

Trends of the Education of First Nations Children, Youth, and Beyond

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Abstract.— Data and information are shared about: 1) First Nations educational infrastructure—new schools, repairs and renovations of schools, project planning, teachers' residences, and operational and maintenance funds. 2) The monitoring of primary and secondary education on reserves. 3) Challenges of schools located in remote areas and with fewer than 100 students. 4) Government spending for primary and secondary education whether positive or negative is made public. 5) Post-secondary achievements of First Nations members.

1) First Nations Educational Infrastructure: Overview of Selected Investments in First Nations Educational Facilities and Projects Between Apr. 2006 – Mar. 2013¹

Covered new school construction, repair or renovation of facilities, project planning, teacher residences, and operations and maintenance funds.

Years	Investment in Educational Projects	Proportions to existing Operations & Maintenance
2006-07	\$195 million	\$ 70 million
2007-08	\$244 million	\$ 78 million
2008-09	\$208 million	\$108 million
2009-10	\$277 million	\$109 million
2010-11	\$304 million	\$111 million
2011-12	\$201 million	\$115 million
2012-13	\$226 million	\$112 million

Approximate value of New Schools completed between 2006 and 2013
\$647,684,148

2) Monitoring Primary and Secondary Education on Reserves²

Some form of Indigenous language programming is offered by nearly 88% of First Nations schools and full Indigenous language immersion is available in 17% of the schools.

Periodic cultural activities are provided in nearly 91% of the schools and 57% routinely include on-going cultural programming.

Cultural teachings are partially integrated into the curriculum of the schools and some have fully integrated cultural teachings into their curriculum.

Data from 2004-2009 indicates that the rate of secondary school graduations was about 36%.

It is worth noting that over the last several years the Membertou First Nation in Nova Scotia has had a secondary graduation rate of 100%.

Results of standard academic performance measures are generally poor for reserve schools.³

3) Challenges of Band-Operated Schools in Remote Areas with Fewer than 100 Students⁴

2012-13 About 500 band-operated schools served 65% of the on-reserve students.

More than 160 of these schools (>30%) have fewer than 100 students and in particular 40% have fewer than 50 students. More than 140 schools (≤30%) are regarded as remote / special access / north of the 55th parallel.

2/3 of band schools would be considered rural by provincial standards.

Only 3 to 4% of band-operated schools could be considered urban.

These schools do not benefit from economies of scale • have higher operating • maintenance • heating • supply costs • challenges attracting, retaining and housing qualified teachers.

The schools also have a high rate of teacher turnover.

4) Funding Whether Positive or Negative Made Public via the Parliamentary Budget Officer⁵

2009-10 to 2013-14 educational capital needs ranged from \$287 to \$307 million. These needs were underestimated and resulted in annual shortfalls of between \$94 and \$221 million.

2012-13 Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) estimates reported a funding shortfall for education programming in band-operated schools between \$300 and \$595 million.

2016-17 Shortfall funding estimates grew to between \$336 and \$665 million.

PBO indicated that the 2016-17 budget proposals could resolve such capital shortfalls.

By 2020-21, the objective is to commit just over \$1 billion— 80% for education programming and the rest to learning environments.

5) Post-secondary Achievements of First Nations Members⁶

2006-2011

Proportion of post-secondary credentials achieved was greater for Indigenous than for Non-Indigenous individuals. Indigenous youth aged 15-29 with post-secondary credential increased from 19 to 21%.

In 2011, 38% of the Indigenous community 15 years and older achieved some form of post-secondary credentials.

Indigenous women were more likely than Indigenous men to have attained post-secondary qualifications.

Employment of Indigenous youth increases with educational certification. The rate was 76% for those with university credentials, 56% for secondary-school completers and only 24% with no certificates/credentials.

A Final Reflection

It is worth noting that what is shared here is selected data and information. More resources are becoming available to First Nations that allow them to monitor all aspects of the provision of education at all levels—early childhood,⁷ elementary, secondary,⁸ and beyond.⁹

¹ Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. 2010. Education Facilities Progress Report: April 2006 – January 2010. Ottawa, ON: Author. Available at: http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2010/ainc-inac/R1-34-2010-eng.pdf

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² Chiefs Assembly on Education. 2012. A Portrait of First Nations and Education—Palais des Congrès de Gatineau, Gatineau, Quebec, October 1-3, 2012. Available at: https://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/events/fact_sheet-ccoe-3.pdf

³ Anderson, Barry and John Richards. 2016. *Students in Jeopardy: An Agenda for Improving Results in Band-Operated Schools: Commentary No. 444*. Toronto, ON: C. D. Howe Institute.

⁴ Parliamentary Budget Officer. 2016. Federal Spending on Primary and Secondary Education on First Nations Reserves. Ottawa, Canada: Author. Available at: http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2016/dpb-pbo/YN5-113-2016-eng.pdf

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⁵ Parliamentary Budget Officer. 2016, pp. 4, 10, and 29.

⁶ Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. 2015. Indigenous Education and Employment Trends in Selected Cities, 2011. Available at: <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/145202729213/1452027251324>

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⁷ Nguyen, Mai. 2011. “Closing the Education Gap: A Case for Aboriginal Early Childhood Education in Canada, A Look at the Aboriginal Headstart Program.” *Canadian Journal of Education*, 34(3): 229-248. Available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ946093.pdf>

⁸ National Panel on First Nation Elementary and Secondary Education for Students on Reserve. 2011. *Nurturing the Learning Spirit of First Nation Students*. Available at: <https://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education2/national-panel.pdf>

⁹ Andrews, Jac J. W., Erica Makarenko, and Meadow Schroeder. 2018. Psychology in the Spotlight: University of Calgary Program Celebrates a First-of-Its-Kind Partnership with Manitoba First Nations. *Psynopsis*, 40(2): 24-25. Available at: <https://cpa.ca/psynopsis/>

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