



PRESS RELEASE

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First Nations Education in Peril: A Budget that Compromises ReconciliACTION in Education

Wendake, November 5, 2025 – The First Nations Education Council (FNEC) is concerned by the orientations of the first federal budget presented by the Carney government.

The government's focus on the short-term streamlining of public finances and boosting competitiveness is pushing First Nations education to the background, sacrificing structuring investments that generate well-documented long-term socio-economic benefits.

“Education is not an expense, it's an investment. Neglecting education funding compromises young people's future and delays the implementation of reconciliACTION,” stated Denis Gros-Louis, General Director of the FNEC.

There is real progress in education, but it is unstable. Today, First Nations schools are showing outstanding results, in some cases superior to those of the provincial network. Reduced financing would be a significant setback and would bring back to the forefront the gaps in success rates that our communities have successfully reduced through the Regional Education Agreement (REA), signed in 2022. Structuring investments in school infrastructures should be included in the REA renewal, planned for 2027, to consolidate these gains and provide sustainable support for educational success.

A Rigorous and Efficient Model that Has Proven Its Worth

The FNEC's experience shows that the investments made under the REA generate solid, viable and sustainable returns. Since 2022, there has been significant increases in school attendance, employee retention and access to special education services. During the same period, more than 1,500 jobs have been created or maintained in FNEC member communities.

The model used, which is founded on rigour, transparency and autonomy, has reduced bureaucratic red tape at Indigenous Services Canada and improved the performance of the administrative system. It proves that it is possible to reconcile budget stability, sound public management and measurable results. The result of a true Nation to Nation partnership, this model is the epitome of reconciliation in action.

At the same time, the FNEC welcomes the announced investments in residential infrastructures for Indigenous communities, essential to quality of life and employee retention. It hopes that these efforts will also support the development of school infrastructures, an essential lever to reach the full potential of the Regional Education Agreement.

Insufficient Funding for First Nations Education

Although the FNEC shares the government's rigour and efficiency objectives, the lack of targeted measures to support the educational success of First Nations students runs counter to Canada's reconciliation and equity commitments.

Since the adoption of the First Nations education transformation policy in 2019, Canada has committed itself to providing flexible funding, adapted to the realities of our communities. This principle must be reaffirmed.

Education is a lever of prosperity, a catalyst for reconciliation and a driver of autonomy. Through its unique vitality, First Nations youth represent a national strategic asset: focusing on their education is to invest in the Canada of tomorrow and build a sustainable reconciliACTION for future generations.

About the First Nations Education Council

The First Nations Education Council (FNEC) is an association of 22 First Nations in Quebec that has been working for 40 years to fulfil the right of First Nations to exercise full jurisdiction over education by developing a comprehensive education system with appropriate resources, designed and managed according to First Nations values and culture. For more information, go to www.cepn-fnec.com

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Information:

Mona Belleau
Communications and Government Relations Services Director
First Nations Education Council
418-842-7672, extension 3016
mbelleau@cepn-fnec.com