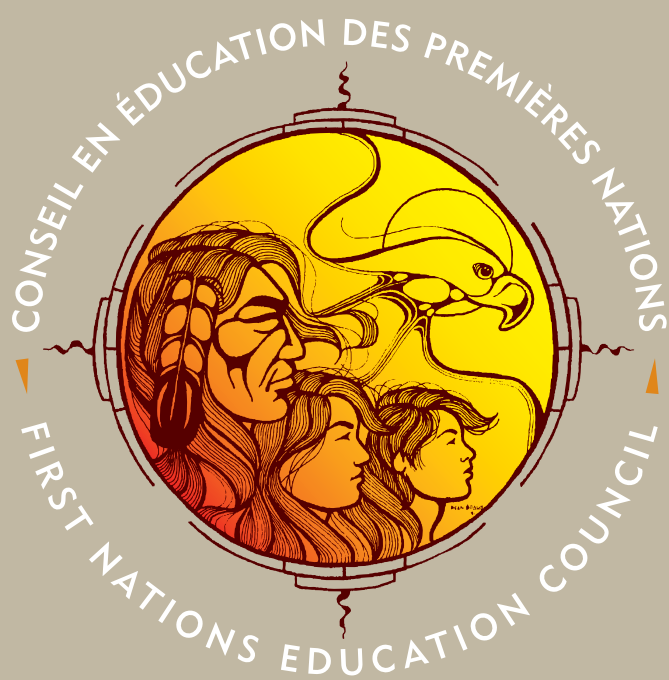




FIRST NATIONS  
EDUCATION COUNCIL



Annual Report  
**2021-2022**



**FNEC**



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### Notice to the reader:

This report has also been published in French and is available in electronic format at [www.cepn-fnec.com](http://www.cepn-fnec.com) under Publications. This report documents the FNEC's operations and achievements for the fiscal year beginning April 2021 and ending March 2022.





## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

### DENIS GROS-LOUIS

I am extremely proud and excited to share this year's annual report with you! We all worked hard again this year to fulfill our mandates in the context of a global pandemic. Now that is a success we can all be proud of!

Defending the inherent right of First Nations to control their education system is an extraordinary mission, underscored by many different realities and perspectives. This mission cannot be fulfilled without the incredible input and support from FNEC representatives, chiefs, and staff who helped us overcome the many hurdles we had to face. Heartfelt thanks to all our employees for their dedication despite having to work under atypical conditions because of COVID-19. We consider it a job well done when we meet the real needs of our member communities as we move forward in the accomplishment of our mission!

This year was also punctuated by the completion of negotiations on the first-ever regional education agreement by and for First Nations. I firmly believe that our goals have been reached, and that important challenges are waiting for us on the road ahead.

Reading this report will give you a better idea of what we have achieved and where we are headed in the coming years.

Next stop: complete autonomy!

**Denis Gros-Louis**  
**Director General**  
**FNEC**





## PRESENTATION OF THE FNEC

### ORGANIZATION

The First Nations Education Council (FNEC) works on behalf of 5,800 students in 24 schools in 22 First Nations communities representing 8 First Nations across Quebec—the Abenaki, Algonquin, Atikamekw, Innu, Mi'kmaq, Mohawk, Wendat, and Wolastoqiyik. Each one of these First Nations has its own unique language, culture, traditions, demographics, and socioeconomic profile. Twelve of our member communities use French as their working language while 10 communities use English in addition to their Indigenous language.

### TEAM

Our dedicated team of 55 employees provides a wide range of expertise and are truly committed to meeting the needs of member communities.



## MISSION

The 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 governments' political and administrative decisions on Aboriginal education.
- Manage programs transferred by different government departments and ensure that services are developed for the benefit of member communities.
- Provide human resources and consulting services to its member communities, as requested.
- Publish educational documents, newsletters, and brochures on topics of interest to member communities.
- Maintain links with other First Nations organizations working in education.

## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The FNEC's governance structure respects the realities of First Nations, reinforcing local and regional capacity in education.

The FNEC is fundamentally an organization of communities, advocating for member community rights in education and improving student outcomes. The FNEC champions member communities' issues and encourages them to exercise their authority in education.

The FNEC does not exist independently of member communities but is well established within their fold and feeds into their interests.

The FNEC's governance structure is a democratic model, with full participation in the decision-making process by all 22 member communities.

The FNEC's structure includes:

- a **general assembly** of member-community representatives;
- a **special general assembly** of chiefs;
- a **finance and administration committee** made up of three members appointed by the General Assembly.

The FNEC secretariat receives its mandates from the **General Assembly** composed of community-nominated education representatives.

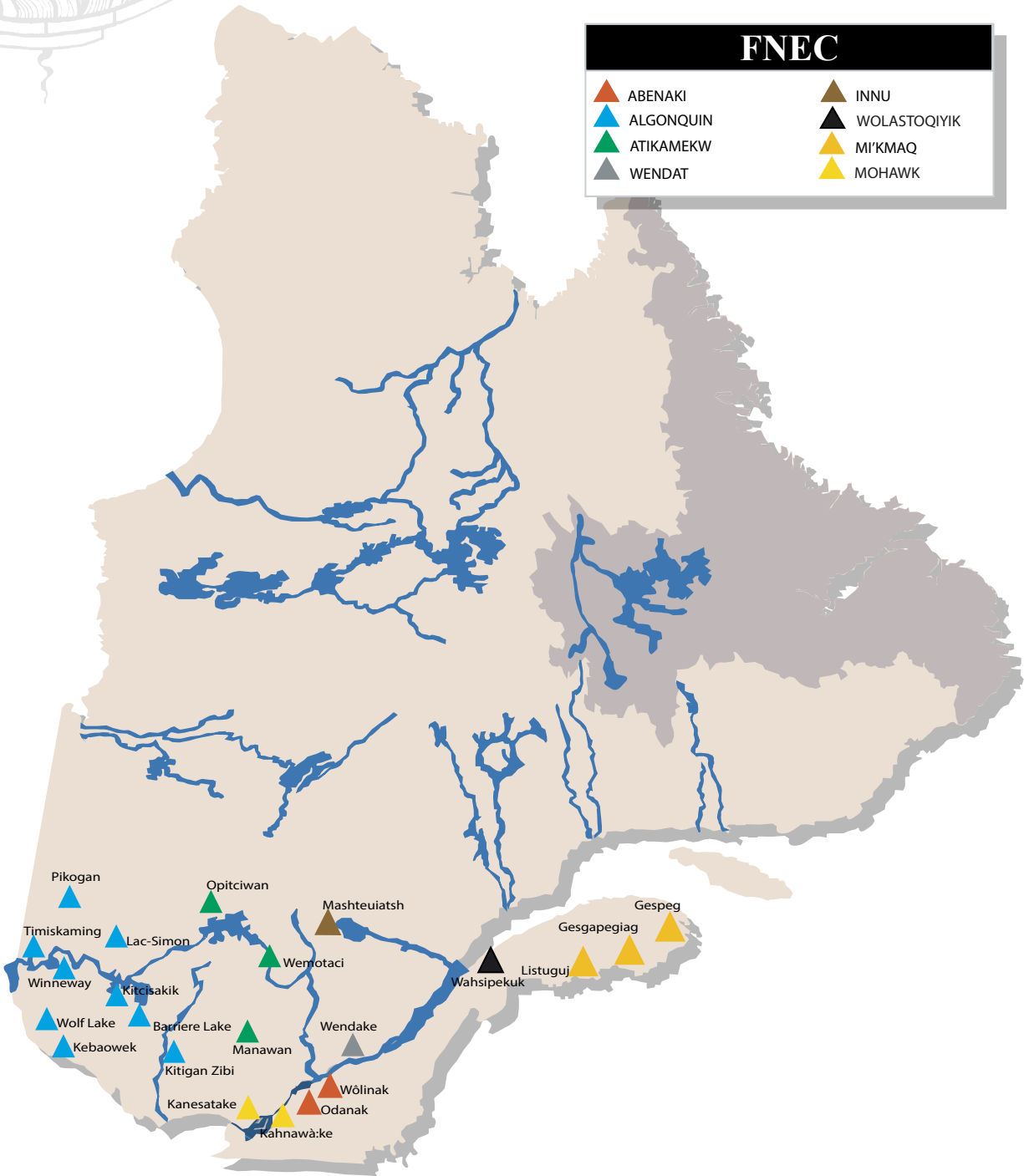
The **Special General Assembly** is composed of chiefs from each member community. The mandates it assigns to the FNEC secretariat serve to fulfill the organization's mission, realize its vision, and defend its political positions.

The **Finance and Administration Committee** is the intermediary body between the Assembly and the FNEC secretariat. It has the authority to assist the FNEC in managing its financial and human resources in accordance with the Assembly's guidance and direction.





# MEMBER COMMUNITIES



## ORIENTATION 1: FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION BY FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE

*The FNEC is maintaining its commitment to ensure the complete takeover of education by and for First Nations.*

### FNEC Funding Formula

The conclusion of an education funding formula by and for First Nations was a major milestone for the FNEC this year. In fact, 15 years ago, members of the FNEC general assembly expressed their desire to participate in implementing a funding formula based on real needs in their education system. As part of regional education agreement negotiations, a joint ISC-FNEC technical team began working together extensively in 2022 on implementing this funding model recognized by the FNEC assembly.

The First Nations funding formula development team continued their work and finalized seven components that went through all the stages in the community approval process. Virtual testing results were submitted to the participating communities who issued recommendations and approved each component before they were presented to FNEC representatives for adoption through a general assembly resolution.

The following formula components and elements have been finalized:

- Instructional services
- Complementary services
- Capital and operations
- Services for students enrolled in provincial schools
- Bussing
- Special education
- Technology
- Remoteness index
- Stabilization measures
- Second-level services

### ISC Interim Funding Formula

Since acceptance of the memorandum to Cabinet in March of 2018, funding for education has been provided by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) through its transformation approach to funding, the basis of which is the interim funding formula.

At the end of the 2020-2021 fiscal year, ISC made several refinements to the department's 2021-2022 interim formula. These refinements included additional money per band school student for supplies and equipment; changes to the methodology used to calculate the 5% administration costs; additional funding for feminine hygiene products for girls over the age of eight enrolled in band and provincial schools; inflation indexation for language and culture and ancillary services for students enrolled in provincial schools; changes to room and board rates to obtain provincial comparability; and increased funds for school bus transportation based on provincial proxies. The total increase to 2021-2022 funding for FNEC member communities was \$13.6M. The 2022-2023 interim formula promises to bring additional funding for school daycare.

We have been busy finalizing and documenting the FNEC funding formula with ISC and were surprised to find that the department is also offering a form of stabilization similar to the mechanisms incorporated into the FNEC formula. This stabilization may replace the need for ISC mitigation measures for the interim formula in the future.

## Regional Education Agreement

A 2% cap on funding increases for schools in FNEC member communities has been in place for over 25 years. We have been developing a new funding formula by and for First Nations based on their real needs since 2007.

Negotiations with ISC ended this year with the pending signature of a regional education agreement. We took advantage of Deputy Minister of Indigenous Services, Christiane Fox's December 2 visit to the FNEC to give her an overview of the agreement which was in the final stages of the negotiating process at the time. We are currently in the process of putting the finishing touches on a Treasury Board submission to access funding announced in the budget.



A series of visits to the communities of Manawan, Wemotaci, Mashteuiatsh, Opitciwan, Wendake and Kanesatake was launched to inform them of details specifically related to their agreement and to answer their questions about the challenges ahead.

The FNEC Chiefs Committee, composed of six FNEC member community chiefs, was mandated to oversee the negotiating process. The committee had regular contact with the FNEC negotiating team to ensure quality control and legality of the process. Meetings were also held to assist with decision making throughout the various stages of the process. The FNEC Chiefs Committee succeeded in guiding the negotiating process to completion.

## Competency 15

In response to the considerable interest in competency 15, the FNEC made several presentations on this teacher qualification requirement to university and college students across Quebec.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's final report includes the following two calls to action in education:

1. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.
2. Educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.



## Education Infrastructure Task Team

As a member of the AFN-ISC national committee on education, the FNEC worked hard with the AFN's Chiefs Committee on Education to convince ISC to update its policy on education infrastructure. This update has been completed.

- The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and ISC co-developed a series of improvements to the department's School Space Accommodation Standards (SSAS), regulating education infrastructure and school spaces in First Nations communities.
- In practice, these new standards will help meet the unique needs of students and families.
- Notable changes include an increased basic school allowance to ensure First Nations students have more space than the national average, dedicated space for language and cultural learning, outdoor classrooms, Knowledge Keeper rooms, and itinerant services such as counselling or special education support.

The new SSAS were designed by and for First Nations and will significantly improve the quality and size of First Nations schools. Renovations and new school constructions will reflect the unique learning culture of First Nations; namely, outdoor learning, language and cultural learning spaces, and support services.

The upcoming funding provided through the proposed regional education agreement will impact space needs in FNEC member communities as they welcome new professionals and teachers. The FNEC intends to work with member communities to assess further needs and will negotiate accordingly.

## First Nations Adult Education School Council

The FNEC participated in meetings and work sessions held by the First Nations Adult Education School Council to discuss issues surrounding adult education for First Nations. Many adult learners in our member communities decide to go back to school, and their concerns are at the heart of the FNEC's involvement.

## National Education Committees

The FNEC is a permanent member of the AFN's National Indian Education Council (NIEC), informing and issuing recommendations to the Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE) and advocating on behalf of member communities. Chief Responsible for Education and Gesgapegiag Chief, John Martin, represents the region on the CCOE.

The FNEC took part in several initiatives stemming from monthly NIEC meetings, including the creation of the Education Infrastructure Task Team, as well as updating funding models used for special education, school bus transportation, school daycare, and the Education Partnerships Program.

The FNEC also participated in drafting a policy proposal aiming to develop a new funding model for post-secondary education.

For further information on the NIEC and the CCOE, visit the website at <https://www.afn.ca/policy-sectors/education/>.



## Post-Secondary Funding Negotiations

The FNEC worked with the AFN and regional members of the NIEC on developing a policy proposal to establish new sustainable and equitable funding models based on the real needs of post-secondary students. A review of post-secondary education including student needs and costing was needed because the program will soon come to an end.

This work resulted in the adoption of a post-secondary education policy proposal via AFN Resolution [no. 21/2021](#) at a special chiefs' assembly held in December 2021. This proposal will guide an ISC brief to the federal Cabinet, giving First Nations the authority to negotiate and ratify local, regional, and treaty-based post-secondary education models.

The AFN [policy proposal](#) requests an additional \$8.68 billion over five years for the Post-Secondary Student Support Program, and the Post-Secondary Partnerships Program, including stable and sustainable funding for post-secondary institutions and community-based post-secondary education programming, as well as \$350 million for vocational training.

Despite this request for additional funding, no funding increases for First Nations students and post-secondary institutions are scheduled for inclusion in the 2022-2023 federal budget.

## Grand Economic Circle of Indigenous People and Quebec

The FNEC took part in this two-day event held in November focusing on Indigenous economic development and innovation. This event gave the FNEC an opportunity to discuss Quebec's economic and political landscape with key Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders.

We are actively involved in Indigenous economic development through the delivery of quality instruction and a sustainable First Nations education system in all 22 of our member communities. Strengthening and expanding the social and economic fabric of society is achieved through education, and the FNEC plays a decidedly strategic role in supporting First Nations-led education programming. The proposed regional education agreement is in and of itself an enormous economic driver with the potential creation of 600 jobs.





## ORIENTATION 2: STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH ONGOING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

### Education Partnerships Program

As regional representative, the FNEC continued to draw attention to the issues affecting First Nations students enrolled in provincial schools, and to support initiatives created by participating member communities to facilitate this transition.

Increased cooperation between First Nations schools and their partners, and the implementation of a variety of mechanisms helping First Nations students transition to the provincial school system demonstrate that this program contributes to First Nations student success.

### Provincial Panel on Indigenous Student Success

This panel, co-chaired by the FNEC, aims to promote cooperation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations.

To support and increase Indigenous student retention and success, the Quebec government:

- has invested \$19.4 million in direct student support, teaching material development, and curriculum reform.
- has implemented an Indigenous strategy in response to panel-identified priorities, the government's willingness to develop an approach adapted to Indigenous contexts, and calls to action in education resulting from inquiry hearings including the Viens Commission.

These initiatives are part of the government's willingness to develop actions that are appropriate for the Indigenous reality in support of the following four primary goals.

1. Support Indigenous student success and well-being.
2. Recognize and value Indigenous instruction, knowledge, and views on education.
3. Increase understanding of Indigenous realities and adopt suitable approaches.
4. Create and strengthen cooperation and partnerships in Indigenous education.

### Atikamekw Regional Development Committee

Committee work resumed this year after a two-year pause. The Grade 4 and 6 French language of instruction exams were reviewed and now cover a broader range of reading and writing competencies. Fifteen Atikamekw community teachers held their first meeting at the Auberge Godefroy in Bécancour to discuss explicit instruction and reading comprehension strategies. The second meeting to discuss the evaluation matrix and student writing strategies was held online in February.



## Birth-to-Age-8 Strategy

The focus of the Growing Together training course, based on the relational developmental approach of Dr. Gordon Neufeld, was to understand the personality traits and needs of the very young child informed by neuroscience and research on the developing brain.

Based on current knowledge of brain development, an additional focus was placed on creating the conditions for the young child to flourish, taking their natural immaturity into consideration.

Fundamental to meeting their emotional needs, an important aspect of our work as caregivers lies in understanding the role and power of the relationship between adult and child. Guided by instinctive caring and respect for the young, we explored interventions and tools to promote safe emotional expression in the childcare setting.

The Growing Together training course was offered in eight monthly sessions in conjunction with the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission to people working with young children. Training sessions were recorded and are available online giving participants the opportunity to review the course material as needed.

## School Administration

The FNEC continued hosting regular school principal meetings every two to three weeks depending on school calendars and holidays. These meetings facilitated networking and sharing important information and best practices among principals, and provided the FNEC with valuable feedback supporting a proactive response to meet the needs of our member communities. These collaborative meetings also served as occasions for

professional development on topics like Jordan's Principle, cybersecurity, CANO tools for principals, holiday support for families, human resources and staffing, and the regional educational agreement.

## Special Education

Special education services have continued to support school personnel within the FNEC network by offering professional development opportunities, including:

- **Educational Assistant/Teacher Aide Training** – Tangible tools these school professionals can use to support students with special needs.
- **Substitute Teaching 101** – A series of webinars designed to introduce interested community members to substitute teaching basics.
- **Nonviolent Crisis Intervention** – Allows school personnel to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to take a proactive and preventative approach to avoid behaviour escalation, and intervene should a crisis arise. The values of solicitude, well-being, protection, and security are at the core of this training course.
- **Continuing Education Course on Cognitive Efficiency** – In collaboration with UQAT, this course offers insight into "learning how to learn": the process of understanding how to reach learning goals using your mental abilities.
- **Remedial Education Services Online Training Course** – This training course focused on implementing remedial education services, best practices in remedial education, identifying challenges and school team collaboration to create optimal conditions supporting exceptional students.

## Audiology and Speech Language Therapy

In partnership with the University of Montreal, the FNEC helped a host community provide audiology and speech language therapy services to students and staff via a practicum placement program for soon-to-be graduates of the School of Speech Therapy and Audiology.

## Parental and Community Involvement

### Parental Newsletter

The FNEC has relaunched the *Did You Know?* quarterly parental newsletter. Topics addressed have been resourced from key moments in the school year, or needs expressed by parents during various FNEC-hosted events. Two editions were issued this year. The November edition explored student anxiety, and the February edition addressed adolescence and helping with career choices.



### Did you know? DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE ANXIETY?

When facing danger, our bodies experience stress. This triggers a whole host of physical reactions that enable us to react to the situation. Our body's fight-or-flight response uses all available energy to deal with the emergency. **A certain degree of stress and fear is normal, and even necessary in situations where our bodies need to be ready to react.**



Anxiety and stress can become problematic and hamper regular activities when there is no clear and present danger. Anxiety can have physiological, emotional, behavioural, and mental effects.

**Fear:** There is a perceived stressful situation that triggers the body's normal warning mechanism. *It's the first day of school today, and I'm afraid because I don't know anyone.*

**Anxiety:** Emotions are expressed when facing anticipated risk or danger. *I have an oral presentation tomorrow, and I am scared I will fail and people will laugh at me.*

**Anxiety disorder:** Reactions are triggered without apparent risk. They are ongoing or progressively worsen, and affect normal functioning.

*I don't think I will be ready for my upcoming exams, and that my parents will be upset if I fail them. It's the first thing I think about when I get up, and the last thing I think about before I go to bed. I not going to get a job.*

#### What is happening?

- Increased resting heart rate
- Reduced blood flow causing paleness, chills, swelling
- Breath quickens, increased sweatiness
- Muscles tighten causing muscle tension, pain, shaking
- Available energy used to react to danger causing the digestive system to slow down
- Focus on danger resulting in a difficulty to concentrate

## Books for Schools

The FNEC liaises with various community organizations to distribute books in our member schools from donors such as Save the Children and Quebec's Egyptian community. These donations compliment school literacy programs which support the development of functional readers and writers helping pave the way for students to be socially engaged citizens.

## CANO User Access and Support

Although invisible to users, the CANO Student Information System was migrated to a new server this year to ensure required upgrades and increased performance and security features. Over 70 sites, including band school, post-secondary and provincial databases are now accessible via CANO.

Communities will have access to the newly created Destination Literacy and funding formula modules in fall 2022.

There were **158,677 user logins** this year, with September, February, March, and especially November being the busiest months in terms of user traffic.

CANO staff responded to over **900 support requests** and provided **14 tailor-made user training sessions** this year.

## Science Lab Compliance

The FNEC has been providing a high school science lab inspection service for member community schools for some time now. This year, a safety inspection was conducted in Lac-Simon's high school, and Amik-Wiche's laboratory and prep room were reorganized in accordance with safety standards.

## PLC for Literacy

A professional learning community for literacy was created this year. The ten-member PLC covered considerable ground in the six meetings held between September and March.

The PLC's main goals were to:

- use a culturally appropriate learning and evaluation situation to mutually assess student reading ability;
- assess student literacy through a shared data entry platform in CANO Destination Literacy;
- implement a response to intervention approach;
- share best practices in remedial reading as part of a response to intervention approach.

## Continuing Education for Unlicensed Teachers

**Six** 90-minute **workshops** for teachers without a valid teaching permit were held from November to February to give them personalized, needs-based support, enabling them to develop strategies, optimize their teaching practices, and facilitate student learning. The workshops addressed classroom management, lesson planning and student evaluation.



## Teacher Onboarding Webinar

To assist member communities with teacher onboarding, the FNEC produced **four one-hour webinars** on aspects of competency 15 including valuing and promoting Indigenous knowledge, worldviews, cultures, and history.



The main topics included:

- the reality of First Nations youth;
- lifelong learning;
- truth and reconciliation;
- culturally responsive instruction (universal design for learning, holistic learning, etc.);
- a model teacher onboarding strategy;
- cultural safety;
- FNEC resources.

## Individual Online Learning

The FNEC offers individual needs-based instruction to students in member communities during school hours. This is a third-level, personalized service based on the needs of students and schools. Guaranteed and viable curriculum has been enhanced through our expertise in online learning, and differentiated instruction has enabled five students this year to complete their required prerequisites during regular class time.



## Synchronous and Asynchronous Online Learning

For the eleventh year in a row, the FNEC has given students the opportunity to complete college prerequisite courses via distance learning. Between March 2021 and April 2022, a total of **29 students from four communities enrolled in 12 classes** took advantage of the FNEC's online learning service.

The FNEC has developed expertise in selecting appropriate online learning material and adapting teaching methods. Through this service, schools had access to online support and resources and were able to develop culturally appropriate needs-based curriculum. Math and science courses were taught this year using this format. What makes us a leader in online learning is our ability to group several isolated students together in a single class with one teacher, delivering services that otherwise would require considerable resources for a community to provide on their own.

## English Language Arts Assessment Community

Grade 4 and 6 teachers were invited to an online workshop on February 24 to develop teaching strategies for written composition. This professional development opportunity was made possible through the participation of an external consultant.

## My Learning Journey

A learning observation and assessment tool, called My Learning Journey, was developed by the FNEC this year to help K-4 teachers monitor essential learning among their students. It is currently in the test phase and scheduled to be added to the CANO Student Information System some time next year.

## Math Practice Tests

In collaboration with Wahta' School in Wendake, the FNEC developed three practice tests for each elementary grade modelled on Ministry of Education requirements in mathematics. These tests give teachers working in our communities clearer learning targets and help prepare students for their ministry exams.





## Anti-Bullying Campaigns

The FNEC supports schools in organizing and implementing anti-bullying campaigns in conjunction with Quebec's Indigenous affairs office, ministries of family, education, higher education, health, and social services, as well as public safety. The FNEC has the authority to sign agreements with member-community schools and is responsible for coordinating local projects that help create a positive and welcoming school climate and foster Indigenous student success. In partnership with the eastern division of Staples Canada, the FNEC also participated in the 2022 edition of Pink Shirt Day to help stop bullying by celebrating all forms of diversity, **which raised over \$5,000.**



## Education Symposium

The theme for the third edition of the FNEC Education Symposium for member community teachers in English-language schools, held on April 15 and 16, was "Strengthening our Connections." This completely online edition gave **over 256 participants** the opportunity to share their best practices during **3 teacher-led seminars** and **14 workshops** covering a wide range of topics including language and culture instruction, literacy, and numeracy, as well as distance education.

## Kindergarten Teacher Gathering

A total of **21 kindergarten teachers** from eight communities gathered in Lac-Beauport on October 28 and 29 for the first major event held in nearly 20 months. The following main points were addressed at the gathering:

- the developmental approach;
- My Learning Journey;
- workshops on the power of play and land-based learning;
- workshop on learning observation and evaluation.

## Literacy Camp Training

Literacy camp coordinators and monitors from three communities were given a condensed, half-day online workshop on:

- reading basics;
- roles and responsibilities of camp leaders;
- encouraging a love of reading and writing;
- activity planning.

## Bill 96 on French Language Reforms

Since the provincial government tabled Bill 96 in May 2021, the FNEC has been working hard on behalf of member communities to ensure all our students have equal opportunities for success. The FNEC has contributed to initiatives aiming to break down the barriers to First Nations student success emanating from the *Charter of the French Language*.

The FNEC participated in drafting the position paper issued by the AFNQL and the regional commissions and organizations submitted during special consultations on Bill 96.

Not only did the Minister Responsible for the French Language, Simon Jolin-Barrette, reject the AFNQL's recommendations aiming to obtain an exemption from language requirements for First Nations students, he actually reinforced the systemic barriers to academic success already present in Quebec's language laws.

During this time, the FNEC was meeting with members of the provincial government, ministry of education officials, as well as opposition party MNAs.

In addition, the FNEC launched a communications and public relations campaign, including press releases, an op-ed piece published in the Montreal Gazette and Radio-Canada, a letter campaign, a petition to the Quebec National Assembly and a video campaign on social media.

## Quebec Culture and Citizenship

The Quebec government announced in October that the new Quebec Culture and Citizenship program would be replacing the province's outdated ethics and religious culture program. Despite the statements made by members of the provincial government, members of the Provincial Panel on Indigenous Student Success, including the FNEC, had not been informed of the changes or the title of the course.

The FNEC and Institut Tshakapesh co-signed an open letter highlighting the lack of consultation, particularly on the title of the course that goes against the goals of the FNEC, the panel and representatives of Quebec's 41 First Nations and Inuit communities.

In the letter, we stated that our interest in taking part in reviewing the program was based on First Nations organizations having a direct hand in developing, drafting, and implementing content affecting Quebec's First Peoples. Our statements were echoed in various media outlets and in a press release issued by the AFNQL.

The FNEC continues to work with these programs and through the panel to represent the values, cultures, and languages of member communities in K-12 education reform and programming.

The new provincial program is scheduled to be piloted in designated school boards/ service centres starting in the 2022-2023 school year.

## Bill 9 on National Student Ombudsman

Quebec's minister of education tabled Bill 9 on November 23 of last year. The bill aims to reform the existing student complaint process in the provincial school system. The FNEC was invited to take part in special hearings before the Committee on Culture and Education.

Even though it looks like the application of the bill would not have a direct impact on FNEC member schools, we thought action should be taken considering the number of First Nations elementary and high school students enrolled in the provincial school system.

The FNEC proposed four amendments to the bill to ensure that First Nations students are properly supported and served, including the creation of an Indigenous student ombudsman with the same duties and responsibilities and required qualifications as regional student ombudsmen, and ensuring the duties and responsibilities of student ombudsmen are adapted to the cultural and linguistic needs of First Nations students enrolled in the provincial school system.

The FNEC's recommendations, submitted during clause-by-clause consideration of the bill, were rejected by the Minister of Education.

Following a series of articles on the provincial government's sluggish implementation of the Viens Commission's calls to action, the Minister submitted amendments on cultural safety and linguistic security for First Nations students.



## ORIENTATION 3: FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGES

*Indigenous language and culture transmission and instruction in schools are at the heart of the FNEC's strategic goals.*

### Regional Committee on First Nations Languages

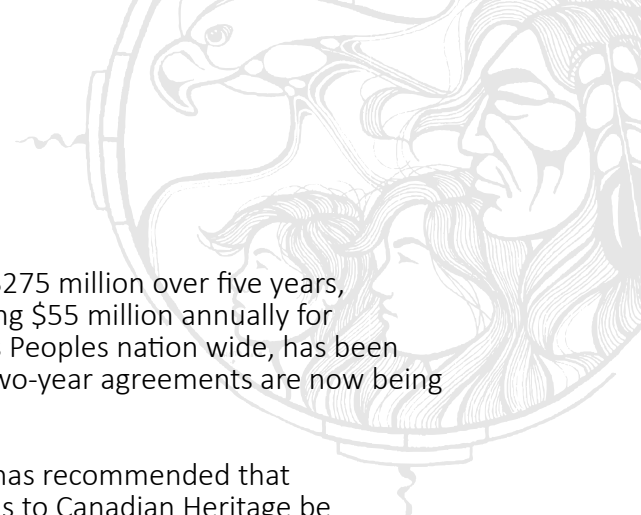
Since receiving the mandate from the AFNQL, the FNEC has been actively coordinating this committee's operations. We hired a new coordinator to assist in the fulfillment of the committee's goals which are to share information, monitor developments on language related issues, including *Indigenous Languages Act* implementation, and ensure adequate funding is provided for language revitalization.

A thorough analysis of the unsurprisingly concerning state of Indigenous languages in Quebec was conducted during the course of the year by the committee coordinator. The coordinator also met with members of existing language committees to strengthen ties between them.

In this International Decade of Indigenous Languages, there is no better time to take action for the preservation and revitalization of First Nations languages, and we will do everything we can to accomplish this goal.

### Reconciliation Committee

The FNEC considers professional development part of the First Nations standpoint on lifelong learning. FNEC employees are given the opportunity to integrate learning naturally and progressively at their own pace.



The FNEC offers organization-wide employee training courses and workshops, and supports individual professional development initiatives.

A permanent committee has been set up to establish a professional development framework and recommend training courses and workshops on First Nations perspectives for employees and management. The FNEC's mission is to advocate on behalf of our member communities, "by promoting the realities of each nation and respecting their identity, culture and traditions."

In this context, employees have a responsibility to be familiar with the identity, culture, and traditions of the communities we serve, and the FNEC is committed to supporting employees in their efforts. Since FNEC employees work closely with the communities, they need to develop cultural competence to ensure community members feel culturally safe.

## Indigenous Language Planning

The FNEC supports capacity building among stakeholders in Indigenous language revitalization and preservation by helping them with language plan development for their community.

## Canadian Heritage Indigenous Languages and Cultures Program

For the last two years, the First Nations Review Committee, supported by provincial sub-committees, has been analyzing a total of 524 funding applications submitted to the Indigenous Languages Component of Canadian Heritage's Indigenous Languages and Cultures Program. The 4-person sub-committee for Quebec is composed of representatives from the FNEC and Institut Tshakapesh, as well as a consultant from British Columbia.

A total of \$275 million over five years, representing \$55 million annually for Indigenous Peoples nation wide, has been granted. Two-year agreements are now being accepted.

The FNEC has recommended that applications to Canadian Heritage be submitted directly to the First Nations Review Committee for analysis.

## PLC for First Nations Language Instruction

FNEC language and culture staff were involved in developing the first professional learning community to promote First Nations language transmission, teaching strategies, and learning diversity.

## Orange Shirt Day

The FNEC once again accepted the invitation from the eastern division of Staples Canada to participate in the Orange Shirt Day 2021 fundraising campaign. On September 30, FNEC employees rallied in a spirit of reconciliation and dressed in orange to honour residential school survivors in the hope of building a better future.

This campaign had four primary components:

- National contest for First Nations youth
- Orange shirt sales campaign
- Awareness
- Orange Shirt Day and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation participation

We are also proud to mention that the artist who won the Canada-wide orange shirt day design contest is from Listuguj—one of our member communities.

The FNEC was once again the proud recipient of the funds raised through this campaign. All proceeds from the sale of orange shirts in the province of Quebec were given to the FNEC to be reinvested in reconciliation initiatives involving FNEC employees and First Nations youth.



## ORIENTATION 4: TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE

*This orientation aims to improve and facilitate technology access and use among member communities and schools by establishing and maintaining community technology infrastructure.*

### Broadband Connectivity Project: Mission Accomplished!

This year represents a special milestone for the FNEC as we have fulfilled our mission to install fibre optic networks in all member communities with schools. With this year's completion of the Kitcisakik and Abitibiwininni fibre optic projects, connectivity infrastructure deployment has been achieved in 330 public sector buildings. This connectivity provides essential access to premium broadband services that are secure, viable, cost-effective, and capable of meeting future needs. The FNEC will continue to support the development and maintenance of broadband infrastructure to meet the needs of our member communities. We would like to acknowledge infrastructure representatives from the First Nations Infrastructure Fund and the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch for their continued support in making this achievement possible.

### Technical Support for Schools and Communities

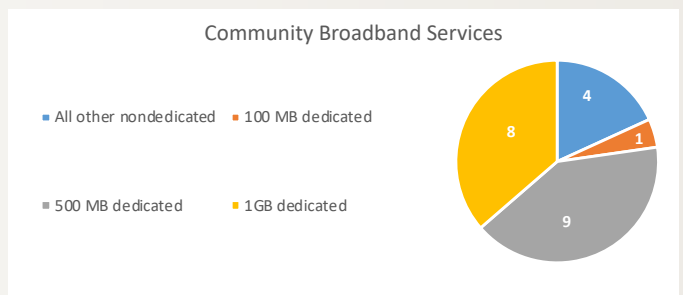
The FNEC aims to continually improve access to technology among member communities, and works with them to close the digital gap. A single-window help desk service has been developed to effectively and rapidly respond to support requests. Structured use of technology gives students, teachers, and other users effective communication and project management opportunities.

A total of **10,078 support requests** were processed this year.

### Public Sector Broadband Connectivity

FNEC broadband services have evolved to meet the needs of member communities and their growing public sectors. The main aspects of our work include:

- managing 14 connectivity contracts for communities;
- providing connectivity reimbursement;
- managing and maintaining network connectivity and equipment;
- providing network and technical support;
- coordinating stakeholder support to fund connectivity needs for communities.



Annual member community connectivity fees total approximately \$400,000. It is important to note that fees for high-cost service areas have yet to be factored into this total cost and will be revised for 2022-2023.

The FNEC is working to secure connectivity financing for fibre optic infrastructure research and deployment, networking equipment, broadband upgrades, and recurring fees for member communities. Since 2015, a total of \$7.43 million in funding has been provided through the First Nations Infrastructure Fund and the eHealth Infostructure Program.





## Zoom Platform

The Zoom videoconferencing application enables secure and effective communication among users. We have a site licence that enables us to share **4,500 Zoom licences** with students, teachers, and school administrators. This year, we were able to hold over **30,000 meetings** for a **total of 7,600,000 minutes**.

## iPads in Schools

From acquisition to deployment, the FNEC continues to help schools integrate iPad technology in the classroom and distance learning environments. Using a cloud-based mobile device management platform called Jamf School enables the FNEC and schools to leverage volume purchasing discounts from Apple Education and deploy device-wide licensing, and customize device requirements established by each school.

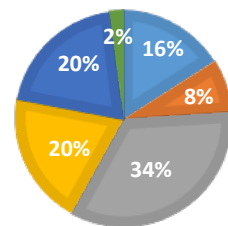
The FNEC offers technical support and training to schools so they can self-manage their devices to achieve the level of collaboration they are seeking. The FNEC has provided a **total of 70 hours of training and support to 15 communities with 2,772 registered devices** as part of this iPad program.

## Equipment Purchasing

The support provided by the FNEC aiming to simplify and facilitate technology purchasing continues to be of great value to communities. This service is available to all FNEC member communities who need advice and support from our team of technology experts and purchasing agents. The FNEC processed approximately **394 transactions for member communities this year**.

### PURCHASING

- Laptops, peripheral equipment
- IP security cameras
- Network equipment
- SMART LCD, audio-visual equipment
- Apple Technologies (Jamf)
- Online purchases (Amazon)



## Software Licensing

The FNEC maintains regional licensing agreements in education for all school computers at no cost to member communities. In total, **26 schools benefit** from this software initiative. The following licensing agreements are accessible through the FNEC and can be downloaded from a secure location with guidance from our technical support staff:

- Microsoft Education agreement (Windows upgrades and Office);
- Microsoft Office 365 for schools;
- McAfee Antivirus;
- SMART Advantage Notebook;
- ZOOM Videoconference;
- Adobe Creative Cloud.

## Microsoft 365

Deployed in 2020 to support distance learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, schools continue to use this platform for collaborative purposes and to access Office 365 software applications including Teams, OneDrive, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Participants registered in the Office 365 project total:

- 16 schools in 11 communities;
- 4,300 students;
- 500 teachers;
- 650 support staff.

## Skills Link

The Skills Link – ICT program gives 18 to 30-year-olds access to valuable on-the-job training and field experience in information and communication technology. Program participation can be up to two years, providing beneficiaries with extensive work experience in their community. Basic computer technician training is provided, contributing to learning continuity and effectiveness, supported by practice classes and high-quality online evaluations. Graduates of the program receive industry recognized certification.

This year, **15 young adults from 11 FNEC member communities** benefitted from this program that includes a 30-week work placement.

## Technology Partnerships and Research

The FNEC continues to work with our research partners in the First Mile Connectivity Consortium and remains proactive in the CRTC public consultation process to ensure ongoing First Nations consultation on broadband policy development for future generations. More information is available at **[www.firstmile.ca](http://www.firstmile.ca)**.



## Quebec Aboriginal Science and Engineering Association

We are maintaining our partnership with the Quebec Aboriginal Science and Engineering Association to support the delivery of online training to help teachers motivate and supervise student participation in science projects and fairs. Two workshops were held online via Zoom on November 16 and 17 in both official languages with a total of 47 teachers participating. Access to recordings of the workshops were also provided to teachers.



## Digital Career Orientation Tools

The FNEC supports member schools in the organization and implementation of digital guidance tools such as myBlueprint used in English-language schools, and Enio used with French-speaking students. These tools help students navigate through career and life planning and develop a deeper understanding of themselves.

## ORIENTATION 5: LIFELONG LEARNING

### University Centre Project

Founded in 2011, Kiuna Institution has become a reference in terms of college instruction by and for First Peoples. But what happens to students after they graduate from the only Indigenous-led college in Quebec? There are university programs adapted to the Indigenous context in the province; however, barriers still exist and prevent Indigenous students from fully developing their academic potential. The fact that the Indigenous identity is not completely valued within the university community is one of these barriers. Although some universities can be congratulated for their efforts in creating an inclusive learning space, we know that cultural insecurity directly affects Indigenous student retention.

The FNEC believes that decolonizing curriculum and promoting Indigenous knowledge and identity can be accomplished through the creation of our own institutions. By creating culturally appropriate conditions and Indigenous-based worldviews and approaches in education and research, we know that Indigenous students will be able to fulfill their dreams.

Developing sustainable university level education is one of the FNEC's strategic goals in its five-year plan for 2021-2026. The creation of a university centre is part of this desire to provide quality instruction to First Nations and Inuit students in a safe environment where Indigenous identities, languages, values, cultures, and traditional knowledge can prosper and grow, giving a greater number of students access to a higher education.

Through the adoption of a First Peoples driven action plan in December 2020, Laval University has become a key partner in the development of a higher learning space, by and for First Peoples.

To meet project targets, consultations with different stakeholders were held in early 2022 to hear their views on what a real Indigenous needs-based university centre should look like.

Findings from these consultations will be analyzed and reported to FNEC management and representatives.

We are scheduled to co-sign a framework agreement with Laval University on our mutual involvement in the university centre project.

### Post-Secondary Education

We conducted a member community-wide consultation on implementing a regional model supporting post-secondary student success and increasing graduation rates. This model upholds the principle of local control and First Nations self-determination by enabling them to design their own models without reducing the flexibility our member communities currently have.

Through our effective takeover of the Post-Secondary Partnerships Program, we were able to confirm financial support for 12 community projects giving approximately 200 First Nations students access to post-secondary education programming.

## Yahndawa'

Yahndawa' is a distance learning portal created for adult students by the FNEC and the workforce training and development centre (CDFM) in Wendake. This online training program enables First Nations adults to obtain their high school diploma or fulfill credit requirements for vocational training programs, or college or university enrollment. Students also have access to a computer equipment lending service, technical support, and academic and career counselling services provided by the FNEC. Yahndawa' programming includes Secondary III compulsory and optional courses. In March 2022, enrollment totalled 31 adults from 9 different communities. One high school graduate was celebrated in June 2021.



## Little Feathers

The FNEC distributed Little Feathers bags again this year to help children transition to 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.

Teachers have also been involved in developing Little Feathers content and providing valuable follow-up with students and parents so that together we can make children's first year in school a great success. Little Feathers statistics:

- 17 participating schools
- 600 families equipped with a Little Feathers bag

## Kiuna

Kiuna was proud to be involved in Emanuelle Dufour's comic book *C'est le Québec qui est né dans mon pays! Carnets de rencontres, d'Ani Kuni à Kiuna* which was officially launched in April. A portion of the profits will be invested in a scholarship for Kiuna students. <https://ecosociete.org/livres/c-est-le-quebec-qui-est-ne-dans-mon-pays>.

Kiuna launched a newsletter in June that will be published four times a year, at each equinox and solstice and is available for online subscription.

Kiuna's satellite classroom project officially began in July 2021 and will be launched in Wemotaci in August 2022. Additional satellite classrooms are being considered.

We tiptoed back-to-school in August due to the cloud of uncertainty still hanging over us, and decided to implement dual-mode teaching, simultaneously combining classroom and online teaching. An estimated 23 students are expected to graduate in 2022.

Kiuna participated in organizing the 6th National Building Reconciliation Forum: Falling into step with First Peoples students, and hosted the virtual pre-forum held on September 21. A total of 500 people attended this year's forum. <https://www.facebook.com/ReseauUQ/videos/157174506588919>.



Kiuna **has reached the 10-year milestone!** A modest, online celebration held October 2 gave us the opportunity to look back and acknowledge the contribution made by our many partners, and served to remind us of our mutual commitment to student success. Kchi wliwni to all those who contributed to this wonderful initiative! [https://m.facebook.com/watch/?v=398225031889177&\\_rdr](https://m.facebook.com/watch/?v=398225031889177&_rdr)

We are still working with the FNEC and our partner colleges on obtaining full accreditation as an independent college from Quebec's Ministry of Higher Education, and two key reports were submitted in November.

Even though dual-mode teaching made things difficult, Kiuna was still able to give students the opportunity to participate in a variety of cultural activities throughout the year. We held an awards night in December to celebrate and acknowledge student dedication, perseverance, and resilience. [https://m.facebook.com/watch/?v=948415102749205&\\_rdr](https://m.facebook.com/watch/?v=948415102749205&_rdr)

Kiuna partnered with the Vignola market research firm to support the college's recruitment efforts and strategic planning. Community participation is essential to this research that will be concluded in June 2022.

Promotional activities including open houses, virtual presentations, school visits, and campus tours were maintained, enabling us to reach approximately 1,250 people. <https://kiuna-college.com/eng/open-house/>

This was a good year for curriculum development at Kiuna. In partnership with the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission, Kiuna launched the pre-university First Nations and Inuit science program in March. [https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch\\_permalink&v=777443479886839](https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=777443479886839)

Kiuna's annual report is available online at [www.kiuna-college.com](http://www.kiuna-college.com).

## Nutrition Funding and Support

In partnership with The Breakfast Club of Canada, the FNEC supports schools in the organization and implementation of student wellness programs or projects that have a noticeable and direct impact on student health and learning. Nutrition funding aims to ensure that all students in our communities have reliable access to healthy food in a safe and positive school environment.

## Ancestors' Challenge

The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to cancel the 13th edition of the FNEC Interschool Games, inevitably creating a void in the lives of the young people who participate in large numbers each year.

Wanting to rekindle First Nations participation in sports while reducing the risk of spreading the virus as much as possible, we decided to create the Ancestors' Challenge. This is a brand-new concept in obstacle racing with 12 different obstacles to test participants' skills.



Between May and October 2021, the Ancestors' Challenge obstacle course was set up in **20 FNEC member communities**, with more than **4,000 young people** between the ages of 4 and 19 participating.



## ORIENTATION 6: OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

*The FNEC uses a results-based management system to encourage the delivery of new services while ensuring the quality of existing member community services is maintained.*

### School Ventilation Systems

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, several experts and organizations have taken a serious look at air quality in schools. In concern for the well-being of students and staff, the FNEC has undertaken an analysis of ventilation systems in member schools. These inspections have given us the opportunity to meet with many school principals and ventilation system operators across the province.

Our analysis has revealed the following:

1. Staff members do not have formal training beyond what they have learned on the job. Several staff members indicated some hesitancy regarding system maintenance considering their lack of training.
2. School principals and system operators indicated that basic training in building mechanical systems is needed for system maintenance and upgrading, community skill development, and the creation of a resource network.
3. Both minor and major deficiencies were detected in ventilation systems, and in some cases the general condition of the building.
4. Air quality samples revealed the need for upgrades in all the schools we inspected.

Following these inspections, Indigenous Services Canada issued funding for the 2021-2022 fiscal year for school ventilation upgrades in First Nations communities.

Furthermore, the FNEC has partnered with the workforce training and development centre (CDFM) in Wendake to develop a building operator training program. This on-site training program will be offered to all band and tribal council staff involved in building maintenance.



The lack of school infrastructure funding for First Nations communities and the need for new investment have been acknowledged by the Government of Canada in ISC's Annual Report to Parliament 2021. The FNEC is currently working on developing a comprehensive partnership to address this issue.

# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



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## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

To the members of  
FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION COUNCIL

### Opinion

The summary non-consolidated financial statements, which include the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2022, the non-consolidated statements of revenues and expenses and administrative expenses analysis are derived from non-consolidated audited financial statements of FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION COUNCIL for the year ended March 31, 2022.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary non-consolidated financial statements are a fair summary of the audited non-consolidated financial statements.

### Summary non-consolidated financial statements

The summary non-consolidated financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. Reading of the summary non-consolidated financial statements, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited non-consolidated financial statements of FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION COUNCIL.

### The audited non-consolidated financial statements and our report there on

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited non-consolidated financial statements in our report dated June 20, 2022.

### Management's responsibility for the summary non-consolidated financial statements

Management is responsible for the preparation of the summary non-consolidated financial statements.

### Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary non-consolidated financial statements are a fair summary of the audited non-consolidated financial statements, based on the procedures which were conducted in accordance with Canadian Auditing Standard (CAS) 810, *Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements*.

Groupe RDL Québec inc.<sup>1</sup>  
Chartered Professional Accountants Corporation

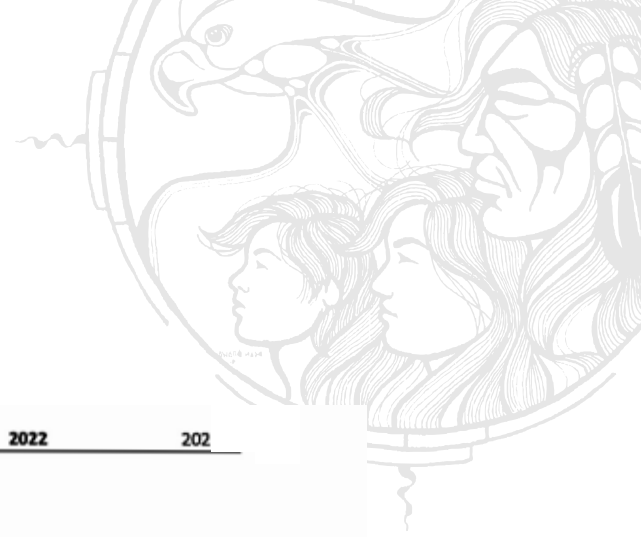
Quebec,  
June 20, 2022

<sup>1</sup> François Soucy, CPA auditor



**Non-Consolidated Statement of Revenues and Expenses**  
**For the year ended March 31**

	2022	2021
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Contributions for the Achievement of the Programs		
Financial Supports		
Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)	\$ 46,555,522	\$ 46,372,354
FNEC-Technology	1,084,237	79,198
Government of Quebec	160,519	135,265
Canadian Heritage	25,437	161,843
Other organizations	311,957	72,034
Communities	1,972,021	4,109,742
Kiuna Institution	2,518,428	2,824,400
Kiuna Residences	43,630	136,727
Membership Fees	22,000	22,000
Earned Interests	33,383	87,952
Sponsorship - Inter-School Games / Ancestor's Challenge	19,000	-
Other revenue	25,517	15,315
	<b>52,771,651</b>	<b>54,016,830</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Achievement of the Programs ISC		
Decentralized Programs	36,854,315	38,226,227
Expenses	7,384,289	5,466,533
Expenses-Other Programs	3,609,221	4,566,246
Kiuna Institution and Residences	2,718,918	3,259,654
Administrative Expenses	2,129,772	1,786,585
	<b>52,696,515</b>	<b>53,305,245</b>
<b>EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 75,136</b>	<b>\$ 711,585</b>



**Non-Consolidated Statement of Financial Position  
As at March 31**

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash	\$ 8,672,442	\$ 12,804,499
Investments	-	1,014,184
Accounts Receivable (note 3)	8,388,658	6,982,610
Prepaid Expenses	153,799	136,008
	<b>17,214,899</b>	<b>20,937,301</b>
<b>CAPITAL ASSETS (note 4)</b>	<b>3,590,941</b>	<b>334,182</b>
	<b>\$ 20,805,840</b>	<b>\$ 21,271,483</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Creditors (note 6)	\$ 6,852,868	\$ 8,553,038
Deferred Contributions (note 7)	8,105,087	6,945,696
	<b>14,957,955</b>	<b>15,498,734</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
<b>INVESTMENT IN CAPITAL ASSETS</b>	<b>3,590,941</b>	<b>334,182</b>
<b>RESTRICTED</b>	<b>844,462</b>	<b>872,559</b>
<b>UNRESTRICTED</b>	<b>1,412,482</b>	<b>4,566,008</b>
	<b>5,847,885</b>	<b>5,772,749</b>
	<b>\$ 20,805,840</b>	<b>\$ 21,271,483</b>

On behalf of the Finance and Administration Committee:

Richard Dussault

Jovette Kistabish



## FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION COUNCIL

Administrative Expenses Analysis  
for the year ended March 31

	2022	2021
	Budget	Actual
	(not audited)	
	\$	\$
Leasehold Improvements	10 000	3 730
Amortization of Capital Assets	5 000	98 569
Insurances and Security	15 000	39 662
Electricity, Heating, Air Conditioning	21 000	31 832
Equipment and Premises Maintenance	26 000	61 377
Equipment - Furnitures	20 000	30
Computer Equipment	99 908	15 997
Training	123 850	43 347
Banking Fees	2 500	5 630
Connectivity	3 000	8 331
Licence Fees and Software	20 444	887
Travel and Representation Expenses	20 000	22 116
Rent	130 200	130 200
Stationary and Office Supplies	40 675	22 479
Publicity and Promotion	3 700	33 008
Salaries and Benefits	1 569 824	1 281 083
Professional Services	210 200	309 923
Telecommunications	45 000	12 664
Translation	-	8 907
	2 366 301	2 129 772
		1 786 585

# KEY PARTNER IN FIRST NATIONS STUDENT SUCCESS



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