

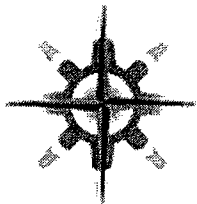
FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL



BRITISH COLUMBIA
ASSEMBLY OF
FIRST NATIONS

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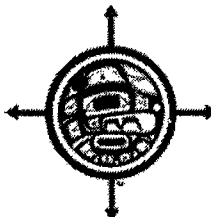
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Edward John's Speaking Notes

For: First Nations Education Agreements Signing

Date: July 5, 2006

**At: Xweme'Ich'stn Estimxwawtsw School, Squamish Nation,
North Vancouver, BC**

Recently one of my grandsons, attending kindergarten for the first time, when I asked him how he was doing in school replied "I am brilliant," and added "more brilliant than you." I'm not sure what that says about me, or him. But the confidence of attitude and being able to achieve is a tremendous life skill.

Today has been long in coming. When we started discussing these issues many years ago, Indian residential schools were still operating in parts of the province and the federal and provincial governments were bilaterally, and without consulting with us, signing Master Tuition Agreements to cover the tuition costs of our students attending public schools. In fact, it was only some 50 years ago that the children were allowed to attend public schools in this province.

Now we have some 120 schools in our communities across this province and our people demand greater excellence and successes in education in quality schools: with excellence in curriculum which reflects their people and cultures; with excellence in teachers who understand and are able to bring out the best in their students; and with excellence in administrators and support staff who understand their responsibilities to support the development of each child's mind, body and spirit; and excellence in support networks in the communities involving our parents/guardians and community offices for each child's development.

It is with this in mind, we proceed with today's signing of the **Education Jurisdiction Framework Agreement** and the **British Columbia First Nations Education Agreement**.

Based on the recognition of the authority of our families, communities and First Nations, it is our intention to strive towards excellence as the standard of achievement for each of our children and for each of our schools. First Nation/Aboriginal students should not have to be satisfied with second class schools, teachers, curriculum, achievement or standards.

We need to challenge, train and support the development of every one of our children, we need to support families as they guide and teach their children, and we need to stand by each one of our communities as they plan and implement goals for their peoples ongoing development and successes.

Today marks an important step in that direction - with both the federal and provincial governments recognizing the importance of our people exercising authorities and bearing responsibilities for our children's education and development. However, both governments must continue to ensure the necessary infrastructure and supports including capacity, buildings, curriculum and financial resources are available to close the social and economic gaps our people and communities face.

Investing properly in the education and future of our children, will ensure we have good, healthy and strong peoples and society.

In closing, on behalf of the First Nations Leadership Council, including the executives of the First Nations Summit, Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the BC Assembly of First Nations, let me say Thank You to Premier Campbell, Minister Shirley Bond and Minister Tom Christensen on behalf of the Province and Minister Prentice on behalf of Canada in helping us move towards achieving greater and higher levels of success in education.

-End-