



Policy Proposal

**First Nations-led, local, regional and/or Treaty-based
Post-Secondary Education Models**

DRAFT

Policy Co-development Team
Assembly of First Nations
National Indian Education Council
Indigenous Services Canada

PREFACE

First Nations are proposing regional post-secondary education (PSE) models with increased funding, resources, and support for First Nations post-secondary education from the Government of Canada to meet the diverse needs of First Nations across the country. A region, for the purpose of this document, is defined as any territory in which First Nations choose to implement First Nations control of First Nations education and negotiate First Nations post-secondary education models. This could include, but is not limited to, a territory defined as a single First Nation, Tribal Council, Treaty affiliation, language family, or an entire province and/or territory. Only Treaty First Nations will speak for Treaty First Nations.

First Nations are exercising the right to self-determination and their self-government right to direct and make decisions regarding all aspects of education, including post-secondary education. First Nations have inherent, constitutional, human, and Treaty rights to education that accords with their respective cultures, values, traditions and languages to support holistic lifelong learning.

Authority and autonomy have and continue to reside with individual First Nations. As such, First Nations will lead the negotiation and conclusion of First Nations-led, local, regional, and/or Treaty-based PSE models, respecting First Nations control of First Nations education. This process will be consistent with the direction and principles of the *2018 First Nations Post-Secondary Education Policy Proposal* and Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Resolution 21/2020: *First Nations-led Local, Regional and Treaty-based Post-Secondary Education Models*.

This co-developed¹ policy proposal is not intended to hinder nor detract from approaches or processes already underway by First Nations in implementing their vision of First Nations post-secondary education in their region. First Nations, including self-governing Nations or those in Modern Treaties, and regions may decide to seek their own bilateral process with Indigenous Services Canada or a tripartite process with the federal government and relevant provincial or territorial government to develop their own policy approach, and to identify the funding, resources and supports required to implement their respective models. In all cases, First Nations will define their own models and decide when and how to involve or include the federal, provincial and/or territorial government. The Government of Canada will not undertake any unilateral decision-making process.

¹ As affirmed by the Terms of Reference for ongoing partnership between the Assembly of First Nations, National Indian Education Council (NIEC), Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE) and Indigenous Services Canada; co-development is a collaborative approach that acknowledges the distinct nature and lived experience of First Nations. This approach is guided by the Foundational Frameworks listed in Section 3 of the Terms of Reference.

Co-development will happen through local, regional, and Treaty-based engagement with First Nations, regional education organizations, and national engagement through the NIEC and CCOE.

Any and all funding for First Nations post-secondary education will be provided directly to First Nations and the federal government will not provide funding for First Nations post-secondary education to provincial governments or to Indspire².

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

ISSUE: First Nations require adequate, predictable, sustainable and equitable funding and resources to support strong student outcomes, develop local capacity, support community-based delivery of post-secondary education programs, and establish and advance First Nations post-secondary institutions through First Nations-led local, regional and Treaty-based post-secondary education models.

DECISION: It is recommended that the Minister of Indigenous Services Canada (“The Minister”) be authorized by Cabinet to:

1. Approve the policy authority for Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to negotiate, conclude and fully implement First Nations-led local, regional and Treaty-based post-secondary education models that are adequate, predictable, sustainable and equitable. Models could include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Financial First Nation Student Supports
 - b. First Nation Post-Secondary Education Community-Based Student Supports
 - c. First Nations Post-Secondary Education Institutions
 - d. First Nations Community-Based Program Supports
 - e. Administration, Governance and Leadership Capacity
2. Allocate an additional immediate investment of \$661.2M over five years, beginning with \$23.8M in 2022-2023 and gradually increasing to \$241.4M in 2027-2028 for yearly ongoing funding to support the implementation of First Nations-led local, regional and Treaty-based post-secondary education models in support of the fundamental right and principle of First Nations control over First Nations education. (See Table 1.0 on page 19).
 - a. This does not prevent First Nations or a region from pursuing their own bilateral process with ISC – or a tripartite process with ISC and the relevant provincial or territorial government – to develop their own policy approach and, identify the funding, resources and supports required to implement their respective models. The completion of this process may result in a requirement for additional funding to support First Nation PSE, in which case a separate Cabinet and Treasury Board process may be followed. (See Recommended Approach below).
 - b. Should the funding amounts identified for First Nations-led PSE models need to increase, the Government of Canada must work with First Nations to ensure adequate, predictable, sustainable and equitable funding is available to implement First Nations-led PSE models.

² Please see: Assembly of First Nations. (2018). Special Chiefs Assembly, Resolution 49/2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.afn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Indspire-Investments-July-2018-1.pdf>

3. Provide funding for ongoing technical tables and other regional processes to prepare First Nations and regions for the negotiation and conclusion of local, regional or Treaty-based agreements.

The Minister will work with First Nations to invest \$25M over five years, as well as \$4M ongoing, to ensure First Nations autonomy and flexibility to host technical tables and other regional processes to develop the First Nations vision for post-secondary education. This work includes the funding and time to determine who their models involve, timelines, costs and funding formulas to ensure that no First Nation student goes unfunded, and that First Nations and First Nations Institutions (FNIs) have the necessary core, program and capital funding to provide an equitable post-secondary education as determined by First Nations.

4. Unlock the \$350M investment announced in Budget 2021 for Adult Education over five-years, starting with \$70M in 2022-23 **based on a regional allocation methodology, as determined by First Nations to meet the unique needs of adult learners in each region.**
5. Allocate an additional immediate investment of \$8.68B over 5-years, starting in 2022-2023, for the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) and Post-Secondary Partnerships Program (PSPP) while First Nations PSE models are being developed, as well as \$1.89B ongoing thereafter. The additional investment for PSSSP and PSPP includes a 4.7%³ increase each fiscal year to reflect inflation, the rise in student costs, the rise in student graduation rates from secondary school, and population growth.
6. Update the Post-Secondary Education Terms and Conditions on a co-development basis, including provisions for the PSSSP and PSPP to support First Nations in implementing their own regional approaches that may replace PSSSP and PSPP, and encompassing the changes outlined above.

CONTEXT

Reports and publications continue to demonstrate that First Nations people in Canada continue to be underrepresented in the public PSE system. In 2015, 47.1% of First Nations people completed post-secondary education, compared to 69.6% of non-Indigenous peoples.⁴ Yet, one 2020 report released by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, titled *Education at a Glance 2020*, profiles Canada's youth as the world's "best educated". This report's finding of high educational attainment rates masks or misses the deep and persistent systemic inequality amongst First Nations post-secondary students. The inequality in the public post-secondary education

³ Statistics Canada (2021). *Consumer Price Index, October 2021*. Inflation rate per year at 4.7%. Retrieved from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/211117/dq211117a-eng.htm?indid=3665-1&indgeo=0>

⁴ Statistics Canada (2017). *Aboriginal People Living Off-Reserve and the Labour Market: Estimate from the Labour Force Survey, 2007-2015*. 2.7 Education. Labour Force Survey.

system in Canada is evident in graduation rates and data on learning outcomes, and First Nations are determined to proceed with a new approach. In fact, ISC's PSSSP and PSCP programs do not meet the needs of First Nations' students, communities, and First Nations post-secondary institutions, as demonstrated in two AFN reports:

1. the *First Nations Post-Secondary Education Review, 2018 Interim Report*⁵ (2018 PSE Interim Report), and
2. the *First Nations Post-Secondary Education Review Institutions Costing Report*⁶ (2018 PSE Institutions Costing Report).

First Nations seek to work in a spirit of cooperation, understanding and action to ensure all students and future generations have access to an equitable post-secondary education determined by and for First Nations.

The AFN, the Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE), the National Indian Education Council (NIEC) and First Nations across Canada have been reviewing various aspects of post-secondary education including student costing, institutional/community-based needs, program authorities, and the transition required to better support First Nations control of First Nations education. A shift began in 2017 with new program funding from the federal government and a commitment to a comprehensive review of the PSSSP program. In 2017, the federal government announced \$90 million over two years for PSSSP, as well as a comprehensive review of the PSSSP program.

AFN Resolution #14/2017: *Post-Secondary Education Federal Review* called on the federal government to ensure the federal post-secondary review included a First Nations specific review; and directed the CCOE to lead the First Nations portion of the federal post-secondary review, with support from the NIEC. The review was completed on July 2, 2018. The *First Nations 2018 PSE Interim Report* provided detailed information on the support required in First Nations post-secondary education.

The *2018 PSE Interim Report* concluded that, in 2015-16, First Nations required funding amounts at an increase of 80.9% (or approx. \$206M) if all students who were enrolled at that time and funded through PSSSP were funded according to actual needs. Such needs include tuition fees, childcare support, northern living costs, special needs support, travel, student fees, books and supplies, living allowance, guidance/counselling/social work services, program incentives directed at strategic needs, and the costs associated with post-secondary graduate work. It is critical to note that if this figure included post-secondary students who were not funded through PSSSP at the time due to inadequate funding, First Nations would require an increase of 150.3% in funding (approx. \$384 million).

⁵ Thompson, T.K and MacDonald, G.I.A. H. (2018), *First Nations Post-Secondary Education Review 2018 Interim Report*. Assembly of First Nations. Retrieved from: https://www.afn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/PSE_Interim_Report_ENG.pdf

⁶ Meadow Consulting Inc. (2018), *First Nations Post-Secondary Education Review Institutions Costing*. Assembly of First Nations. Retrieved from: <https://www.afn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/1-First-Nations-Post-Secondary-Education-Review-%E2%80%93-Institutions-Costing-....pdf>

The *2018 PSE Interim Report*, as well as the *2018 PSE Institutions Costing Report*, concluded and outlined that core supports are required for First Nations post-secondary education institutions that include, but are not limited to, governance, student services, program development and delivery, First Nations languages, multi-lingual capacity, innovation, research and development, infrastructure, operations and maintenance, and additional supports.⁷ This must also include provisions for building community capacity for community-based program delivery, and for the creation of new First Nations-controlled post-secondary education institutions where none currently exist.

AFN Resolution 29/2018: *First Nations Post-Secondary Education Review Report and Recommendations* was supported by the First Nations-in-Assembly, who ultimately accepted the *AFN Post-Secondary Education Review, 2018 Interim Report*. The Resolution called on the federal government to extend and expand funding commitments to fully support First Nations post-secondary education. As a follow-up from the review, the Resolution directed the AFN, CCOE and NIEC to work in partnership with ISC to develop an honourable and joint process that supports existing post-secondary regional models, the development of regional processes and the development of new models to seek a new policy authority for post-secondary education. The jointly developed policy proposal was incorporated into a Memorandum to Cabinet in 2019, which included investments for regions to develop their First Nations-led post-secondary education models.

As asserted in the *Policy Proposal: First Nations Post-Secondary Education (2018)*, the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) requires transformative change in the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous Peoples. *An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which received Royal Assent on June 21, 2021, affirms the UN Declaration has application in Canadian law and requires the Government, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, to take all necessary measures to ensure the laws of Canada are consistent with the UN Declaration. The Government is also required under the legislation to prepare and implement an action plan, in consultation and collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, to meet the objectives of the UN Declaration. Article 14 of the Declaration affirms that:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.
3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

⁷ Assembly of First Nations (2018), *First Nations Post-Secondary Education Review Interim Report*.

The Government of Canada has also committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Goal 4: *Quality education to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*. The Government of Canada must continue to work to fulfill these commitments through the negotiation and conclusion of First Nations-led local, regional and Treaty-based post-secondary education models, and in providing adequate, sustainable, predictable and equitable funding for First Nations students, institutions and communities.

As new models are being developed for post-secondary, the First Nations-in-Assembly⁸ passed AFN Resolution 21/2020: *First Nations-led Local, Regional and Treaty-based Post-Secondary Education Models*, which directs the AFN, CCOE, and NIEC to work in partnership with ISC to obtain requisite authority for First Nations to negotiate and conclude their models.

The negotiation and conclusion of First Nations-led, local, regional, and/or Treaty-based Post-Secondary Education (PSE) models aligns with the UN Declaration, the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, and the principle of First Nations control of First Nations education. First Nations-led local, regional and Treaty-based post-secondary models will enable First Nations to address the diverse needs of their post-secondary students, institutions, and community-based programming. Furthermore, the PSE models will enable First Nations to holistically consider, design, and implement a suite of culturally and linguistically relevant, integrated programs and services that support First Nations student and community success. The PSE models will work to ensure that First Nations have the adequate, predictable, sustainable and equitable funding required to meet the needs of First Nations students, institutions, Adult Education, and/or community-based programming.

The broad principles of constitutional law, the fiduciary relationship between the Crown and Indigenous Peoples, the common law principles developed by Canadian courts including the honour of the Crown, and international law and human rights standards, are all relevant and applicable in defining and framing all relationships between the government of Canada and First Nations, as well as Canada's responsibilities in providing services and funding to First Nations.

Indigenous Peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions as an aspect of their inherent rights of self-determination and self-government, as affirmed in the UN Declaration, and also as recognized and affirmed under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, which encompasses existing Aboriginal and Treaty rights. Consistent with its legal and constitutional obligations, including those derived from Treaty, the Government of Canada must ensure that any measures, arrangements, programs, policies, agreements or legislation regarding First Nations education, including post-secondary education, are developed in consultation and cooperation with First Nations and consistent with their rights. This includes the right to

⁸ The First Nations-in-Assembly consist of all the Chiefs of those First Nations who exercise their right to be Members of the Assembly of First Nations. 2019. Charter of the Assembly of First Nations.

determine their own priorities in education, based on their responsibilities to future generations. The Government of Canada must provide adequate, predictable, sustainable and equitable funding and resources to enable the development of local capacity and institutions to ensure First Nations' control over education.

RATIONALE AND KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Education is a fundamental element of self-government and the right to self-determination as guaranteed by the *Constitution Act, 1982*, and in line with inherent and Treaty rights and international law.⁹ It is also acknowledged that improving access to education, particularly at the post-secondary level, plays a significant role in boosting socio-economic mobility.¹⁰

First Nations post-secondary students both on- and off-reserve are reeling from deep-rooted intergenerational trauma due to the impacts of residential schools, the effects of which are compounded by educational, geographic, linguistic and cultural challenges that act as barriers to entry and advancement in post-secondary education. Furthermore, First Nations must now adapt to the educational disruption caused by the novel Coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Funding previously allocated for the development of First Nations-led local, regional and Treaty-based post-secondary models was negatively impacted in 2019-2020. Engagements moved slowly due to Indigenous Services Canada's (ISC) delay in releasing funding on time. Further, the rollout of dedicated engagement funding was impacted in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 of the rollouts by COVID-19. The pandemic has profoundly affected the lives of everyone around the world; activities and in-person engagements had to shift to online platforms and many First Nations did not have equal access to a high-speed internet connection to engage and meet online. The combination of funding delays for model negotiation and COVID-19's impact on engagements ultimately were responsible for missed opportunities in exploratory discussion, engagements, and technical tables.

First Nations have faced significant challenges in the educational and professional spheres with the transition to an increasingly virtual world. The 2020 CRTC Communications Monitoring Report clearly indicates that access to reliable broadband internet in First Nations has remained stagnant, with only 34.8% of First Nations communities having access to unlimited 50/10 Mbps service.¹¹

COVID-19 brought many engagements to a standstill and many post-secondary students were forced to return to home. Many communities have closed their borders,

⁹ TRC, Call to Action #11; An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, s.c. c-14 (2021); AFN Resolution 36/2016.

¹⁰ For instance, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - OECD (2018). *Equity in Education: Breaking Down Barriers to Social Mobility*, PISA, OECD Publishing. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264073234-en>.

¹¹ Canadian Radio-television, Telecommunications Commission. (CRTC) (2020). *Communications Monitoring Report*, p.108.

which has unfortunately compounded the stress and anxiety the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to students, institutions and communities. Indeed, results from a recent survey conducted by the First Nations Education Council (FNEC) with over 250 post-secondary students suggest that social isolation and access to mental health services have become the two vital issues of concern for First Nations students during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹² All are adapting to the everchanging challenges posed by COVID-19. Further investments and carryover of funds from ISC are required for technical and regional tables to ensure First Nations can adapt to the limitations of COVID-19 and continue to meaningfully develop, negotiate, conclude and implement their First Nations-led local, regional and Treaty-based post-secondary education models.

The Government of Canada must account for the specific needs of First Nations individuals both on- and off-reserve to address the challenges in obtaining post-secondary education, including trauma, remoteness, limited internet access, governance and administration capacity, and the lack of infrastructure on-reserve.

In an era of recognition of First Nations rights and reconciliation, the Government of Canada must work directly with First Nations on a Nation-to-Nation basis to resolve the significant barriers to post-secondary education for First Nations students, institutions and communities. The Government of Canada can achieve this in partnership and collaboration with First Nations through the negotiation, conclusion and implementation of First Nations-led local, regional and Treaty-based post-secondary education models.

First Nations have inherent, constitutional, human and Treaty rights to lifelong learning, with post-secondary education as a vital component. The Government of Canada has historically used education as a tool of assimilation against First Nations. The *Gradual Civilization Act* of 1857 introduced “voluntary enfranchisement” and was based on the assumption that First Nations would be willing to surrender their legal and ancestral identities for the “privilege” of gaining Canadian citizenship. This would become legally compulsory with the *Indian Act* of 1876, which included a clause that would enfranchise any Indian, as defined within *Indian Act* for gaining a university education.

Broken treaties, colonial governance structures, the *Indian Act*, and discriminatory policies – and the absence of or disregard for First Nations’ input and guidance – have resulted in lower post-secondary education attainment rates and success amongst First Nations. There remains a continued gap in First Nations access to post-secondary. For example, the PSSSP, a program that provides First Nations students with funding to access post-secondary education, has not seen major ongoing investments. PSSSP only allows for the funding of approximately 25,000 students each year, despite rising high school graduation rates and First Nations’ led advocacy seeking adequate funding for aspiring and current post-secondary students. Moreover, less than half the students funded through PSSSP are funded sufficiently to complete a university degree or

¹² First Nations Education Council. (2021). (Forthcoming), *Consultation visant à la consolidation et l’amélioration des modèles locaux et régionaux de livraison de services au postsecondaire*.

college diploma and/or certificate. Finally, labour market integration and the increasing pressure for educational qualifications affects First Nations people more severely, as First Nations continue to show lower levels of educational attainment compared to non-Indigenous People.¹³

According to ISC/Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) data provided to the AFN in July 2021, only 24,772 students were able to receive PSSSP funding in 2017-2018. Notably, data from the 2016 Canadian census demonstrates that 54,805 First Nations students were enrolled in post-secondary education.¹⁴ The difference of 30,083 is the number of First Nations students who had to secure funding from sources other than PSSSP. The demand for student funding far exceeds the money that First Nations receive to support members who wish to attend post-secondary. The funding students receive through PSSSP by way of their First Nation only covers a portion of their needs, and the federal program fails to support the unique costs First Nations incur while attending post-secondary. This includes, but is not limited to increased costs for mental health supports, childcare, travel, groceries, accommodations, northern costs and supplies. First Nations students have the inherent and Treaty right to lifelong learning and should not have to apply to a charitable organization such as Indspire or rely on government loans to pay for their costs associated with obtaining a post-secondary education. This is of particular concern as the First Nations-in-Assembly, by way of Resolution 49/2018, have called upon the AFN and Government of Canada to cease and desist all federal investment to Indspire relating to First Nations education beginning in fiscal year 2019-2020. It cannot be forgotten that First Nations continue to assert their right and responsibility to direct and make decisions regarding all matters relating to First Nations lifelong learning as an inherent and Treaty right, and that Post-Secondary Education is a fundamental element of this continuum.

First Nations require funding that accounts for inflation, increased tuition costs, population growth and increasing graduation rates. Indigenous Peoples are the fastest growing population in Canada, growing by 42.5% between 2006 and 2016. The First Nations population, including both those who are registered or Treaty Indians under the *Indian Act* and those who are not, grew by 39.3% from 2006 to reach 977,230 people in 2016.¹⁵ From 2006 to 2016, a span of 10 years, the First Nations population grew close to 1 million. Based on this statistic and given that 5 years have passed, the population now sits closer to 1.5 million people in 2021. Reforms to registration under the *Indian Act* (Bill S-3) could account for a larger First Nations population as more individuals are eligible to register. Considering the significant increase in First Nations population, Canada must not only work with First Nations to address the backlog of students but

¹³ Statistics Canada. (2017). *Aboriginal People Living Off-Reserve and the Labour Market: Estimates from the Labour Force Survey, 2007-2015*. Retrieved from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-588-x/71-588-x2017001-eng.htm>

¹⁴ Data Sources: ISC/CIRNAC's (2016) Census Core Table 12. Registered Indian Aged 15+ and School Attendance. Calculated Data.

¹⁵ Statistics Canada. (2017). *Aboriginal peoples in Canada: Key Results from the 2016 Census*.

also must account for future generations. If First Nations reached the same post-secondary education attainment rate as non-Indigenous Canadians, 78,000 First Nations graduates would be required to close the gap on post-secondary education.¹⁶

Based on an analysis of data and costing information, First Nations students require a minimum allocation of \$29,548 per year to attend post-secondary education. This amount is calculated by the average of the Market Basket Measure for persons not in economic families¹⁷, multiplied by the inflation rate between 2015 and 2021, plus average fees for tuition, books and ancillary fees.^{18 19}

In 2020, 80,112 Indigenous People participated in the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASET) and the Skills and Partnership Fund (SPF); two federal initiatives meant to improve Indigenous Peoples' participation in the Canadian labour force. In the most recent program evaluation, status First Nations accounted for 79% of the ASET participants and 82% of the SPF participants.²⁰ The evaluation of the ASET and SPF demonstrate that out of all the First Nations participants, only 2% had completed a post-secondary degree and 23% had not completed their post-secondary education. Furthermore, 31% had not completed secondary and 3% had no education at all. Therefore, there is a need to adequately fund Adult Education, aspiring and current post-secondary students and the First Nations institutions and community-based programming which provides First Nations-centred education rooted in First Nations pedagogy and frameworks that meet the educational needs of First Nations lifelong learners. Notably, not all First Nations participate in Canada's Census Program²¹ and there is a substantial number of aspiring and current First Nation post-secondary students of all genders unaccounted for by these statistics. Canada must work in partnership and collaboration with First Nations to identify the number of First Nations people who go unaccounted for. As noted in ISC's 2020 Annual Report to Parliament, 14 First Nations were not included in the 2016 Census and the term "Gender" is limited to the binary concepts of male and female.²²

¹⁶ [Aboriginal Identity \(9\), Secondary \(High\) School Diploma or Equivalent \(14\), School Attendance \(3\), Registered or Treaty Indian Status \(3\), Age \(13A\) and Sex \(3\) for the Population Aged 15 Years and Over in Private Households of Canada, Provinces and Territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations, 2016 Census - 25% Sample Data \(statcan.gc.ca\)](#)

¹⁷ Source: Market Basket Measure (MBM) thresholds for economic families and persons not in economic families, 2015. Retrieved from: https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/tab/t4_5-eng.cfm

¹⁸ Statistics Canada. (2021). *Tuition fees for degree programs, 2021/2022*. Retrieved from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210908/dq210908a-eng.htm>

¹⁹ Brown, M. (2018) *The cost of a Canadian University education in six charts*. Maclean's. Retrieved from: <https://www.macleans.ca/education/the-cost-of-a-canadian-university-education-in-six-charts/>

²⁰ Employment and Social Development Canada. (2020). *Evaluation of the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy and the Skills Partnership Fund*. Retrieved from: https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/esdc-edsc/documents/corporate/reports/evaluations/ASETS_Final_Report-EN.pdf

²¹ See, for instance, Statistics Canada. (2016). *Guide to Census Population, 2016 - Appendix 1.2: Incompletely enumerated Indian reserves and Indian settlements*. Retrieved from: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/app-ann1-2-eng.cfm>

²² Indigenous Services Canada (2020). *Annual Report to Parliament 2020*. Government of Canada.

The Government of Canada has an obligation to reconciliation under section 35 of the Constitution Act and must align with its political direction and moral obligations. In 2019, the Prime Minister mandated the ISC Minister to prioritize ensuring “that First Nations students have the support they need to access and succeed at post-secondary education.”²³ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Call to Action #7 calls on the federal government “to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians”. TRC Call to Action #11 calls upon the federal government to “provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education”.

First Nations will determine what qualifies as adequate funding through the negotiation, conclusion and implementation of First Nations post-secondary education models. A respectful and honourable step towards providing adequate funding requires ISC to fully fund First Nations local, regional and Treaty-based post-secondary education models as a continuation of a fundamental right. This should begin with a commitment to fully fund the costing considerations as outlined in Table 1.0.

An integral principle for each First Nations-led local, regional, and Treaty-based PSE model is that any federal policy must respect First Nations’ authority to modify, adjust and update their post-secondary education model over time as the priorities and needs of First Nations change.

The estimates provided in Appendix B for First Nations-led PSE Models are based on limited data. Therefore, adjustments over time will be necessary as more accurate data becomes available. The costing calculation for First Nations-led PSE models reflects the estimated total costs for PSPP and PSSSP phased in with a gradual implementation based on the estimated percentage of First Nations ready to negotiate and conclude their local, regional and Treaty-based PSE models. Each year includes a 15% increase in costs over existing estimates to account for costing considerations for First Nations-led PSE models. This includes but is not limited to financial First Nation student supports, First Nation PSE community-based student supports, First Nations PSE Institutions, First Nations community-based program supports and administration, governance, and leadership capacity building. While these increases may be sufficient on an interim basis, costs may be higher as regional models are developed and negotiated. Should the percentage identified for First Nations-led PSE models need to increase, the Government of Canada must work with First Nations to ensure funding is available to implement First Nations-led PSE models.

First Nations-led local, regional and Treaty-based post-secondary education models provide long-term self-determined strategic plans that go beyond a four-year political cycle. First Nations control of First Nations post-secondary education requires a robust and comprehensive system of supports for First Nations institutions, students, Adult Education and First Nations overall. First Nations’ needs-based post-secondary

²³ Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau (2019). Minister of Indigenous Services Mandate Letter. Office of the Prime Minister. Retrieved from: [Minister of Indigenous Services Mandate Letter | Prime Minister of Canada \(pm.gc.ca\)](https://pm.gc.ca/indigenous-services-mandate-letter)

education models address inequities and build strong First Nations by ensuring that First Nations lead in making improvements to post-secondary education for First Nations lifelong learners. In K-12 Education, the Education Partnerships Program supports ongoing activities related to partnership establishment and advancement. There is a similar demand in post-secondary education to support the ongoing negotiation of First Nations models, with funding available to support establishment and engagement activities through First Nations technical tables.

The economic benefits of improved First Nations education and employment outcomes are indisputable. Data from the national Census show that the employment gap between First Nations and non-Indigenous Canadians closes with increased university attainment.²⁴ Furthermore, research estimates that closing the First Nations education gap would increase First Nations contributions to GDP by 45% over baseline measures.²⁵

New funding investments would ensure that First Nations are able to meet the needs of their students, with flexibility to meet the unique circumstances of students. Funding for students should not be limited and should support students attending post-secondary no matter the length of their program, type of program, the location²⁶, or the area of study.

In addition to student funding, First Nations require resources to deliver programming within their communities. While some First Nations have established, or intend to establish institutes to carry out this work, most First Nations partner with post-secondary institutions on a program-by-program basis to deliver much needed programming to learners within their communities who may not otherwise be able to access post-secondary. In both cases, current funding levels are inadequate and do not meet the needs of First Nations students, communities, or institutions. Allocation of this funding between institutions and community-based programming will be determined by First Nations within their respective regions.

As such, Regional PSE models may also include modernized supports for First Nations established institutes of higher learning consistent with the UN Declaration Article 14.1, and the right to establish and control institutions providing culturally and linguistically relevant methods of teaching and languages. These institutes increase post-secondary

²⁴ Assembly of First Nations (2006). *Fact Sheet on First Nations Post-Secondary Education*. Figure 9: Employment rates by level of educational attainment, 2006. Pg. 5. Retrieved from: [Microsoft Word - PSE Fact Sheet_Virtual Summit_Fe.doc \(afn.ca\)](#)

²⁵ Canadian Centre for Living Standards (2015). Retrieved from: <http://www.csls.ca/reports/csls2015-03.pdf>

²⁶ The Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation Between His Britannic Majesty and the United States of America of 1794 (otherwise known as the Jay Treaty) explicitly states that "it shall at all times be free to ... Indians dwelling on either side of the said boundary line, freely to pass and repass, by land or inland navigation into the respective territories and countries of the two parties on the continent of America." This excerpt extends to post-secondary; students should have adequate access to funding if they choose to attend an American post-secondary institution without barrier, and without putting other students at risk due to the lack of funding.

education attainment rates by providing the holistic and culturally relevant supports that drive First Nations student success.²⁷

First Nations post-secondary institutions lack secure operational funding and rely heavily on inadequate and unpredictable proposal-based programs. The lack of adequate, predictable, sustainable and equitable funding affects First Nations institutions' capacity for program delivery year-to-year, effective planning for the short and long-term, recruitment and retention of staff, traditional and culturally based infrastructure, family and psychosocial services, technology, library and other services, and effective student services. First Nations institutions lack access to capital grants that public post-secondary institutions qualify for, which hampers First Nations institutions' ability to grow²⁸ and to renovate or build infrastructure to align with accessibility needs for both students and staff with disabilities. First Nations post-secondary institutions and programming have different operating and capital costs associated with the provision of culturally and linguistically appropriate post-secondary education and training opportunities to First Nation learners, including costs for full-time faculty, research support, infrastructure, land-based education and administration of programs, laboratories, renovations and other equipment.

The AFN engaged *Directions Evidence and Policy Research Group* ("Directions") to develop a comprehensive, research-based report²⁹ to assist in identifying the costs to establish, operate, and maintain a First Nations university³⁰. Drawing from the economics literature on university costs, Canadian universities' financial information, literature on Indigenous and First Nations post-secondary institutions, and consultations with administrators in First Nations Institutes (FNIs), *Directions* has provided estimates of the average costs per Full-time Equivalent student for a FNI to deliver a university-level education that is appropriate to the unique features of First Nations-controlled post-secondary institutions. Recognizing that the process of creating First Nations Universities is likely to come from the growth and transition of First Nations post-secondary institutes to university-degree institutions, three scenarios are proposed:

1. In the initial phase of the transition, the average cost per full-time student would be \$23,894.

²⁷ Aboriginal Institutes Consortium. (2014). *A Roadmap to Recognition for Aboriginal Institutes in Ontario Position Paper*.

²⁸ Meadow Consulting Inc. (2018), *First Nations Post-Secondary Education Review Institutions Costing*. Assembly of First Nations. pg. 7. Retrieved from: <https://www.afn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/1-First-Nations-Post-Secondary-Education-Review-%E2%80%93-Institutions-Costing-....pdf>

²⁹ Directions Evidence + Policy Research Group (2021), *First Nations Post-Secondary Education: A Costing Analysis on the Establishment and Advancement of First Nations Institutions*. Assembly of First Nations.

³⁰ The term First Nations University is used in reference to an end goal where First Nations have the required funding and resources to establish, advance, and control their own institutions to be able to provide students with a post-secondary experience and degree-based education that is equivalent to, but not necessarily the same as, that provided by a comparable mainstream/western Canadian university.

2. As institutions move through the early transition phase and begin to grow towards an emphasis upon university-level programs, the average cost per full-time student would be \$27,942.
3. Once the transition stages are complete, with First Nations universities in a steady-state environment where university-level programs, infrastructure, and services are in place, the continuing average cost per full-time student would be \$29,959.

The premise for the costing estimates is that a First Nations University should be able to provide students with a post-secondary experience and degree-based education that is equivalent to, but not necessarily the same as, that provided by a comparable mainstream (Western) Canadian university (that is, public institutions that are not Indigenous-owned, -operated, or -mandated). Accordingly, the relevant costs for operating a First Nations university should be understood to be at least the same as the costs experienced in mainstream Canadian universities.

For First Nations who may not have an established post-secondary education institution, funding is required to bring post-secondary education programming into First Nations communities to address local priorities and needs through community-based programming, partnerships with institutions, or the development of new institutions. Investments for start-up capital costs are variable and should account for remoteness factors and other factors determined at the individual and regional level.

Currently, there are over 60 FNIs offering post-secondary and/or Adult Education programming across Canada, with some individual institutions supporting upwards of approximately 2,450 students per year. FNIs share similar values and principles as they contribute to the educational and pedagogical self-determination as vehicles of lifelong learning and resource-building and are geared toward the advancement of First Nations control of post-secondary education.³¹ FNIs provide culturally and linguistically responsive educational environments grounded in traditional ways and values.³² As centres of First Nation-led research, FNIs play a pivotal role in the revitalization of languages and culture, act as building blocks for functionally integrative local and regional self-governance and are simultaneously more responsive to the needs and requirements of First Nations and post-secondary students.³³

FNIs are meeting various labour market needs by offering a diverse range of courses and programs at the Adult Education, college, CÉGEP, university and post-graduate

³¹ A. Jenkins. (2007). *Indigenous Postsecondary Institutions in Canada and the U.S.*, Higher Education Perspectives 3(1), p.4.

³² E. Dufour. (2015). « Une école où tu réapprends à être fier de ce que tu es » : L'Institution Kiuna et le programme Sciences humaines – Premières Nations, *Recherches amérindiennes*, XLV (2-3).

³³ E. Dufour. (2019). La sécurisation culturelle des étudiants autochtones : Une avenue prometteuse pour l'ensemble de la communauté collégiale, *Pédagogie collégiale*, 32(9).

level.³⁴ In a national survey of over 200 Indigenous students in post-secondary programs, students indicated a positive learning experience studying at FNIs, where Indigenous culture is treated as a “priority rather than an accommodation.”³⁵ Students attending a FNI receive education that upholds First Nations ways of knowing and teaching methods, as well as wrap-around supports rooted in First Nations culture. In a 2020 report released by the Indigenous Institutes Consortium (IIC), the literature and data demonstrate how Indigenous Institutes provide significantly stronger wrap-around supports for students enrolled. For example, it is noted that “wrap-around services provided at Indigenous institutes recognize that students are individuals with specific needs. Students attending Indigenous Institutes may need assistance in arranging housing, childcare, financial aid, personal counselling, mental health, physical health, and/or accessibility services. Wrap-around services address the “students’ material, cultural, spiritual and academic needs.”³⁶ Furthermore, recent research from IIC’s 2020 report noted that “Indigenous Institutes not only play a role in the communities their campuses are located within but are also important to the larger group of individual communities that the programs serve, and students are drawn from. 82% of respondents considered Indigenous Institutes play a “large” or “very large” role in their home communities. This demonstrates that the presence and scope of Indigenous Institutes are far reaching and extremely significant to First Nation communities they serve.”³⁷ FNIs propose a dual pedagogical focus – that is, providing education at par with non-Indigenous institutions that is also grounded in cultural, linguistic principles.³⁸

The negotiation and conclusion of First Nations-led, local, regional, and/or Treaty-based PSE models will enable First Nations to address the diverse needs of their post-secondary students, institutions, and community-based programming. The implementation of First Nations PSE models is in line with the Government of Canada’s obligations to First Nations, and the recommended approach is one co-developed by First Nations and ISC. As affirmed above, this approach aligns with First Nations control of First Nations education, the *First Nations Post-Secondary Education, 2018 Interim Report*, the *First Nations Post-Secondary Education Review 2018*, AFN Resolution #29/2018: *First Nations Post-Secondary Education Review Report and Recommendations*, and AFN Resolution #21/2020: *First Nations-led Local, Regional and Treaty-based Post-Secondary Education Models*. First Nations continue to emphasize the need for new investments accompanied by the negotiation and conclusion of First Nations-led regional PSE models.

³⁴ Calculated data based on public facing documents and website information.

Data collected from 29 sample institutions.

³⁵ Indspire. (2018). *Post-Secondary Experience of Indigenous Students Following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Summary of findings*. September 2018.

³⁶ Indigenous Institutes Consortium. (2020). *IIC Student Support Promising Practicing Models*. P. 9.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ “To survive and to maintain credibility with [their]...constituencies, [FNIs] must do an excellent job of teaching and fostering indigeneity as well as an excellent job of educating First-Nations students to reasonable parity with their mainstream peers across the principal components of mainstream curriculum.” J. Paquette and G. Fallon. (2014). In *Quest of Indigeneity: Quality and Credibility in Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education in Canada: Problematic, Contexts, and Potential Ways Forward*, *Canadian Journal of Educational Policy* 165, pp. 3-4.

Within these models, and to attain effective, efficient and accountable post-secondary education supports, the Government of Canada is required to support First Nations community empowerment, capacity building, and self-determining governance. In brief, the success of these models largely depends on a conscious and systemic shift in the current administrative, management-based, colonial policy framework which has guided the Government of Canada and which does not respect or reflect First Nations control of First Nations education.

Models will respect local control, honouring the autonomy of First Nations to dictate their own models, and will not minimize any flexibilities that First Nations communities currently have. These models will be directed and managed by First Nations, and interim programs that continue to support First Nations students, institutions and communities, will be determined by First Nations at the local and regional level, and may include the potential elements outlined in the First Nations recommended approach.

RECOMMENDED APPROACH

The Minister will work on a region-by-region basis with First Nations and/or appointed First Nations Education organizations to negotiate the Government of Canada's support for First Nations-controlled post-secondary education in each region, including new regional funding formulas for First Nations communities, students and institutions through First Nations-led local, regional and Treaty-based post-secondary education models.

The Minister will respect that jurisdiction over First Nations post-secondary education remains with each First Nation. Therefore, the recommended approach would support each First Nation to opt-in or out of any existing or new federal education policy and/or any First Nations local, regional, Treaty-based post-secondary education model and negotiate their own agreements and funding for post-secondary education. Funding must be based on real costs, accounting for the great diversity of local needs and costs associated with pursuing post-secondary education, and the exceptional circumstances and unique costs associated with northern, remote, isolated, fly-in First Nations communities, special needs, former children in care, First Nations established institutes, and community-based programming. Funding amounts requested through the policy proposal shall not negatively impact or limit what First Nations are able to negotiate within their PSE models. First Nations, through their engagements, regional tables, or other regional methods, will define the needs of their students, institutions and community-based programming.

- 1. Approve the policy authority for Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to negotiate, conclude and provide funding to fully implement First Nations-led local, regional and Treaty-based post-secondary education models. Models could include some or all the following, but are not limited to:**

- a. **Financial First Nation Student Supports** – to ensure all First Nations students that are eligible to attend post-secondary and Adult Education programs have all the necessary financial resources required to participate and succeed in post-secondary education, including, but not exhaustive of: tuition fees, books and supplies, childcare, travel, and transportation, rent and living expenses. First Nations and/or appointed First Nation organizations will develop their own policies to govern delivery and manage resources.
 - b. **First Nation Post-Secondary Education Community-Based Student Supports** – to ensure communities can effectively support student success, including, but not exhaustive of: program choice, career planning, transitioning to post-secondary education, enrolment application process, guidance, Elder and/or Knowledge Keeper supports, and orientation for students and families.
 - c. **First Nations Post-Secondary Education Institutions** – to ensure First Nations have the financial resources to establish, sustain and advance existing and prospective institutions to develop, modify and provide quality post-secondary education in alignment with the First Nations' vision of their local, regional, and/or Treaty-based PSE model, which may include, but will not be limited to: operations, maintenance, capital, student services, research, quality assurance, Adult Education, post-secondary and transitional programming, multiple languages of instruction and accreditation. Criteria and allocation methodology will be determined by First Nations within their respective regions.
 - d. **First Nations Community-Based Programming Supports** – to ensure First Nations have additional funding to support the coordination, delivery, development, and modification of Adult Education, post-secondary education and transitional programming within the community that have previously been underfunded through PSPP. Guidelines, the allocation methodology, adjudication and the appropriate vehicle for this funding will be determined by First Nations within their respective regions.
 - e. **Administration, Governance and Leadership Capacity** – to ensure First Nations have adequate funding to take on the transfer of responsibilities and to develop, administer and govern local policies, data sovereignty, decision-making structures, partnerships and strategic planning regarding First Nations students, mandated institutes, public/private post-secondary institutions, Adult Education, post-secondary transitional programming, community-based programming and performance measurement and data collection.
2. **Allocate an additional immediate investment of \$661.2M over 5 years, starting with \$23.8M in 2022-23, with gradual implementation for First Nations-led local, regional and Treaty-based post-secondary education models, and \$241.1M a year in ongoing costs thereafter. Table 1.0 reflects how these funds would be allocated over 5 years.**

This additional funding is intended to be a top-up in addition to the amounts available for PSSSP, PSPP and Adult Education. The total amount available for First

Nations PSE regional models will be inclusive of this additional funding and all PSE programs based on an estimated percentage of models being completed by year.

Appendix C acts as a guideline and provides an explanation of how funding will be rolled into First Nations PSE Models once they are negotiated, concluded and implemented. The total amount required for PSE regional models will be determined by First Nations.

This funding envelope does not prevent First Nations or a region from pursuing their own bilateral process with ISC – or a tripartite process with ISC and the relevant provincial or territorial government – to develop their own policy approach and, identify the funding, resources and supports required to implement their respective models. The completion of this process may result in a requirement for additional funding to support First Nation PSE, in which case a separate Cabinet and Treasury Board process may be followed.

- a. The Minister must ensure First Nations-led local, regional, and Treaty-based post-secondary models receive adequate, predictable sustainable and equitable funding to advance their post-secondary education models, as determined by First Nations.

Table 1.0 Additional Funding Estimated for First Nations-led Local, Regional and Treaty-based PSE Models (inclusive of an additional top-up of 15%)

Costing Considerations	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	Ongoing
*Additional Top-Up Costs	\$23.8M	\$62.2M	\$130M	\$203.8M	\$241.4M	\$241.4M

***The additional funding is requested separate from the PSSSP and PSPP, and is integrated into the total amount available for First Nations PSE models (Please See Appendix C).**

- 3. **Provide funding for ongoing technical tables and other regional processes to prepare First Nations and regions for the negotiation and conclusion of local, regional or Treaty-based agreements.**

The Minister will work with First Nations to invest \$25M over five years, and \$4M ongoing to provide First Nations with autonomy and flexibility to host technical tables and other regional processes to develop the First Nations vision for post-secondary education. This includes the funding and time to determine who their models involve, timelines, costs and funding formulas to ensure that no First Nation student goes unfunded, and that communities and institutions have the necessary core, program and capital funding to provide an equitable post-secondary education as determined by First Nations. This investment would **provide funding for ongoing First Nations post-secondary education technical tables and other regional processes** that would:

- a. Support ongoing discussions to develop, negotiate and conclude First Nations-led local, regional and Treaty-based post-secondary education models as per recommendation 1;
 - b. Support ongoing technical tables for post-secondary education and Adult Education; and
 - c. Provide a forum for engagement on the development and implementation of the immediate funding as per recommendations 4 and 5.
4. **Unlock the \$350M investment announced in Budget 2021 for Adult Education over five years (as outlined in Appendix A), starting with \$70M in 2022-23 based on a regional allocation methodology, as determined by First Nations to meet the unique needs of adult learners in each region.**
5. **Implement immediate funding for PSSSP and PSPP while First Nations-led local, regional and Treaty-based post-secondary education models are negotiated, concluded and implemented based on a regional allocation methodology, as determined by First Nations.**

The Minister will work in partnership with First Nations to implement immediate funding that provides: Immediate investments and ongoing investments as outlined in Appendix B, wherein each fiscal year the amount increases by 4.7% to adjust for inflation, increased tuition costs, population growth and increasing graduation rates. First Nations will be supported to re-evaluate the funding commitment to determine the funding and methodology required to meet the needs of students, institutions and communities in line with First Nations control of First Nations education. First Nations will allocate investments in line with First Nations control of First Nations education through the following respective programs:

- a. \$7.27B investment over 5 years into the Post-Secondary Student Support Program, for current and unfunded post-secondary education students, and those who are expected to graduate secondary school, starting with \$1.32B in 2022-2023, and \$1.59B ongoing.
- b. \$1.07B for First Nations post-secondary institutions and community-based programming over 5 years, starting with \$195M in 2022-2023 to reflect actual costs to support students and deliver programming, and \$234M ongoing. Community-based programming may include, but is not limited to, the elements reflected in Recommendation 1(c) **First Nations Post-Secondary Education** and Recommendation 1(d) – **First Nations Community-Based Programming Supports**. The PSPP will continue to accommodate both First Nations Institutions and community-based programming, and First Nations will seek additional support through the negotiation of their models.
 - I. Increase funding for the PSPP so that it is sufficient to provide core funding for First Nations post-secondary institutions and funding for community-based delivery of programming for First Nations that do not have their own institutions, and enable the flexible expenditure of funds to support students, institutional and community-based

programming, operations and infrastructure. The funding for both community-based delivery of programming and institutions must be sufficient to cover existing global agreements and any shortfalls relative to currently unfunded students (including those unfunded in vocational and technical education) and population growth.

- II. Ensure that the PSPP will continue to be a regionally allocated program that upholds First Nations control over the program funding, local allocations and delivery.
- III. Implement immediate funding for PSSSP and PSPP while First Nations-led local, regional and Treaty-based post-secondary education models are negotiated, concluded and implemented with funding allocated regionally, as determined by First Nations. This funding will not negatively impact funding available to those involved in a block agreement, and will address shortfalls relative to currently unfunded students (as explained in Appendix B).

6. Update the Post-Secondary Education Terms and Conditions on a co-development basis, including provisions for the PSSSP and PSPP to support First Nations in implementing their own regional approaches that will replace PSSSP and PSPP, and encompassing the changes outlined above.

RISKS

There are considerable risks to not supporting and implementing the First Nations Recommended Approach. Status quo mandates and funding allocations overlook the above-discussed dynamics,³⁹ the economic benefits of a skilled First Nations workforce,⁴⁰ the pervasive effects of colonialism and the intergenerational trauma engendered by Canada's Indian Residential School System as well as the chronic, structural inequities in educational funding that trample First Nations post-secondary opportunities and success.⁴¹

Risk #1 – Leaving Thousands of Actual and Prospective Post-Secondary Students Behind

³⁹ On measuring education trends in First Nations in Canada see, for instance, ISC (2019). *Report on Trends in First Nations Communities, 1981 to 2016*. Retrieved from: https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-ISC-SAC/DAM-STSCRD/STAGING/texte-text/report-trends-FN-Comm-1981-2016_1578933771435_eng.pdf.

On the limitations and measurement inadequacies of ISC's Community Well-Being Index, see Auditor General of Canada (2018), *Report 5—Socio-economic Gaps on First Nations Reserves—Indigenous Services Canada*. Retrieved from: https://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_201805_05_e_43037.html#hd2b.

⁴⁰ M. Spielauer. (2014). *The relation between education and labour force participation of Aboriginal peoples: A simulation analysis using the Demosim population projection model*, Canadian Studies in Population 41(1-2), pg. 144-163.

⁴¹ TRC, Calls to Action #7, 10.ii, 10.vii and 11; UNDRIP, Articles 14 and 21.

Funding allocations for First Nation applicants seeking to pursue post-secondary education has remained stagnant while the policy design of federal post-secondary funding programs has failed to account for inflation, population growth and contextual changes as determined by First Nations. Without significant policy changes in line with First Nations control of First Nations education, the gap in post-secondary attainment will persist, and First Nations will continue to face income inequality, a higher social assistance use, and barriers to social and economic mobility. ISC's own *Evaluation of the Post-secondary Support Program* best portrays the failures of the current funding and program design and the inherent risks of the continuation of the status quo: "The result is a vast under-representation of First Nations... in the labour force and resultant disproportionate poverty and social and economic exclusion."⁴²

A strategy premised on the application of strict and limited funding formulas is not sufficient to ensure substantive equality in education for First Nations learners in higher education. To adequately identify existing gaps and potential areas of discrimination related to First Nations post-secondary education, the Government of Canada must ensure that adequate funding is in place to support First Nations in relation to:

- i) assessing the real needs of their communities to determine the equitable level of funding required;
- ii) monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of programs and measures implemented to improve outcomes in First Nations lifelong learning; and
- iii) developing local capacity and institutions to ensure First Nations' control over education.

Risk #2 – Cumbersome, Time-Consuming and Ineffective Administrative Requirements and the Need to Expand and Strengthen Local Administration, Governance and Leadership Capacity

First Nations post-secondary administrators, coordinators, technicians, and First Nations organizations are overburdened by administrative and reporting requirements. Current administrative processes associated with decision making, whereby First Nations and organizations are accountable to provincial, territorial and federal governments, are inefficient, and incompatible to First Nations' practices and good governance mechanisms. For example, results from a recent First Nations Education Council (FNEC) regional survey show that while 50% of First Nation post-secondary community administrators considered that Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) provides clear information on the administration of files and records, only 16.6% suggested that ISC verification processes are useful for improving local program administration.⁴³

⁴² Indigenous Services Canada (2020). *Evaluation of the Post-Secondary Education Program*. Government of Canada. Pg. 7. Retrieved from: [Evaluation of the Post-Secondary Education Program \(sac-isc.gc.ca\)](https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca)

⁴³ Similarly, 50% of the respondents highlighted the complexity and demands of ISC's post-secondary Annual Register of PSE students while less than 10% considered the nominal roll list report as useful for the local administration of the program. FNEC-CEPN (forthcoming), *Consultation visant la consolidation et l'amélioration des modèles locaux et régionaux de livraison de services au postsecondaire*.

The recommendations made within this policy proposal address the importance of First Nations-led policy and total control over First Nations education. Newly negotiated and concluded First Nations PSE models will be equipped with adequate funding to accommodate the growth in students, administrative requirements, the transfer of responsibilities, the chronic human resources shortage, and the development of new or advanced wrap-around services. New investments and a new policy approach will address the cumbersome and time-consuming structures that local and regional First Nations administrators have identified through various forums including the 2020 First Nations Post-Secondary Education Think Tank, and the 2021 AFN Post-Secondary Forum on First Nations-led Models. Flexible funding will allow for First Nations to meet the various needs of students and eliminate systemic barriers that First Nations students face in accessing post-secondary education.

Risk #3 – Without Increased Investments and New Approaches for Post-secondary, FNIs and First Nations will Continue to Face Barriers in Adequately Delivering Programs and Supporting Student Success

FNIs and First Nations have communicated that extensive reporting requirements and a proposal-based program take-up capacity from staff members. There are not enough resources to hire dedicated roles to cover administrative and regulatory requirements. Often, Directors and management staff must take time from supporting students to fill out lengthy proposals, posing issues in operations, with no guarantee that funding will flow to the First Nation or their institution for community-based programming. With proposal-based programming that is inadequate, unpredictable, and unsustainable, FNIs and First Nations face challenges supporting student success, addressing capital needs, and building capacity in teaching and research. FNIs also face barriers in relying on partnerships with non-Indigenous institutions to deliver degree-granting programs, and accreditation is an ongoing issue. FNIs find themselves in competition with non-Indigenous post-secondary institutions for funding as well as for the recruitment and retention of staff.

The current PSPP budget is inadequate to address the programming needs of First Nations and FNIs.

To address the risks listed above, First Nations require new investments in conjunction with new approaches developed through First Nations-led regional models. The negotiation, conclusion and full implementation of First Nations-led regional models will advance FNIs and community-based programming. First Nations-led regional models will also strengthen their role in First Nations language and culture revitalization, as deemed appropriate by First Nations, academia and the labour market writ large.

Risk #4: First Nations will Not Accept the Status Quo

First Nations are ready for a substantial change in post-secondary education. First Nations have been chronically underfunded and have been underrepresented in the public post-secondary education sphere in Canada.

Education has historically been used as an assimilation practice against Indigenous Peoples. First Nations have developed and delivered education that is rooted within their respective languages, cultures and values. Post-secondary education, as an integral part of lifelong learning, supports First Nations in accessing and learning about their respective cultures and languages that were forcibly taken from First Nations through the Indian Residential School Systems in a manner which both respects and integrates their respective traditional cultural norms and languages. First Nations control of First Nations post-secondary education repairs not only an educational gap for their peoples, but also addresses holistic community wellbeing and healing.

First Nations have been working to address their students, institutions and community needs in post-secondary long before the three-year Engagement which began in 2019-2020, however the Engagement funding was an opportunity for First Nations to collectivize and develop regional approaches moving forward. Should Cabinet not approve the First Nations recommended approach, First Nations will continue to be subject to colonial and paternal practices that the federal government perpetuates, and relationships between First Nations and the Government of Canada will not improve.

Unilateral decisions have been made previously by the department in not moving towards regionalization, mirroring centuries of broken promises, not upholding Treaty, and perpetuating colonialism through discriminatory policies. First Nations have and will continue to assert that unilateral decisions must not be made on programs and policies that First Nations access or that affect First Nations. Through full co-implementation of the policy proposal, and full funding to support First Nations, a path forward can be made towards real reconciliation, and the implementation of First Nations control of First Nations education in line with their fundamental human rights as self-determining peoples.

Risk #5: Unilateral Decision Making by the Federal Government.

First Nations will not accept any unilateral decision making regarding the implementation of this PSE policy proposal, its submissions, terms and conditions, guidelines, agreements, and/or funding allocations. The Memorandum to Cabinet must be consistent with this policy proposal and its implementation will be co-developed with First Nations, consistent with First Nations control of First Nations education.

APPENDIX A: GOVERNMENT OF CANADA ANNOUNCEMENT OF \$350M OVER 5 YEARS FOR ADULT EDUCATION							
Adult Education - Existing Funding Announced through Budget 2021							
	2022-23 Total Costs	2023-24 Total Costs	2024-25 Total Costs	2025-26 Total Costs	2026-27 Total Costs	5-YR Total Costs	Notes
4. Adult Education - Costs already announced through Budget 2021	\$70,000,000	\$70,000,000	\$70,000,000	\$70,000,000	\$70,000,000	\$350,000,000	ISC Definition

APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL INVESTMENTS IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION								
	2022-23 Total Costs	2023-24 Total Costs	2024-25 Total Costs	2025-26 Total Costs	2026-27 Total Costs	5-YR Total Costs	Ongoing Costs	Notes
Additional Immediate Investments for Regional PSE Model Development and Implementation								
2. First Nations-led regional PSE models	\$23,811,715	\$62,203,788	\$130,007,982	\$203,807,411	\$241,418,399	\$661,249,294	\$241,418,399	Phased in (10%,25%,50%,75, 100%) of total costs for PSPP and PSSSP, assuming a 15% increase in costs over and above existing estimates for regional PSE models. (PSSSP + PSPP * 10%-100% of models being concluded * 15% increase in costs over existing estimates).

3. Funding for ongoing Technical Tables	\$6,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$25,000,000	\$4,000,000	5-YR commitment to prepare First Nations and regions for the final negotiation and conclusion of their PSE models and an understanding that funding in years four and five be utilized for First Nations to negotiate the federal interim investments.
Additional Immediate Investments to PSSSP/UCEPP, PSPP and Adult Education								
5a. Additional Costs for current students (reflects actual costs) *	\$433,821,656	\$454,211,274	\$475,559,204	\$497,910,486	\$521,312,279	\$2,382,814,899	\$521,312,279	Required additional costs multiplied by the number of students - with each fiscal yr escalating by 4.7% to reflect inflation, rise in student costs and population growth.
5a. Actual costs for unfunded students*	\$888,892,484	\$930,670,431	\$974,411,941	\$1,020,209,302	\$1,068,159,139	\$4,882,343,297	\$1,068,159,139	Current per student costs multiplied by the number of students - each fiscal yr escalating by 4.7% to reflect inflation, rise in student costs and growth. (2016 Census)
5c. First Nations Institutions and Community-based Programming*	\$194,733,500	\$203,885,975	\$213,468,615	\$223,501,640	\$234,006,217	\$1,069,595,947	\$234,006,217	Costs per student based on 2021 scan of students attending First Nations post-secondary institutions - with each fiscal yr. escalating by 4.7% to reflect the increase in required additional costs and number of students.

TOTAL 5-YEAR INVESTMENT (INCLUDING \$350M FOR ADULT EDUCATION):	\$9,371,003,438
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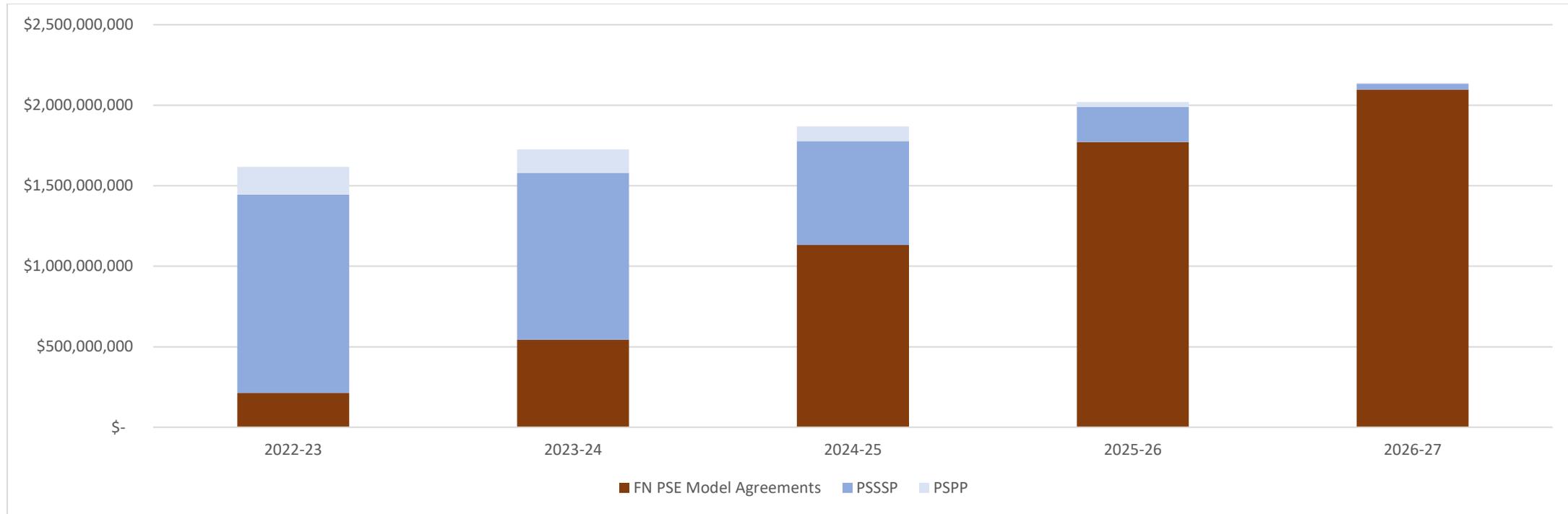
* Costs per year included in rationale below.

<u>Costing Rationale: PSSSP and PSPP</u>	Current Per Student Costs	Required Additional Per Student Costs	Number of Students (2020-2021)
5a. Additional Costs for current students (reflects actual costs)	\$12,000	\$17,548	24,722
5a. Actual costs for unfunded students	\$29,548	-	30,083
5c. First Nations Institutions & Community-based Programming	\$29,959	-	6,500

APPENDIX C: OVERVIEW OF FUNDING ROLLOUT

The appendix below reflects how funding will be rolled into First Nations-led local, regional and Treaty-based post-secondary education models. The funding ask (demonstrated above) calls for increased funding for PSSSP and PSPP. While First Nations negotiate, conclude and implement their regional models, funding from the programs will be absorbed into their regional models. Funding will stay within the interim programs for First Nations or regions who have not yet negotiated their models. The allocations below are meant to act as a guideline – funding needs will be determined by First Nations.

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
FN PSE Model Agreements	\$ 212,368,193	\$ 544,099,496	\$ 1,131,735,844	\$ 1,771,330,893	\$ 2,096,292,788
PSSSP	\$ 1,232,552,014	\$ 1,036,603,215	\$ 645,987,736	\$ 218,366,471	\$ 37,338,107
PSPP	\$ 172,339,148	\$ 145,268,757	\$ 90,724,162	\$ 30,731,476	\$ 5,265,140
TOTAL	\$ 1,617,259,355	\$ 1,725,971,467	\$ 1,868,447,742	\$ 2,020,428,839	\$ 2,138,896,034



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