



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
NOVEMBER 22, 2007**

FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION ACT WILL RESULT IN IMPROVED OPPORTUNITIES FOR FIRST NATIONS LEARNERS IN BC

Coast Salish Traditional Territory/Vancouver, BC – The First Nations Summit views the introduction of the First Nations Education Act, as a critical step in improving opportunities and success rates for Aboriginal learners in BC. The provincial legislation formally recognizes First Nations authority and jurisdiction over decisions affecting First Nations learners in BC.

“This legislation is a concluding step in a long process in recognizing our communities’ jurisdiction to exercise authority and bear responsibility for our children’s education and development. We congratulate and commend the First Nations Education Steering Committee as well as the federal and provincial representative who have worked towards this legislation which will lead to greater educational opportunities within our communities”, said Grand Chief Edward John, a member of the First Nations Summit political executive.

“While the number of First Nations graduates is increasing slowly, the sad fact is that too few of our students graduate high school. This legislation will assist our communities in building the capacity of our people so that we can develop and implement educational programs that will improve the success rates of our learners”, said Chief Judith Sayers, also a member of the First Nations Summit political executive.

“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 the schools in our communities. With our authority over education, we will be able to set the high standards necessary to lead to success for our students”, added Chief John.

On July 24, 2003, First Nations representatives, along with representatives of the federal and provincial governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the elements of First Nations education jurisdiction. In November 2005, the negotiators initialed the respective agreements. An official signing of the package of Agreements by BC First Nations, British Columbia and Canada took place on July 5, 2006 in North Vancouver, BC. In November of 2006, Bill C-34, First Nations Jurisdiction over Education in British Columbia was unanimously passed in federal parliament.

Detailed information on the legislation and agreements can be found on the education jurisdiction website at www.fnesc.bc.ca/jurisdiction/index.php.

-30-

The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. Further background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

For further information:
Colin Braker
Communications Director
First Nations Summit
Phone: (o) 604-926-9903 (c) 604-328-4094