



REGIONAL EDUCATION AGREEMENT

Negotiations are ongoing and everyone is working hard to finalize the first draft of a formal agreement by the start of the next fiscal year. This new regional funding agreement will cover three areas: agreement governance, mutual accountability, and the new funding approach based on real costs demonstrated by member communities.

Accountability is a key element in the application of the new funding formula. We are discussing a new approach to reporting and oversight with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), and are trying to simplify funding allowances for communities. Funding for some programs like high-cost special education will no longer go through the FNEC if the communities agree to this approach. We are recommending that all funds be issued to communities through individual funding agreements with the amount of funding determined through the application of FNEC developed methodology. The individual funding agreements would include specific provisions including a funding protection mechanism, data management and transmission regulations, a dispute resolution process, as well as guaranteed First Nations programming.

In conjunction, the FNEC has set up a strategic planning committee focussing on formula governance and the roles and responsibilities in formula implementation for all the involved parties. This committee is also in charge of getting the parties to agree on various technical issues throughout these negotiations.

We are honoured to be actively involved in achieving recognition for the first ever formula developed entirely by a First Nations organization that will enable communities to independently manage their elementary and secondary education program funding. This agreement should also allow them to develop innovative programming ensuring language instruction and curriculum based local governance. The agreement also conveys an important message to young people who are about to graduate, since new funding will increase capacity among schools to attract new hires, contributing to local economic development.