



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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EDUCATION JURISDICTION AGREEMENTS TO CREATE IMPROVED OPPORTUNITIES FOR FIRST NATIONS LEARNERS

Coast Salish Traditional Territory/Vancouver, BC – The First Nations Leadership Council is viewing today’s signing of the Education Jurisdiction Framework Agreement and the British Columbia First Nations Education Agreement as critical steps in providing better opportunities for success by First Nations learners. The agreements, which provide First Nations authority and jurisdiction over decisions affecting First Nations learners in BC, were co-signed this morning by the Honourable Gordon Campbell, Premier of British Columbia, the Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) at a ceremony conducted at Xweme’lch’stn School in North Vancouver.

“Today has been long in coming. We congratulate and commend all of the parties involved who have worked hard for many years to see these agreements become a reality”, said Grand Chief Edward John, a member of the First Nations Summit Political Executive and the BC First Nations Leadership Council.

“Based on the recognition of the authority of our families, communities and First Nations, it is our intention to use these agreements as a basis to strive towards excellence as the standard of achievement for each of our children and for each of the 120 First Nations schools in BC”, added Chief John.

“We sincerely hope this agreement will ultimately assist in bettering the success rates of First Nations learners in BC. In the end it will be our children and the future generations of our communities who will be the primary beneficiaries of these agreements”, said Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and a member of the BC First Nations Leadership Council.

Shawn Atleo, BC Regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations said, “The lack of success in education is directly linked to chronic poverty, and these agreements are an important step towards closing the socio-economic gap for First Nations in BC. It is especially significant as all parties worked together, federal, provincial, First Nations, and the FNESC, to reach an agreement that is beneficial to everyone. Our children are our future leaders, and I am optimistic that the signing today will improve the livelihoods of our youth”.

The agreements mark a commitment by all parties to improve the quality of education for First Nations students. The agreements also fulfil recommendations made by the National Working Group on Education, who determined that the transfer of jurisdiction is a key ingredient for better educational performance.

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The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the First Nations Summit, Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the BC Assembly of First Nations. The Council works together to politically represent the interests of First Nations in British Columbia and develop strategies and actions to bring about significant and substantive changes to government policy that will benefit all First Nations in British Columbia.

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