



REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

## Memorandum of Understanding

Between the

First Nations Education Steering Committee  
known as “FNESC”

And

the Representative for Children and Youth, for British Columbia  
known as “RCY”

### *Principles*

The following principles guide the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding between the two parties.

- The education of First Nations children is the paramount consideration underlying this Memorandum of Understanding.
- Only through the facilitation of discussion about education matters affecting First Nations in BC, can information be disseminated and shared amongst First Nations in BC.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), are living documents for both parties.
- Both parties agree that First Nations children and youth have a fundamental right to their culture, language, community, along with maintaining their family connections.
- Both parties are committed to providing culturally appropriate education to First Nations children and families across British Columbia.
- The Representative is committed to entering into and maintaining protocol agreements with other First Nations agencies and service providers for the coordination of services to First Nations children and their families.
- The working relationship between the parties will be characterized by mutual respect, trust, honesty and fairness, collaboration and a commitment to problem solving.

## **WHEREAS**

- A. The Parties recognize the right of First Nations to be self-determining and self-governing.
- B. The Parties recognize that First Nations possess inherent rights and responsibilities with respect to the education of their children and youth. These rights include a special collective right to transmit a unique cultural identity and to sustain that identity including a sacred relationship from time immemorial with their ancestral teachings, territories, and their peoples.
- C. The Parties acknowledge that the number of vulnerable First Nations children in British Columbia is a matter of provincial and national concern that requires immediate, systemic and remedial attention. The parties agree that educational success for First Nations Children in BC is vital for their future as contributing members to their respective community, First Nation, and the provincial and national community. They further agree that the successes and strengths of First Nations children and their families and communities must be recognized and celebrated.
- D. The Parties agree on the need for a respectful and ongoing relationship and dialogue on all issues relating to the education of all First Nations children and youth so that they can be supported while retaining and enjoying their distinct rights and identity as First Nations peoples.

## **1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") is to establish a joint dialogue and advocacy process regarding general and systemic issues relating to the education of First Nations children and youth in British Columbia. And;
  - a) recognize that First Nations maintain education jurisdiction over their children and youth,
  - b) recognizes and supports the Representative for Children and Youth as an independent officer of the Legislature of British Columbia with a statutory mandate to advocate on behalf of children and youth, to monitor programs and services and to review and investigate critical injuries and deaths; and
  - c) facilitate discussion about educational matter affecting First Nations in BC between the parties; and
  - d) establish and open dialogue on Children's Rights within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and;
  - e) to have open dialogue on the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous peoples.

- 1.2 The joint dialogue and advocacy process will focus on:
- a) advocating on behalf of First Nations children and youth to ensure that they are fully supported in their education, including that they receive culturally-appropriate education of sufficient quantity and quality to address their needs, circumstances and aspirations;
  - b) supporting First Nations communities and people to be effective advocates for the education of their children and families;
  - c) advocating for the development of educational programs and services that respond to the intergenerational trauma experienced in First Nations communities;
  - d) other topics or issues as mutually agreed upon by the Parties.
- 1.3 The First Nations Education Steering Committee agrees to strategize on outcomes for First Nations children on a semi-annual basis to the Representative for Children and Youth.
- 1.4 The joint dialogue and decision making process will be carried out through the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth and such leaders of the First Nations Education Steering Committee, or through individual agencies across British Columbia.
- 1.5 The process defined in this MOU is to provide an avenue for dialogue, consistent communications, and information sharing that is fruitful to the development of First Nations children and youth and their educational aspirations in British Columbia.

## 2.0 TERM AND REVIEW

- 2.1 This MOU shall come into effect on the date on which it is signed, and will remain in effect for a (5) five-year period from that date.
- 2.2 This MOU and activities associated with it will be reviewed annually by the Parties.

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Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond  
Representative for Children and Youth

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Tyrone McNeil  
President, First Nations Education Steering  
Committee