion, the accounting principles in the Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations have been applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

Vancouver, B.C.
August 14, 2015

D+H Group LLP
Chartered Professional Accountants

First Nations Schools Association

Statement of Revenue and Expenses and Changes in Fund Balances

Year ended March 31, 2015

	2015 \$	2014 \$
	Budget (Unaudited)	Actual (Note 2)
Revenue		
First Nations Education Steering Committee		
Society Funding, Operations	350,400	711,900
Membership fees	-	19,774
ArtStarts contributions	25,750	25,000
Annual general meeting vendors' table income	8,250	2,060
Conference registration	-	20,900
Interest income	-	6,934
Miscellaneous	-	20,556
	<u>384,400</u>	<u>807,124</u>
Expenses		
Annual general meeting catering	102,000	112,754
Artists in Education program	34,000	37,636
Directors' costs	93,250	54,383
Educational Assistant Forum	56,247	-
Insurance	2,500	2,210
Materials and supplies	24,000	23,459
Principal professional development	20,750	418,698
Professional fees	8,900	12,394
Representative travel	50,000	44,861
Speakers	30,000	27,653
Subscriptions	-	240
	<u>421,647</u>	<u>734,288</u>
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	(37,247)	72,836
Fund balance, beginning of year	<u>470,751</u>	<u>397,915</u>
Fund balance, end of year	<u>433,504</u>	<u>470,751</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

First Nations Schools Association
Summary Statement of Operations and Changes in Fund Balances
Year ended March 31, 2015

	Schedule #	FNESC funding	Membership fees	Other revenue	Total revenue	Total expenses	Excess (deficiency) for the year	Beginning fund balance	Transfers for the year	Ending fund balance
Core Operations	1	-	16,583	48,715	65,298	32,300	32,998	318,477	115,027	466,502
TEFA Core	2	160,400	-	-	160,400	197,647	(37,247)	8,041	29,206	-
Annual General Meeting and Conference	3	190,000	-	-	190,000	190,000	-	118,471	(118,471)	-
National Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	25,762	(25,762)	-
		350,400	16,583	48,715	415,698	419,947	(4,249)	470,751	-	466,502

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

First Nations Schools Association

Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2015

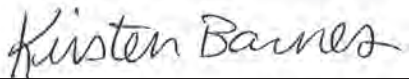
	2015	2014
	\$	\$
Assets		
Current		
Cash	561,344	572,410
GST/HST receivable	8,495	10,496
Prepaid expenses	<u>1,693</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>571,532</u>	<u>582,906</u>
Liabilities		
Current		
Deferred revenue (Note 4)	-	8,345
Due to First Nations Education Steering Committee Society (Note 5)	<u>105,030</u>	<u>103,810</u>
	<u>105,030</u>	<u>112,155</u>
Fund balances		
Restricted (Schedule 3)	-	25,762
Unrestricted	<u>466,502</u>	<u>444,989</u>
	<u>466,502</u>	<u>470,751</u>
	<u>571,532</u>	<u>582,906</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

Approved on Behalf of First Nations Schools Association



Pamela Lee Lewis, President



Kirsten Barnes, Treasurer

First Nations Schools Association

Statement of Cash Flows

Year ended March 31, 2015

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
Cash flows from (used in) operating activities		
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	(4,249)	72,836
Changes in non-cash working capital		
Decrease (increase) in		
Amounts receivable	-	12,718
GST/HST receivable	2,001	14,504
Prepaid expenses	(1,693)	8,808
Increase (decrease) in		
Deferred revenue	(8,345)	(2,235)
	<u>(12,286)</u>	<u>106,631</u>
Cash flows from financing activity		
Due to First Nations Education Steering Committee Society	<u>1,220</u>	<u>9,730</u>
Increase (decrease) in cash during the year	(11,066)	116,361
Cash, beginning of year	<u>572,410</u>	<u>456,049</u>
Cash, end of year	561,344	572,410

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

First Nations Schools Association

Notes to the Financial Statements

March 31, 2015

1. Association, aims and objectives

First Nations Schools Association (the “Association”) was incorporated under the Society Act of British Columbia on December 18, 1996. The Association obtained its Registered Charity status effective April 1, 1998.

The Association serves First Nations schools to promote quality education and to maximize the available resources in order to improve the quality of education of First Nations students. The Association will direct its energies to supporting the work of First Nations schools in developing and implementing culturally appropriate, meaningful and quality educational programs. The Association will work to provide a forum for networking, communication and liaison among First Nations schools, other educational institutes, and federal, provincial and other governments.

The Association is exempt from income tax as long as certain criteria continue to be met.

2. Summary of significant accounting policies

The following is a summary of significant accounting policies used in the preparation of the financial statements:

Basis of presentation

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (“ASNPO”) which necessarily involves the use of estimates. The financial statements have, in management’s opinion been properly prepared within reasonable limits of materiality and within the framework of significant accounting policies summarized below.

Use of estimates

The preparation of financial statements in accordance with ASNPO requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amount of assets and liabilities, and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amount of revenues and expenses during the period. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

Fund accounting

The Association follows the restricted fund method of accounting for contributions.

The Operating Fund accounts for the Association’s program delivery and administrative activities. The fund reports restricted and unrestricted resources and is further divided into the following funds:

- Core Operations;
- Annual General Meeting and Conference; and
- National Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy.

Revenue recognition

Restricted contributions related to general operations are recognized as revenue of the Core Operating Fund in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. All other restricted contributions are recognized as revenue of the appropriate restricted fund.

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

Membership fees are recognized as revenue when earned and collection is reasonably assured.

First Nations Schools Association

Notes to the Financial Statements

March 31, 2015

2. **Summary of significant accounting policies** - continued

Budget figures

All budget figures were prepared by management and are unaudited.

Comparative figures

Certain comparative figures have been reclassified to conform to the current year's presentation.

3. **Financial instruments**

The Association's financial instruments consist of cash and amounts due to First Nations Education Steering Committee Society. Unless otherwise noted, it is management's opinion that the Association is not exposed to significant interest, currency or credit risks arising from these financial instruments.

4. **Deferred revenue**

Deferred revenue represents funds collected for Annual General Meeting registration. The Annual General Meeting is being held subsequent to the year end date.

5. **Related party transactions**

The Association and the First Nations Education Steering Committee ("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 FNESC.

Unless otherwise stated, related party transactions are measured at the exchange amount, being the amount of consideration established and agreed to by the related parties.

6. **Economic dependence**

The Association is economically dependent on funding from First Nations Education Steering Committee Society (84.3% in 2015 and 88.2% in 2014).

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Annual Report of the First Nations Education Steering Committee and
First Nations Schools Association for 2014-2015

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