

FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION COUNCIL

KEY PARTNER IN FIRST NATIONS STUDENT SUCCESS

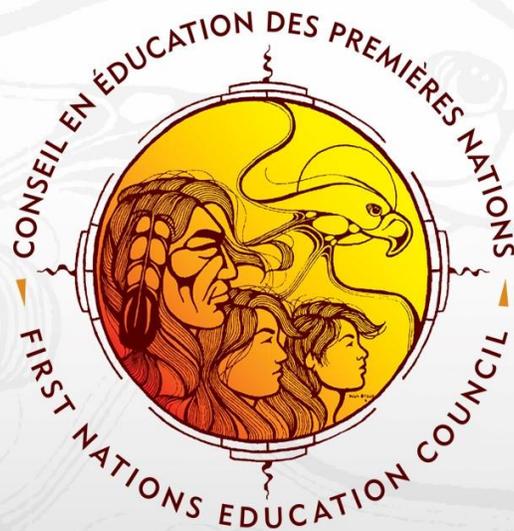


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CREATION OF THE FNEC

Canada's First Nations clearly demonstrated their commitment to full educational autonomy in the mid-1970s, when Canada's Chiefs of First Nations Education, Indian Control of Indian Education. This document, published in 1972, was recognized by the Government of Canada in 1973. Fifty years later, First Nations still aspire to exercise this full autonomy.

In 1982, First Nations educators from Quebec began to meet to discuss and discuss their practices and the challenges they faced each other. In 1983, in response to an urgent need to address issues related to education, seeing that they each lived in similar situations, the Indian Education Task Force submitted a report which recommended, among other things, First Nations govern their education systems. Thereafter, educators expressed the common goal of advancing Indian education in Quebec. To do this, they needed to come together and join forces within a permanent organization that would pursue a collective goal: to achieve complete control of their education systems.

Created in 1985, the First Nations Education Council (FNEC) was given the first mandate to determine the needs of member communities and to defend their interests in education.

The FNEC is one of the first community-based First Nations organizations in Quebec.





ABOUT US

Mission

The First Nations Education Council (FNEC) contributes to the complete takeover of and inherent jurisdiction over education by its member First Nations. The FNEC represents and defends the interests of this collective strength by promoting the realities of each nation and respecting their identity, culture and traditions. Excellence, student success, cultural pride and control of education by and for First Nations are at the heart of its mission.

Vision

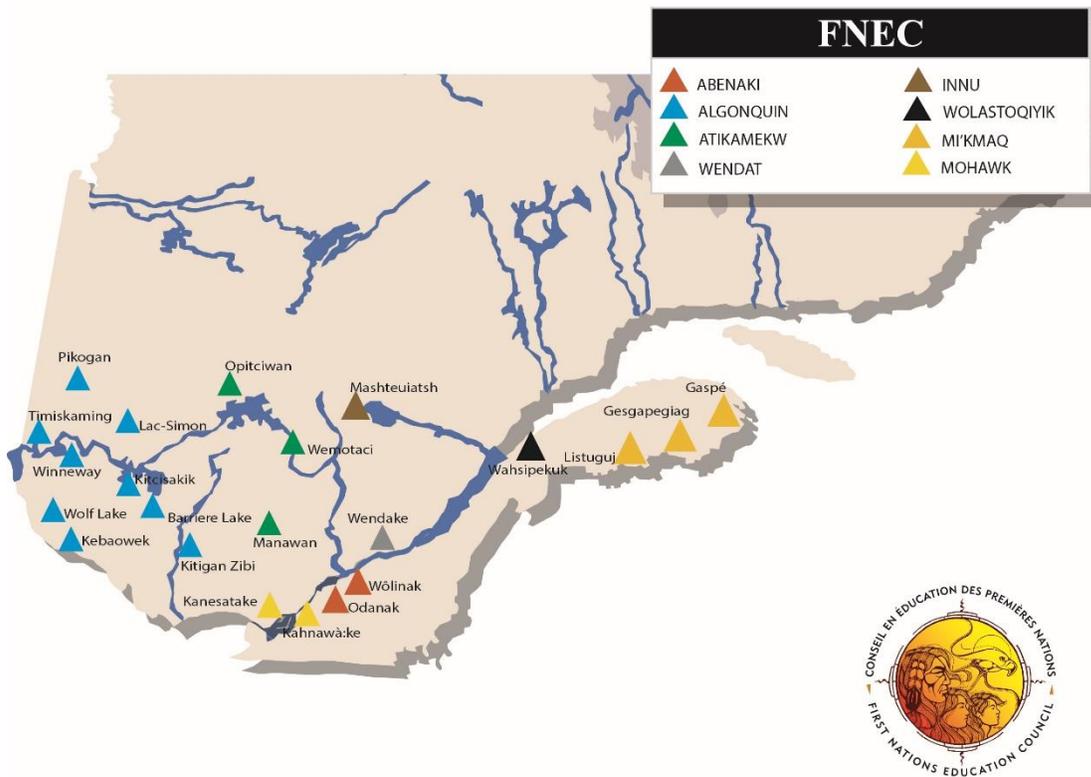
FNEC-member First Nations locally exercise their inherent right to and complete jurisdiction over education. Their school system promotes lifelong learning, local capacity building and learner well-being.

Mandates

- Take political action to ensure that First Nations regain full control of their education.
- Take administrative action to ensure respect of the educational rights of First Nations communities.
- Take all necessary measures to advance and increase the quality of First Nations educational programs and services.
- Conduct studies and make recommendations on political and administrative decisions made by governments on Aboriginal education.
- Manage programs transferred by different government departments and ensure that services are developed for the benefit of the communities.
- Provide human resources and consulting services to member communities if needed.
- Publish educational documents, newsletters and brochures on topics of interest to member communities.
- Maintain links with other First Nations organizations working in education.

MEMBER COMMUNITIES

The FNEC brings together eight Quebec nations: the Abenaki, Algonquin, Atikamekw, Innu, Wolastoqiyik, Mi'kmaq, Mohawk and Wendat, as well as twenty-two (22) communities. Spread over a vast territory, member communities have their own languages, cultures, traditions and demographic and socio-economic profiles. In addition to using their Indigenous language, some communities also communicate in French (12) and English (10).





SERVICES OFFERED

The FNEC provides its members with administrative, educational, technological and second-level political representation services. It also provides access to training for communities interested in increasing their capacity to meet the diverse needs of their members.

Administrative services are primarily focused on the management of education programs by communities and are intended to facilitate service delivery and accountability.

Educational services include a continuum of services from early childhood to secondary school, post-secondary education, professional and continuing education and professional development. The FNEC offers communities a variety of educational services for students, schools, administrators and teachers alike.

Technology services consist of support and advice to communities, including connectivity, fibre optics, information technology and their use. The FNEC supports the technological development of communities by taking into account specific needs as well as holistic action plans.

Finally, the FNEC carries the collective voice of its members. It ensures the defense of their interests in the field of First Nations education and conducts political representation activities.

As examples, let us present some essential services offered by the FNEC:

- direct support to **24 elementary and secondary schools** as well as **Kiuna Institution** to contribute to the delivery of quality educational services tailored to First Nations cultures.
- **special education counselling services** to enable teachers to respond appropriately to specific needs.
- networking and pooling of expertise, and professional development courses for teachers, stakeholders and school administrators to **encourage continuing education**.
- Negotiating and purchasing technological equipment to achieve **economies of scale** and equip communities with digital infrastructure.
- **technical support services** in schools and communities, particularly in the areas of connectivity, networking and information technology.
- **representing and defending the collective interests** of members through the creation of partnerships, the conduct of analyzes and the writing of memoirs and articles.



OUR SECTORS

The FNEC is composed of the following six sectors:

1. General management.
2. Educational services.
3. Technology services.
4. Financial services.
5. Government relations and communication services.
6. Data governance services.

1. GENERAL MANAGEMENT

The general management sector is determined to do everything possible to carry out the mission of the association. They are working hard to:

- Use the association's efforts and resources to fulfill the mandates assigned to the FNEC by the general assembly.
- Bring about an education system entirely under First Nations jurisdiction.
- Official partnership agreements are developed and established to create working relationships between representatives and educators in the provincial school system and those in regional organizations and First Nations schools.
- Continually improve the quality of educational programs and services.
- Build local and regional capacities in education governance.

Our actions are based on the association's values which are language and culture preservation, perseverance, collaboration and respect. We encourage partnership building by liaising with First Nations leaders and organizations that may affect our ability to accomplish our mission. We maintain lobbying and advocacy efforts with government authorities to ensure First Nations rights are upheld.



Mandates and Responsibilities

Organization:

- Prepare general assemblies.
- Prepare Finance and Administration Committee meetings.
- Create working groups.
- Follow-up on assembly and committee decisions.
- Representative and chief relations.

Management:

- Administrative service and human resource management.
- Implement strategic planning.





2. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

We work hand in hand with our member communities to coordinate training and develop activities. We encourage ongoing improvement of the quality of instruction by providing school administration and educational support services on an on-demand basis. We also continue to support and build on innovative practices developed by our member community schools.

Parental and community participation is also a priority for us. We value children, the role of parents, volunteering, school, as well as the different ways children learn.

School administration services for FNEC-member communities:

- Policy development.
- Government partnership liaison.
- Success plan development, implementation and monitoring.
- Management of FNEC educational programs.
- School administrator network organization and support.
- Distance education service coordination.

Educational support services that meet the needs of FNEC-member communities:

- Developing literacy and numeracy skills.
- Creating a network of professionals in special education to support exceptional students.
- Communicating professional and school-related information (e.g., theme-based workshops for students).
- Integrating technology in education (e.g., training on using the interactive whiteboard in school).
- Organizing networking activities for school staff.
- Pooling and sharing best practices in education.
- Establishing and guiding professional learning communities.
- Setting up meetings and training workshops for school teams.
- Developing and distributing teaching material such as the Youth Literature Inventory.
- Making group purchase arrangements for teaching material (books, software, etc.) and training programs to promote economies of scale.
- Providing training and support on the use of educational material (Banque d'instruments de mesure (BIM), Repères, Career Cruising, the Educational Video Collection, Learn Quebec, etc.).



3. TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

The team promotes the use of information and communications technologies (ICT) in schools and assist through our technical support services. They work in conjunction with the federal counterparts and regional organizations to develop unified connectivity support and a sustainability model for First Nations in Quebec.

They are involved in the following areas:

- Connectivity.
- Indigenous Services Canada technology programs.
- Computer equipment.
- Technology support and research.

Services offered to communities:

- Videoconferencing and teleconferencing (technical support, installation, training, etc.).
- Cybersecurity awareness.
- Internet connection installation, management and troubleshooting.
- Computer equipment purchasing (group purchasing advantages).
- Troubleshooting by our technical support service (e.g., videoconferencing, computers, servers, the Internet, etc.).
- Technology training.
- Maintenance consultation and support for computer and information management systems.
- Technology research and innovation.



4. FINANCIAL SERVICES

In keeping with management and Finance and Administration Committee guidelines, this sector is responsible for the financial management of the FNEC.

Mandates of the sector:

- Account reconciliation.
- Payments.
- Payroll.
- Billing.
- Auditing.
- Presenting audited financial statements.
- Human resource management.

In addition, the sector coordinate:

- Financial reports.
- Budget forecasts.
- Government-funded programs (agreements, proposal forms, final reports).



5. GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION SERVICES

This department provides guidance to FNEC administrators on national and regional policy and in dealings with government and chiefs of the Assembly of First Nations and the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador, as well as FNEC member communities. The department also oversees strategic communication and promotion on behalf of the FNEC.

Roles and responsibilities

Communication

- Promoting schools, programs and services
- Managing the FNEC website and social media accounts
- Organizing events
- Media relations
- Publishing the annual report
- Internal and external communication

Government relations and lobbying

- Involvement with federal and provincial government agencies
- Consultation
- Drafting and presenting notices and briefs
- Participating in lobbying activities and organizing forums



6. DATA GOVERNANCE SERVICES

The data governance service coordinates education data management on behalf of the FNEC, ensuring proper database operation and security.

Roles and responsibilities

Data management

- Developing and managing the CANO student information system
- Providing CANO user training and technical support
- Upholding and implementing the First Nations principles of data ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP)
- Analysing and processing data

Funding formula

- Developing and updating education funding methodology
- Providing analysis and support for negotiations to ensure adequate and equitable funding for education programming
- Advising member nations on implementing the takeover of education





OUR MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

Special education

In the early 1990s, the FNEC played a leading role in defending the right of First Nations children to access special education services.

The sustained mobilization of its member communities and the hard work of the FNEC will have made it possible to implement, in 1997, a triennial pilot project on special education.

The pilot project was extended until 2005, when the federal government finally confirmed the continued existence of the Special Education Program for all First Nations children in Canada.

Videoconferencing

In 1999, the special general assembly entrusted the FNEC with the mandate to implement a videoconferencing project. The main objective of this project was to install a videoconferencing system in each of its twenty-two member communities to reduce travel costs and promote distance education.

Ten years later, the FNEC had gone well beyond its initial objective. In addition to its twenty-two member communities, it has enabled seven Innu communities, members of the Tshakapesh Institute, to benefit from a videoconferencing system.

In addition, twenty-nine of these communities were able to receive a videoconferencing system at their health center.

Fibre optic

In 2007, the FNEC conducted a study on connectivity in First Nations communities of Quebec and Labrador. The analysis clearly pointed out that the installation of fibre optics in the communities deprived of this resource was the best option to meet connectivity needs.

To date, the FNEC has deployed some twenty community networks. It is working to expand fibre-optic networks to meet the needs of member communities that require more connectivity infrastructure to serve the entire public sector.

FNEC Inter-school games

A study led by the FNEC revealed that most member communities did not have sports and recreation policies in place and that half of them did not offer physical education programs. Communities lack the necessary resources for such programs, whether in terms of facilities or equipment.

It is in the light of these observations that the FNEC decided to create a regional sporting event: The Inter-school Games of the First Nations Education Council. By organizing the Inter-school Games, we pursue three main objectives: to encourage students to stay in school, to promote perseverance and healthy lifestyle habits including physical activity and good nutrition, and to support academic success.

Since 2008, the FNEC Inter-school Games give nearly 500 athletes between the ages of 10 and 18 and their coaches the opportunity to take part in friendly competition in track and field events, floor hockey, basketball and volleyball at the end of each school year.

Throughout the years, the organizers have noted a continual increase in the number of school sports teams. The high level of preparation among students in the competitions is a testament to their hard work and commitment throughout the school year. Coaches and athletes all agree that this event fills an important need among First Nations communities!





Student information system (CANO)

At the request of its member communities, the FNEC has created a student information system called CANO.

This database system allows collecting, processing, comparing and interpreting various data pertaining to students, teaching staff, school infrastructure, pedagogical resources available, etc.

In addition, the FNEC provides support and organizes training workshops for the system users.

Yahndawa'

Yahndawa' is a distance learning portal for adult students created by the FNEC in conjunction with the CDFM huron-wendat in July 2015.

The aim of this online training program is to give First Nations adults the opportunity to obtain their high school diploma, complete prerequisite courses to enroll in vocational training programs, or fulfill a personal education goal.

The service delivery model is flexible to correspond to the reality of adults returning to school and their needs.

The particularity of these courses lies in the personalized support offered by success agents. They support the students both in terms of studies and motivation. Frequent interactions, dynamic videos and quality teaching materials are aspects that students particularly appreciate.

Kiuna

In the scope of the Socioeconomic Forum held in Mashteuiatsh, in 2006, the ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) granted their support to the FNEC for the creation of a First Nations Post-Secondary Institution.

After several years spent in finding the appropriate site, preparing the study programs, negotiations and meetings, etc., the FNEC finally obtained in November 2010 official approval from the authorities for this project.

It is in 2011 that we celebrated the official opening of the Kiuna Institution located in the community of Odanak.

Kiuna is a dynamic and innovative college, deeply rooted in indigenous cultures. Even though the programs are designed by and for First Nations, it is also open to non-Aboriginals!

Since its opening, the Kiuna Institution has celebrated the graduation of over 105 students.



First Nations Preschool Curriculum 4-Year-Olds

In August 2019, the FNEC launched the First Nations Preschool Curriculum 4-Year-Olds.

The curriculum represents the hard work of teachers and education advisors on the kindergarten committee that have been diligently working on it since 2015. It is part of a broader collective effort to unite the strengths and expertise of all our members to build a school system that respects our culture, values and traditions.

The objective of the curriculum is to ensure quality education for all of our students while promoting a smooth transition from home to school.



Competency 15

In November 2020, the Competency 15 was revealed. This is the result of concerted efforts between the FNEC, Institut Tshakapesh and the Centre de développement de la formation et de la main-d'oeuvre huron-wendat.

Competency 15 is an exhortation to the province of Quebec to fulfill its duty, and to integrate the recommendations issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, by the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls National Inquiry and by the Viens Commission, not only for education, but in all areas affected by its calls to action.

The FNEC believes that Competency 15 should be placed at the heart of all preparatory teacher training, and become an essential component of professional development for practising teachers.



Ancestors' Challenge

In 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the FNEC had to cancel the 13th Inter-school Games, which has inevitably created a void in the school and sports life of the young people who participate in large numbers each year.

In 2021, the FNEC decided to replace the Games with a brand new concept with the aim of rekindling the sporting flame of First Nations youth while limiting the risk of contagion to COVID-19 as much as possible: **a race of 12 obstacles called the Ancestors' Challenge.**

This obstacle race can be set up in all the communities that wish to participate in the challenge. In order to allow young people to measure themselves against each other, the course is standardized, that is to say perfectly reproducible from one community to another. Thus, regardless of where the obstacle course is deployed, the results obtained by the participants can be compiled using a computerized system.

Between May and October 2021, the FNEC visited 20 communities, totalling the participation of more than 4,000 young people aged 4 to 19.



Little Feathers

In 2018, the FNEC launched the Little Feathers program to give all children a fair chance as they start their school journey.

Through this program, preschool children receive a bag full of materials and books to help prepare for kindergarten.

The Little Feathers program provides parents and guardians with culturally relevant learning material and books by First Nations authors that they can use to prepare their children for classroom instruction.

Since its launching, the FNEC distributed over **1 700 bags** to families, and **thousands of books** have been donated.



