

AFN Reality Check: The Fraser Institute Report "Myths and Realities of First Nations Education" (August 2014)

Poor analysis leads to poor policy prescriptions that will not work for anyone.

## **Funding**

- As AFN has long argued, First Nations are underfunded relative to the costs of delivering quality education in First Nation communities.
- The federal government has also validated that First Nations are funded less than provincial governments, and that is why there was a commitment to \$1.9 billion for First Nations education funding in the 2014 budget.
- The Fraser Institute report uses an inaccurate approach to identifying the core, sustainable and predictable funding that reaches First Nation schools. As AFN has shown, using the exact same data cited in this report, First Nations schools on reserve receive on average \$7,856 per student in predictable core funding.
- Using the total AANDC budget of \$1.5 billion to determine a per-student average is inaccurate and misleading. More than half of this money does not find its way to all First Nation schools. Over 26% of the funding goes to provincial school boards/divisions, 10% of the funding is allocated to existing Education agreements (like the James Bay Cree School Board, the Mi'kmaw Education Authority "Mi'kmaw Kinaw'matnewey" and others), and 23% is discretionary, short-term, project-based funds that First Nations may apply for but not all First Nations receive and certainly cannot depend on as regular, annual support.
- Based on the above, that leaves 40% of the funding (\$499 million) finding its way to First Nation schools to support 63,529 students (\$7,856 per student).
- First Nations have long advocated that we are not looking for comparable funding to the provinces, rather comparable opportunity for First Nations students to access the educational services and standards that all Canadian children have.

## **Kelowna Accord**

- The \$1.05 billion announced in the 2005 Kelowna Accord, similar to the \$1.9 billion announced in the 2014 budget, was identified as core, predictable and sustainable funding for First Nation schools.
- First Nations have advocated that, similar to every other education system in Canada, when education administrators know their budgets for next year and can rely on the money being there, they are able to develop long-term education goals, hire teachers at comparable salaries, and focus on improving student success, not making financial ends meet.

## **Standards**

- Despite the lack of specific resources to develop educational standards, First Nation education systems have been able to build and develop local standards that support their schools and communities.
- In fact, First Nations are required through their agreements with the federal government to ensure standards around curriculum and teacher certification, for example, are met.
- Furthermore, First Nation schools have only recently (since 2008) been provided specific resources to develop standards, build information systems to support data management, and implement educational assessments. But this is project-based funding and not all First Nation schools are provided with the resourcing to do this.

Where we see First Nations control of First Nations education we see success, in some cases exceeding provincial and national graduation rates.

First Nations control of First Nations education is a right and it works!

