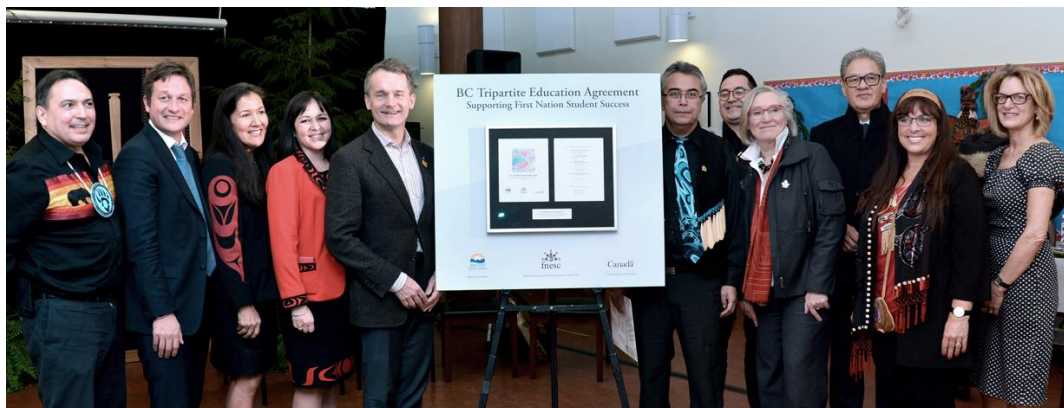




A Systemic Shift in Indigenous Education



Education is a powerful force for change – which is why so many of the calls to action articulated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada are connected to education. The BC Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA) signed on July 1, 2018, by three governments – First Nations (as represented by the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC)), the Government of Canada and the Government of B.C. represents an important step on the journey to reconciliation through its enhanced supports for First Nations students, families and communities.

The BCTEA replaces and extends upon a previous agreement in effect between 2012 and 2018. The fact that B.C. is the only jurisdiction in Canada to have this type of government-to-government-to-government agreement speaks to the commitment of the three signatories to identify what's needed to support the success of First Nations students and take action to make that happen.

Building on the foundation of the prior agreement, the BCTEA introduces new policies, accountability requirements and commitments for working together as education partners, as well as significant new funding for First Nations education, particularly for students in First Nations schools.



One of the First Peoples Principles of Learning is that “learning requires exploration of one’s identity” and a strong grounding in culture. This has been linked to First Nations students’ positive self-identity and confidence.

Additional funding commitments of \$20 million from the Government of Canada will support the implementation of the agreement and help address this principle. In particular, \$14 million of the new funding will be invested in First Nations Language and Culture programs in First Nations schools to ensure students receive a quality and culturally appropriate education, as will provincial commitments to develop an Indigenous Language Policy and introduce full-course offerings in First Nations languages.

Seeking ways to reduce barriers to education is also woven throughout the BCTEA. For example, school boards will work with First Nations communities to create transportation plans for students who live off-reserve and attend public schools, and money will be invested in improved transportation services.

There’s also additional funding for technology and school-connectivity upgrades, something of particular importance in many remote First Nations communities.

To support evidence-based decision-making, student achievement data will be collected and monitored. In addition, beginning in the 2019/2020 school year, one professional development day each year will focus on enhancing First Nations student learning outcomes.



Ultimately, each and every element of the BCTEA aims to support First Nations students, no matter where they live in the province or what school they attend. The agreement sets out tangible ways we can all work together to close the gap in outcomes between First Nations students and other learners in BC, while ensuring our schools reflect First Nations languages, cultures, values and traditions.

“The BC First Nations Education Steering Committee is proud to be a signatory to the 2018 BCTEA, which we believe provides a comprehensive approach for recognizing and implementing First Nations educational rights and advancing important system reforms,” says FNEESC President Tyrone McNeil. *“We hope that BCTEA will provide a foundation for the creation of policies, practices and programs that will support teachers, families and First Nations in collaborating effectively for the benefit of First Nations students, wherever they attend school.”*

By setting out a framework for promoting systemic shifts, BCTEA is intended to better support teachers to ensure that all of their students have successful experiences in school, and that all students are fully prepared and encouraged to pursue their goals for higher education and/or a range of career opportunities.

Learn More

- › FNEESC has compiled an **extensive set of resources on the BCTEA**, including the full agreement and e-bulletins about the implementation of the agreement.
- › The Ministry of Education’s **Aboriginal Education in British Columbia** site brings together classroom tools and resources, teaching guides, information on reconciliation and racism, research studies, Aboriginal student scholarship information and much more.
- › Read the **First Peoples Principles of Learning**.