



STRATEGIC **PLAN**

Honouring our roots, learning with pride

2026 – 2031

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WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

Denis Gros-Louis

Kwe,

Over fifty years ago, First Nations Chiefs from across the country joined together to clearly assert their desire to achieve full educational autonomy. Today, this vision is our compass. The First Nations Education Council (FNEC) is committed to fulfilling the vision charted by our Elders: implement an education system that reflects our values, our languages and our aspirations.

It is in this spirit that we created the *Strategic Plan 2026–2031*. This ambitious document will steer our priorities and collective effort for the next five years. The plan was developed in close collaboration with our 22 member communities. It translates their expectations, their ambitions and their vision of an educational future based on self-determination and excellence. It is structured on five major strategic orientations:

1. Sovereignty in education
2. Education and school infrastructure funding
3. Defense of education and language rights and interests
4. Implementation of a culturally safe and relevant postsecondary environment
5. Our organization's relevance and organizational excellence

Member communities have made excellent progress since the Regional Education Agreement was implemented. This is reflected in improved programs, stronger education services, achievement of performance indicators in schools, and the introduction of a number of initiatives for students. The present plan aims to consolidate this momentum and paves the way to further substantial gains.

Over the next five years, we have our sights set on:

- providing a full range of educational services, from preschool to university, with each community fully exercising their inherent right to self-determination;
- tearing down systemic barriers so that our youth can access key professions in essential fields, including health, education, law, and many others;
- training a new generation of proud, committed leaders, who are bearers of change in their communities;
- developing a highly-qualified labour force that is ready to get involved in large-scale national projects, including the Alto High-Speed Rail project;
- providing an education rooted in First Nations cultures, languages and values, while preparing young people to become agents of renewal, particularly in the fields of information technology, cybersecurity and artificial intelligence;
- ensuring culturally-safe learning, which encourages pride in First Nations identity, proficiency in First Nations languages, bilingualism (First Nations language and French or English), and development of academic skills essential for success.

We are committed to helping each community to achieve its ideal school: a place of learning where each child can thrive, belong and prepare to become a future leader. By honouring our roots and learning with pride, together we will continue to transform education for the generations to come.



WORD FROM THE CHIEF

Lisa Robinson

I would like to congratulate the First Nations Education Council on the release of its 2026–2031 Strategic Plan. For over 40 years, FNEC has stood alongside our communities, strengthening First Nations education and advancing our inherent right to govern it according to our Nations' priorities and values. The progress achieved over these decades reflects the dedication of leadership, educators, families, and communities working together.

This new Strategic Plan is both visionary and practical. It reinforces our educational self-determination and ensures that our students are supported not only to succeed, but to pursue their dreams with confidence. It strengthens our collective ability to respond to their aspirations – academically, culturally, and as future leaders of our Nations.

The coming years will be pivotal as we implement the Regional Education Agreement and build the infrastructure needed to sustain this work for generations to come. The work ahead will

demand leadership and collective effort. Through collaboration, shared commitment, and a continued focus on our children, we will continue building schools that are inspiring, culturally grounded, and responsive to the realities of our communities.

The future of First Nations education is one we are shaping together – and it is a future full of promise.

Lisa Robinson

**Chief Lisa Robinson
Wolf Lake First Nation**



FNEC GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The FNEC governance structure is built on a democratic model that allows for the full and complete participation of its 22 member communities in the decision-making process.

The FNEC structure includes:

- a **general assembly** made up of representatives from member communities;
- a **special general assembly** of grand chiefs and chiefs;
- a **finance and administration committee** made up of three members appointed by the general assembly.

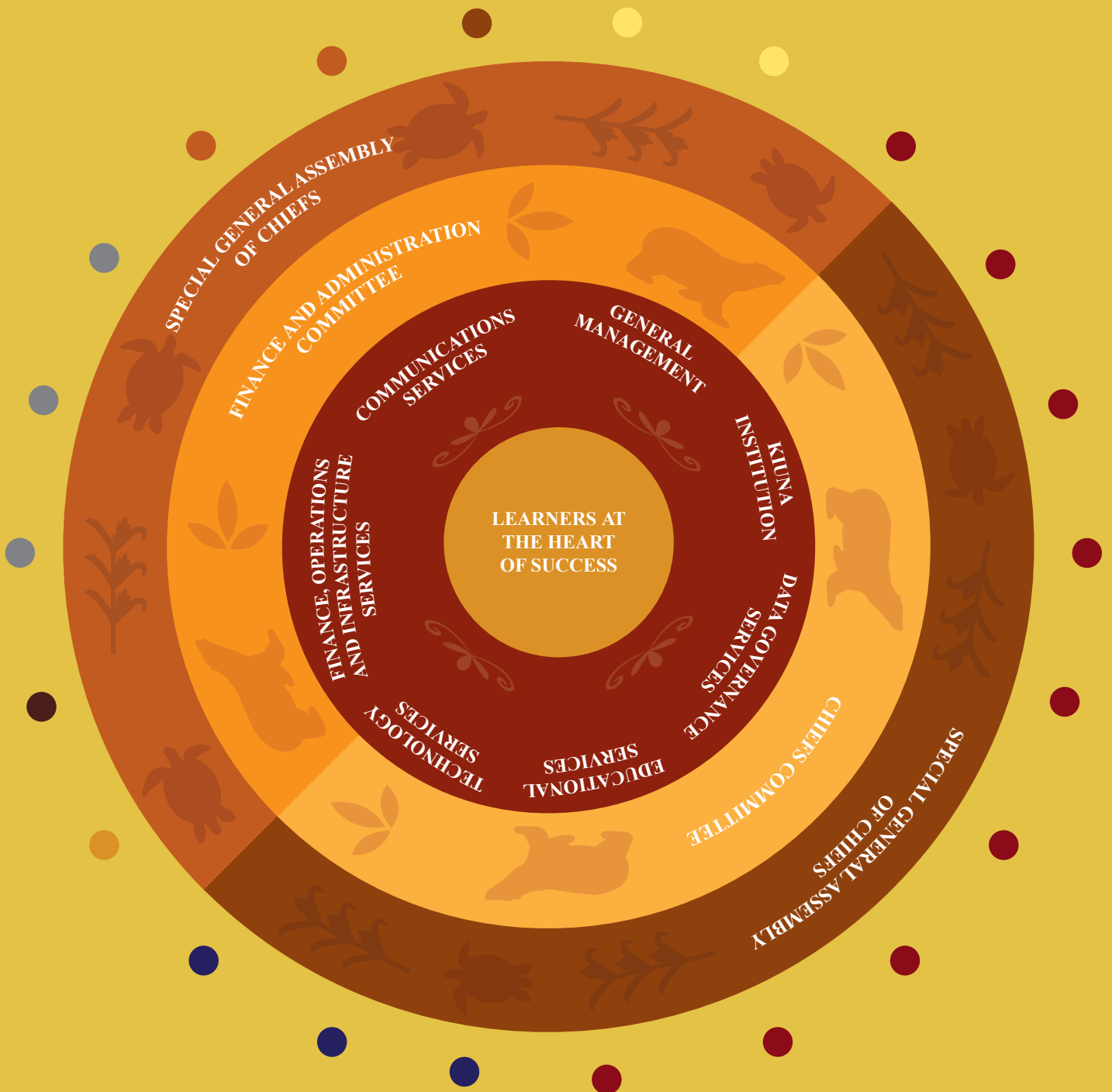
The **general assembly** is made up of education representatives designated by their respective communities and entrusts its mandates to the FNEC Secretariat.

The **special general assembly** is composed of chiefs from each member community. It entrusts the FNEC Secretariat with mandates concerning the fulfilment of its mission, the achievement of its vision and the defense of its policy positions.

The **finance and administration committee** is an intermediate body between the general assembly and the FNEC Secretariat. Its mission is to support the Secretariat in managing finances and human resources, in accordance with the orientations and instructions given by the general assembly.



FNEC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



THE FNEC AT A GLANCE

22

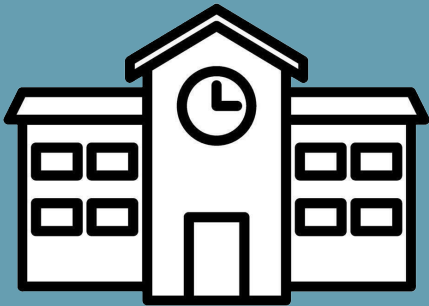
COMMUNITIES

8

NATIONS

6200

STUDENTS



25

SCHOOLS

13

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

5

COMBINED SCHOOLS
(ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY)

7

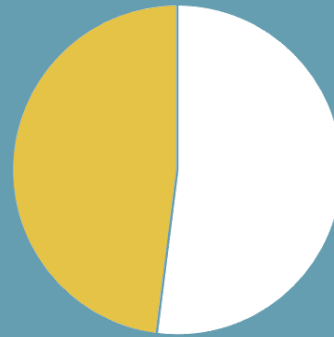
SECONDARY SCHOOLS

1

HOUSE OF KNOWLEDGE
(COMING)

1

POSTSECONDARY
INSTITUTION
(KIUNA)



52%

FRENCH LANGUAGE
SCHOOLS

48%

ENGLISH LANGUAGE
SCHOOLS



SERVICES OFFERED
IN ANCESTRAL LANGUAGES



MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS 2021-2026

Signing of the Regional Education Agreement

After ten years of work, the signing of the Regional Education Agreement marked a major advancement towards the full control of education by and for First Nations.

FNEC funding formula

The development of a funding formula by and for First Nations was a major milestone for the FNEC.

Performance indicators by and for First Nations

The result of a concerted effort with the communities, the nine performance indicators form the official accountability mechanism for the Regional Education Agreement.

Recognition of our collective expertise in the creation of educational content

- *Competency 15* – Developed in collaboration with the CDFM and the Institut Tshakapesh, this competency, which aims to reinforce the understanding of First Nations realities and fight against systemic racism, has aroused great interest in universities and cegeps.
- *First Nations Preschool Education Cycle Program* – This major breakthrough integrates cultural traditions and lifelong learning, and supports the control of education by and for First Nations.
- *Foundations in Teaching in a First Nations Context* – The UQAC officially recognizes the knowledge and competencies of FNEC training in its bachelors of arts leading to a teaching certificate.
- *Voices from the Land portal* – This tool supports reconciliation by offering authentic First Nations resources to teachers.

Awacak Okiskinohamatowikamikowaw elementary school

Manawan inaugurated its new elementary school, which can now welcome 450 children in modern installations.

Historical agreement for the House of Knowledge

The signing of the framework agreement with all Quebec universities is a decisive step towards the establishment of the House of Knowledge, the first university designed by and for the First Peoples.

Kiuna: a top choice for young people

More and more students are choosing to pursue their studies at Kiuna immediately after obtaining their high school diploma.

Adoption of the *Declaration on First Nations Language Rights*

The Regional Committee on First Nations Languages highlighted the adoption of a historical declaration by the AFNQL chiefs asserting First Nations language rights.

Broadband infrastructure

The FNEC technology services ensured that all schools have access to the bandwidth that they need. Each member community that has a school benefits from a connection of at least 1 GB, which also facilitates the deployment of public infrastructures thanks to the fiber optic infrastructure project.



STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2031

Honouring our roots, learning with pride



ROOTED IN THE ASSERTION AND EXERCISE OF SOVEREIGNTY IN FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

First Nations commitment to exercise full educational autonomy is not new. In 1972, all chiefs in Canada adopted the policy paper *Indian Control of Indian Education*, which was recognized by the Government of Canada in 1973.

For the First Nations in Quebec to achieve their goal of governing and gaining full control over their education systems, they had to come together and unite their efforts in a permanent organization. This led to the creation of the First Nations Education Council (FNEC) 40 years ago.

Today, the assertion and exercise by the member First Nations of their education sovereignty remains the FNEC's main priority. As the present *Strategic Plan 2026-2031*, demonstrates, the team will continue to carry out the work performed by the team so that this ambition becomes a reality.



ALIGNED WITH THE FNEC'S MISSION AND VISION

FNEC MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

MISSION

The First Nations Education Council (FNEC) contributes to the complete control of education by its member First Nations and the exercise of their inherent jurisdiction.

The FNEC represents and defends the interests of this collective strength by focusing on the realities of each First Nation, and respecting their identity, culture and traditions. Excellence, student success, cultural pride and control of education by and for First Nations, are 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.

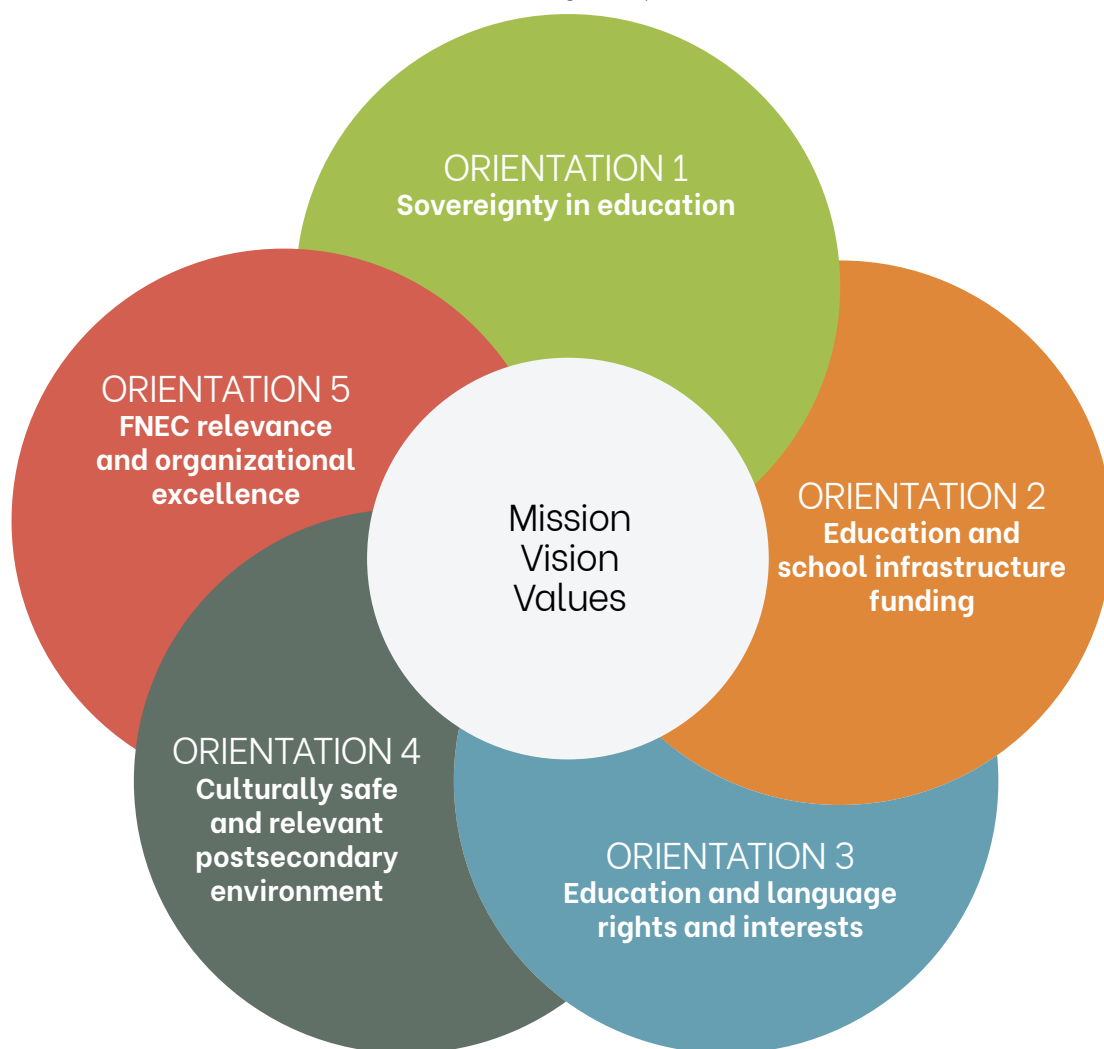
VALUES

- Autonomy
- Collaboration
- Culture
- Perseverance
- Respect
- Rigour
- Transparency



SUPPORTS THE FNEC'S MISSION AND FACILITATES THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ITS VISION

The strategic orientations 2026–2031 are interconnected and none of them take priority over the others. Rather, they form an integrated whole that will orient the significant work that the FNEC will have to undertake during this period:



REFLECT THE VISION AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE 22 MEMBER FIRST NATIONS

Starting in January 2025, while taking stock of the achievements of the *Strategic Plan 2021-2026*, the FNEC management team also reflected on the adoption of an approach to place learners and their communities at the heart of the *Strategic Plan 2026-2031*.

A series of surveys and discussions took place throughout 2025 with General Managements, Directors of Education,

and chiefs of member First Nations to share their vision and expectations concerning the *Strategic Plan 2026-2031*.

The FNEC used the comments and data collected to make several observations and identify important elements to integrate in the strategic orientations 2026-2031.



Here is a summary of the main priorities expressed by the member First Nations for 2026–2031:

- Establish a process to take full and complete control of education
- Have governments and postsecondary institutions recognize Indigenous competency in education, including the diplomas issued by First Nations
- Develop and deploy our curricula in our education system
- Maximize autonomy and optimize the management of education and school infrastructure funds
- Adapt the programs, the training of future teachers and the postsecondary environment to First Nations needs and realities

Finally, in addition to these main priorities, other priorities and expectations expressed by the member First Nations have led to the completion of the FNEC's strategic orientations 2026–2031 and their strategic objectives. The next section describes the scope and importance of the work that will be performed by the FNEC.



STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS 2026-2031

A path guided by our vision



DESCRIPTIONS AND ACTIONS TO TAKE

To fulfil its mission and make progress towards achieving its vision, during the 2026-2031 period the FNEC will focus a major part of its efforts and resources on the following five strategic orientations:

- 1. Sovereignty in education**
- 2. Funding of education and school infrastructure**
- 3. Education and language rights and interests**
- 4. Culturally safe and relevant postsecondary environment**
- 5. FNEC relevance and organizational excellence**

The following pages present each of these orientations and their main strategic objectives.



ORIENTATION 1

SOVEREIGNTY IN EDUCATION

ASSERT MEMBER FIRST NATIONS SOVEREIGNTY
IN EDUCATION AND SUPPORT THE PROJECT
THROUGH TANGIBLE ADVANCES

1. Establish a process for the full and complete control of education by and for First Nations

- Study and recommend methods suitable to the communities to transfer education responsibilities from Indigenous Services Canada to the First Nations
- Study and recommend one or more models that support a local and regional governance aligned with First Nations self-determination and needs

2. Ensure the recognition of our graduates by the governments, postsecondary institutions and professional establishments, through agreements and strategic partnerships

- Ensure that the educational certifications issued by First Nations, including those of Kiuna, are recognized by the governments and education partners
- Ensure that the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the *Declaration of Recognition of First Nations Competency in Education* are respected, and have our school programs recognized
- Agree on an inclusive decision-making process in which the FNEC, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Higher Education will participate for decisions concerning the policies that affect FNEC member communities

3. Coordinate, develop and support the deployment of school programs by and for First Nations

- Build the paths, requirements, dimensions and content (history, law, languages and cultures, holistic approach, healing paths, etc.)
- While the Indigenous school programs are being adopted and deployed, support the communities that want to adapt the provincial curriculum to their cultures, identities and languages

4. Ensure the coordination and establishment of standards to certify the qualification of teachers, directors and support staff in a First Nations context and external collaborators

- Study and recommend the funding models needed to establish and apply these standards
- Establish the criteria, standards and requirements to respect for FNEC certification of university training and qualification for teachers in a First Nations context





ORIENTATION 2

EDUCATION AND SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

OBTAIN AND SUSTAIN FORESEEABLE FUNDING BASED ON REAL NEEDS IN EDUCATION AND SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Improve and renew the Regional Education Agreement (REA)

- Act as a guardian for the REA for member First Nations by ensuring its integrity, its continuous evolution and its alignment with the FNEC's mission, which is to support the complete control of education by and for the member communities
- Use established performance indicators to promote REA successes to demonstrate the importance of the Agreement and member communities capabilities
- Build research capability founded on REA data
- Continuously improve the REA by integrating five new strategies: improved schedule, salary adjustments, cybersecurity, contingency fund and protection measures

2. Obtain the funds needed to fulfil real needs in school infrastructure, and contribute to their sound management

- Negotiate a school infrastructure agreement which will take into account the needs observed with the implementation of the REA and long-term needs
- Establish a funding and infrastructure project governance structure that will respect member First Nations local autonomy and their principles of self-determination
- Ensure that the provisions of the REA are integrated in infrastructure project completion criteria
- Ensure that the planning and implementation of school infrastructure projects reflect the cultural identity signature of each member First Nation
- Prepare a process for transferring responsibilities



ORIENTATION 3

EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE RIGHTS AND INTERESTS

DEFEND AND PROTECT THE RIGHTS AND INTERESTS OF MEMBER FIRST NATIONS AGAINST SYSTEMIC BARRIERS

1. Remove the barriers that prevent or limit the exercise of education sovereignty of member First Nations

- Promote First Nations culture, history and knowledge (competency 15)
- Actively participate in the Quebec–FNEC bilateral technical table on language issues
- Raise awareness of the systemic barriers identified and implement strategies to remove them
- Take action so that First Nations fundamental rights in education are extended to the first two years of college, to meet the workplace needs of the modern world

2. Support and represent member First Nations in the defense of their rights

- Successfully defend the application for judicial review
- Document the opportunities to defend rights and interests and use a concerted strategy to lead them
- Address the specific needs expressed by First Nations as well as cybersecurity needs
- Take steps with the courts when requested by member First Nations



ORIENTATION 4

CULTURALLY SAFE AND RELEVANT POSTSECONDARY ENVIRONMENT

CONTRIBUTE SIGNIFICANTLY TO ENSURING THAT POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS OFFER A CULTURALLY SAFE AND RELEVANT LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR FIRST NATIONS MEMBERS

1. Establish and implement a strategy for the Indigenization of postsecondary environments

- Implement integration paths, support services (e.g. First Nations mentors) and reserved spaces for First Nations students
- Make Kiuna and the House of Knowledge cornerstones of Indigenization
- Establish partnerships that have a strong likelihood of generating tangible progress in First Nations education

2. Plan and deploy the House of Knowledge (First Nations university)

- Inaugurate the House of Knowledge
- Assert the complete control of the educational path by offering quality, diversified and culturally safe programs so that First Nations learners can fulfil their life's ambitions

3. Promote Kiuna as a model

- Contribute to ensuring that the diplomas issued directly by Kiuna are recognized by universities and workplaces
- Support Kiuna's autonomy
- Help the transformation of Kiuna into a constituent college

4. Collaborate with stakeholders involved in career pathways and job training

- Work so that First Nations learners can benefit from culturally safe and relevant services, paths and training
- Become the reference for academic institutions that want to offer spaces for First Nations
- Have Kiuna recognized as a partner of choice





ORIENTATION 5

FNEC RELEVANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

ENSURE THAT MEMBER FIRST NATIONS CAN RELY ON AN AGILE AND INNOVATIVE ORGANIZATION THAT OFFERS THEM A RANGE OF QUALITY SERVICES THAT MEET THEIR NEEDS

1. Develop and implement optimized and customized support services

- In each community, develop and implement a specific and customized support plan that integrates lifelong learning

2. Continuously improve the services offered by the FNEC

- Offer complete and integrated support to school teams (e.g. help with mental health with partners, activities to engage parents, families and the community, pool of specialists in education, education technology)
- Build and deploy a complete professional development program

3. Position the FNEC to meet the challenges, expectations and needs of its member First Nations

- Excel in the preparation and management of organizational changes
- Integrate in FNEC organizational changes the observations, future needs, expectations and recommendations identified during the work done to take control of education in FNEC organizational changes
- Clarify the FNEC's role in the support provided to First Nations to exercise their sovereignty in education, and make sure to remain relevant
- Align common or complementary services with First Nations regional organizations and commissions to promote a coordinated action and ensure the full development of learners.



KEY SUCCESS FACTORS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Even though these five strategic orientations have been established for the five-year period from April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2031, the FNEC team will set annual priorities for each of these five years. These priorities will be included in annual action plans, which the FNEC will use to successfully implement the *Strategic Plan 2026-2031* and achieve the expected results.

This five-year strategic plan represents a collective engagement for the educational future of our children, our youth and our communities. It relies on a vision of education rooted in our cultures, our languages and our knowledge, which honours our identity while promoting equitable and sustainable paths for success, consistent with the lifelong learning cycle. Our goals include the implementation of a university and the integration of a new school infrastructure business management model.

Plan progress will be monitored using clear, culturally relevant and evolving performance indicators to measure progress, ensure a strict follow-up and sustain the continuous improvement of educational practices. Our priorities include recruiting, school attendance, integration of cultural content and the advancement of infrastructure projects. We will use these indicators to guide our decision-making, reinforce transparency and adapt our actions to the real needs of learners and communities.

Carried by our values and our right to self-determination in education, together we are moving confidently towards a future where assessing progress fosters both the personal and collective fulfilment of First Nations.



