

# FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

## News Release

**For Immediate Release**  
**November 5, 2015**

### **Aboriginal Education Audit Shows Need for Increased Accountability in Public Education System, Says First Nations Leadership**

**Coast Salish Territory (Vancouver, BC)** – The leadership of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, First Nations Summit and the BC Assembly of First Nation (First Nations Leadership Council) are troubled by the findings of the Office of the Auditor General of BC in the newly-released report, Performance Audit: Education of Aboriginal Students in British Columbia. The report indicates that the Ministry of Education has not fully exercised its power to close the gaps for Aboriginal students in BC public schools, falling short in leadership, use of student data, and sharing of best practices. The First Nations Leadership Council is calling for the Ministry to be held more accountable for Aboriginal student outcomes and to engage in a system-wide improvement effort.

“The Auditor General’s recommendations for making the public school system more accountable for Aboriginal student results echo the recommendations that First Nations leaders made for several years. BC must give these recommendations immediate attention,” said Grand Chief Edward John of the First Nations Summit Political Executive. “In particular, the Ministry must require each school district to report annually on Aboriginal student outcomes and monitor the districts in order to provide extra support where needed.”

Regional Chief Shane Gottfriedson of the BC Assembly of First Nations stated “Education is an inherent right, and BC must work collaboratively with First Nations in the spirit of the Transformative Change Accord and the New Relationship to achieve better outcomes for our youth. Specifically, we need the Ministry of Education to provide more support to First Nations and school districts to develop effective Local Education Agreements that target First Nations student achievement.”

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs commented “The Auditor General’s findings about the level of racism in our schools are very worrisome, especially when it comes to the large numbers of First Nations students who are being awarded the non-graduation Evergreen Certificates rather than the regular Dogwood Graduation Diplomas. These low expectations create barriers that prevent our youth from reaching their full potential and prevent them from continuing on to post-secondary education and training. The Ministry must collaborate with First Nations leadership and the First Nations Education Steering Committee to engage in a strong, system-wide strategy that will improve outcomes and address non-graduation Evergreen Certificates.”

First Nations leaders have asserted that quality First Nations education is essential for empowering First Nations communities and addressing the significant socio-economic gaps that still exist.

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The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

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