

# Memorandum of Understanding for First Nations Education in Alberta



## Long Term Strategic Action Plan

*September 24, 2013*

*MOU Elected Officials met on September 24, 2013 to approve the draft MOU Long Term Strategic Action Plan. All parties agreed to move forward on work to implement the plan.*

*“Let’s put our minds together to see  
what we can do for our children”*

Chief Sitting Bull

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## **Preamble**

The Long Term Strategic Action Plan is to be considered a statement of intent for actions to be undertaken by the parties that will help implement the commitments made under the Memorandum of Understanding for First Nation Education in Alberta (MOU). It should not to be considered to create or imply any legal obligations on behalf of the parties and should only be interpreted in accordance with the understandings contained within Part IV, Provision 3 “Scope of MOU” within the MOU.

## **Executive Summary**

### **First Nation Education in Alberta**

On February 24, 2010, the Government of Canada, the Government of Alberta, and the Assembly of Treaty Chiefs in Alberta signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to achieve the following vision for First Nations Education in Alberta:

*First Nations students are achieving or exceeding the full educational outcomes, levels and successes of all other students in Alberta.*

Through a Joint Action Plan (see p. 14) key measures are proposed for the restructuring of First Nation education in Alberta in order to improve First Nation student outcomes, including:

- The development of a First Nation Education System in Alberta (see Annex A), with an “opt-in” mechanism that will formalize all parties’ roles and responsibilities, maximize the impact of investments, and create new ways of supporting First Nation education.
- Empowering First Nation Chiefs and Councils to establish/delegate First Nation Education Authorities (see Annex B) to foster best practices in the delivery of First Nation education, enhance the availability of supports and services, and be the recipient of education funding.
- Establishing an Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom Centre (IKWC) that will provide First Nation schools with expertise and support to revitalize First Nations languages and culture.
- Creating Parent and Community Councils to build collaborative relationships, improve student attendance and increase community engagement.

### **Federal and Provincial Roles**

Canada will continue to support the education of on-reserve First Nation students, including its commitment to develop new funding methodologies that will provide more predictable and sustainable funding to support a restructured First Nation education system. Alberta will enhance, and not replace, federal funding by extending access to selected provincial initiatives to First Nation Education Authorities.

Both Canada and Alberta will support the development of collaborative frameworks between First Nation Education Authorities and Provincial School Boards that will support joint planning and actions to improve student success.



## **Legislation**

In keeping with commitment 2 (4) (a) and (b) of the MOU, the parties have agreed to review existing legislation and policies and to examine options for a legislative base for First Nations education in Alberta. The significance of education legislation is well-documented. Legislation defines the relationship of an education system to students, parents and stakeholders while also providing for the system of administration and financing of education. Most importantly, education legislation ensures that a child's right to access education is properly defined and protected.

## **Mechanism for Opting In**

Canada, Alberta, and First Nations will develop a mechanism through which First Nation Education Authorities can opt-in. The mechanism will identify each party's responsibilities with respect to programs, services, and funding; governance, accountability and reporting relationships; and the processes for its review and amendment.



## First Nation Education in Alberta

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*History, for [First Nations] is contained in the rich oral traditions of [First Nations]. History is a renewal process where stories are told and re-told again; where ceremonies are performed and re-performed again; where songs are sung and sung over again; where stories, ceremonies, and songs are done at the same places over and over again.<sup>1</sup>*

*- Dr. Leroy Little Bear*

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### Background

First Nation peoples come from an oral tradition where reading and writing were not the primary tools for learning. Though First Nation peoples were introduced to a system that emphasized reading and writing processes, they are still innately connected to their traditional learning processes and are committed to ensuring the continuity of these over the long-term. It has also been recognized that this process is holistic, begins at birth and continues for a lifetime.

The signing of Treaties 6, 7, and 8 marked the initial period of time at which the Crown and First Nations jointly acknowledged the importance of education. Indeed, “treaty signatories understood education to be critical for the well being of their nations” (AFN, 2009)<sup>2</sup>. However, federally-operated residential schools followed by, federally-run day schools, focused more on reading and writing than on First Nations culture and traditional ways of living and learning. In 1972, the National Indian Brotherhood issued their foundational document entitled *Indian Control of Indian Education*, which emphasized the importance of increased control of education by parents and community leadership.

When management and operation of on-reserve schools was transferred from the Federal Government to First Nation Governments, First Nations inherited a schoolhouse but not an education system. The current schoolhouse model of First Nation Education in Alberta is best defined by what it lacks when compared to a comprehensive system of education. Schools operating in the provincial system benefit from second and third level services. Second level services include those offered through a school board central office such as administrative supports, education planning, hiring of teachers, and provision of learning resources. Third level services are those offered through provincial ministries of education and include strategic planning, developing and implementing education regulations, policies and standards, and curriculum and resource development.

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<sup>1</sup> Little Bear, L. (2004). The story of Sokitapiwa/Blackfoot. In *Histories, cultures, and contemporary issues of First Nation, Metis, Inuit Peoples of Alberta*. A teacher preparation resource package for Faculties of Education and Alberta Learning. (pp.1-135 – 164).Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education. <http://blackfoot-awakening.ca/toolkit/en/media/docs/essays/Sokitapiwa.pdf> Accessed February 12 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Assembly of First Nations (2009). *First Nation Control of First Nation Education: It's Our Vision, It's Our Time*. <http://64.26.129.156/calltoaction/Documents/FNCFNE.pdf>



The use of the school house model, rather than a comprehensive system model, is among the factors that led the Auditor General of Canada to state that it would take 28 years for First Nations to reach the national average of high school graduates (Auditor General of Canada, 2004<sup>3</sup>).

## Challenges

Some of the current challenges faced by First Nation-operated schools in Alberta are similar to those faced by provincial schools prior to the 1930s when education was delivered by local control through a schoolhouse approach. This model of delivery created two pressing issues:

- districts had limited capacity to address issues facing by schools; and
- education services suffered because districts had very little capital to purchase better quality services (i.e., teachers, equipment and supplies).

Beginning in the 1930s, Alberta created larger school divisions with centralized administration. Though the change was initially resisted, it gained acceptance once the public witnessed the efficiencies divisions brought, such as savings in bulk purchase, secured supplies in all schools, new classrooms/schools where the population was growing, proper and timely teacher salary payments with schedules and higher qualifications, and proper facility maintenance. Savings were achieved not only in the purchasing of supplies, equipment and fuel, but also by redistributing the cost of administration. As such, educational services became more reliable in that students, in any part of the province, are afforded the same treatment in the form of equitable education and opportunity. It was understood that the move to develop larger school divisions, provided the “fundamental ideal of democracy”, which was an “equality of opportunity in education,” (Alberta Department of Education 1945, 31)<sup>4</sup>.

While some First Nations in Alberta have taken steps to create education system type supports and services for their schools, federal funding for school supports and administrative capacity has not been consistent, system-based or aligned with provincial system funding. In turn, this has made it difficult to maintain the second and third level services necessary to offer students a comprehensive education program.

While the inconsistency in funding affects all areas of First Nation education, numerous reports have documented other barriers for First Nation students, such as:

1. Lack of Culturally Appropriate Curriculum and Resources

*Children should be able to understand their language and embrace their cultural identity with pride. Schools have a vital role in addressing this need. While*

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl\\_oag\\_200411\\_05\\_e\\_14909.html](http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_200411_05_e_14909.html)

<sup>4</sup> Alberta Department of Education. *School Divisions in Alberta: Pioneering in School Administration*. Edmonton: Department of Education. (1945).



*improvements have been made, fragmented K-12 curriculum and an absence of readily usable First Nations resources for use in classrooms deprives First Nations and other students from learning about First Nations cultures, languages, histories and contributions to the larger Canadian society.*

2. Socio-Economic Conditions

*Learning can be seriously compromised by one's socio-economic status. Challenges First Nation students face, including overrepresentation in the child welfare system, and higher incidence rate of social challenges, such as poverty, can significantly and negatively impact a student's education.*

3. Teacher Training

*There is a need for the teaching profession to adopt changes in teacher training and professional development to recognize the impact of colonization and racism on First Nation students, and to ensure teachers are equipped to meet needs of First Nation students.*

4. Lack of Community Involvement in Education

*Involvement of the First Nations community in the education of its children has been minimal or nonexistent, due to a number of factors, such as parental disempowerment, and lack of positive educational experiences, due to the impact of residential schools or negative experiences in public schools. First Nations people understand the world in terms of relationships, and the inclusion of Elders, parents, and the community in the learning process is fundamental.*

5. Racism and Bullying

*Racism in schools is a formidable problem for First Nations students who are generally a minority in public schools, and can become easy targets for bullying. When racism and bullying are not acknowledged, the usual assumption is that there is nothing wrong with the education system, but rather that the problem is with the student. This can be a major cause of non-attendance and dropout rates in both in provincial and First Nation schools.*

The current, “non-system” of First Nation education in Alberta has created an environment where First Nation students do not have the same opportunities for success that are available to other Alberta students. Instead, First Nation students receive school instruction that does not reflect their language and culture, and often go without supports and services which are required for them to be successful.

When their educational needs are not being met, students are less likely to attend school; the ongoing lack of a comprehensive education system to meet students' needs has led to declining enrollment in First Nation schools and an achievement gap between First Nation students and other Alberta students. Research and data gathered by all levels of government, educational institutions, and other interested agencies over the past 35 years has illuminated this alarming trend. As of 2006, 67 per cent of First Nations people living





on-reserve in Alberta, aged 20-24, did not have a high school diploma, compared to 16 per cent for non-Aboriginal students (Census,2006).<sup>5</sup>

Results for the Alberta Provincial Achievement Tests (PAT), which are currently completed by all students in Grades 3, 6 and 9 in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, indicate that fewer students attending First Nation schools meet the excellent/acceptable standards for their grade level than those who attend provincial schools. Moreover, many First Nation students do not participate in the exams, which is a concern because it makes it difficult for schools to measure progress, and may reflect the ongoing issue of poor attendance or of students leaving school.

It is evident that many young First Nations children entering the school system are ill-equipped with the necessary supports to achieve long-term positive educational outcomes, and as such are at similar risk of not completing high school. Therefore, the achievement gap is an increasing concern given the correlation between high school completion and improved social outcomes including, but not limited to: higher rates of employment, lower levels of deep and prolonged poverty, increased labour market participation, and increased incidences of post-secondary enrolment.

What all levels of government now better understand is that without successful educational outcomes for First Nations people, there will likely be little commensurate change elsewhere, placing First Nations communities and their populations at significant risk of sustaining low levels of overall health and well-being that are ever present in far too many communities across the country.

Moreover, Article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) states 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<sup>6</sup>.

## **Call to Action**

Recognizing the need to link the success that First Nations children had within traditional holistic learning to that of a modern education system, the Assembly of Treaty Chiefs in Alberta (AoTC, Treaty 6, 7 and 8) passed a resolution in 2009 identifying an Education

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<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada. (2006). 2006 Census.

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf)



Working Group with representation from the three Treaty organizations, and, with the Government of Alberta, delivered a proposal to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada to begin discussions on developing a Memorandum of Understanding.

## **Memorandum of Understanding for First Nation Education in Alberta Background**

On February 24, 2010, the Government of Canada, the Government of Alberta, and the Assembly of Treaty Chiefs in Alberta signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for First Nations Education in Alberta. The MOU established the following shared vision:

*First Nations students are achieving or exceeding the full educational outcomes, levels and successes of all other students in Alberta.*

Beyond the common vision, the MOU also articulates guiding principles followed by nine broad commitments (containing over forty sub-commitments) – all of which amount to one of the most comprehensive First Nation education MOUs in Canada. Key highlights of the Memorandum of Understanding include the development of strategies to address:

- First Nation education resourcing;
- accountability and performance management of First Nation education programming and funding;
- Elders, parental and community engagement;
- recruitment, retention, and professional development of teachers in First Nation schools;
- educational outcomes of First Nation children in care;
- special education student supports;
- issues related to school age children not in school; and
- the establishment of an Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom Centre (IKWC) to provide Alberta-wide support to First Nation education organizations and improve opportunities for Treaty and Cultural awareness and for programs that support a Holistic approach to education.

In Commitment 2(6) of the MOU, the Parties agreed to jointly develop a Long Term Strategic Action Plan for First Nation education in Alberta, to propose measures for the restructuring of First Nation education in Alberta in order to improve First Nation student outcomes (see pg 6 for Action Plan).

## **Implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding for First Nation Education in Alberta**

A Senior Officials Committee, the Alberta First Nations Education Circle, was established to support ongoing partnership and to oversee the implementation of the commitments in accordance with the principles of the MOU<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> The Circle is comprised of the Executive Directors/Chief Executive Officers from the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations, Treaty 7 Management Corporation, and Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta, the Assistant Deputy



The Circle is supported by an MOU working group, consisting of representatives from each party. Upon signing the MOU, the working group developed an MOU implementation framework to ensure all commitments were addressed. Recognizing the importance of having First Nation communities and stakeholders share their knowledge of challenges for First Nation students and schools, and provide recommendations for improvement, the implementation framework called for the establishment of eight expert sub-tables to provide reports to inform the development of the Long Term Strategic Action Plan for First Nations education in Alberta.

In July 2010, the implementation framework was presented to the Circle, and in January 2011, elected officials endorsed the implementation framework to guide the work of the MOU. Comments from elected officials, at the time, reflected a renewed commitment to working together to improve the education attainment of First Nation students in Alberta.

Subsequently, the MOU working group established eight sub-tables with experts from all parties and support from Elders. Of the 111 sub-table participants 67% represented First Nation community interests. The sub-tables were: Education Restructuring (funding, services, and legislation analysis), Data Sharing, Transitions (education services agreements and partnerships), Indigenous Knowledge Wisdom Centre, Children in Care/Children Not in School, Special Education, Teachers, and Community Engagement.

To inform their recommendations, the sub-tables undertook various activities, such as focus group meetings, research and literature reviews of relevant and related policy, and surveys of school personnel and First Nation administrators. In April 2012 each of the sub-tables submitted reports containing extensive and meaningful observations that act as a foundation for the development of the Long Term Strategic Action Plan.

## **Key Findings of the MOU Sub-Table Process**

Key findings during the sub-table process included:

- First Nation schools lack a system approach and the centralized capacity to address common issues;
- on-reserve schools generally have less funding for teachers, equipment and supplies, and support services compared with their provincial counterparts;
- there is an apparent need to align k-12 education funding with the provincial funding framework and to fund the system as a system;
- the need for smooth transitions for First Nations students when moving between on-reserve and provincial schools; and
- at present, there is no comprehensive legislative base for First Nations Education in Alberta.

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Minister and Alberta's Regional Director General of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, and the Deputy Ministers and Assistant Deputy Ministers of Alberta Education and Alberta Aboriginal Relations.



The Long Term Strategic Action Plan will address these high level key findings by:

1. describing the key measures required for re-structuring and building a quality a system for First Nations education in Alberta;
2. describing the roles of First Nations, Canada and Alberta in this regard; and
3. describing the steps required to implement the restructured system.

## **Creation of a Long-Term Strategic Action Plan for First Nation Education in Alberta**

The sub-table engagement process yielded over 120 recommendations to make improvements to the current state of First Nation education in Alberta. The scope of the recommendations varied a great deal, with some focused on broad challenges in the current system, and others focused on smaller, yet equally important, issues. Based on the recommendations received, the MOU working group developed the proposed restructured First Nation education system detailed below. The Joint Action Plan (see pg. 14) reflects required steps to create this system. Not all recommendations received from sub-tables are reflected in the Joint Action Plan, but the recommendations received through the sub-table process will continue to inform plans developed to address commitments in the MOU. The creation of a comprehensive First Nation education system will address a number of the recommendations made.

## **The Proposed First Nation Education System in Alberta**

The shared objective of all parties is to improve outcomes for First Nation students through the creation of a First Nation Education System (see Annex A) that:

- Upholds the vision of First Nations control of First Nations education;
- Is sufficiently supported to be responsive to students' needs and implement lasting action in priority areas such as language and culture;
- Acknowledges the Treaty relationship between First Nations and the Crown;
- Is accountable to students, parents and communities; and
- Is supported by the Provincial and Federal governments.

First Nations will have the choice to opt-in to this restructured First Nations education system through a Framework Mechanism, which will formalize all parties' roles and responsibilities in First Nations' education, maximize impact of existing and new investments, and create new organizations to support continuous improvement of First Nation education.



## **First Nation Education Authority**

Under the restructured system, First Nations Chiefs and Councils will establish and delegate First Nation Education Authorities (see Annex B) to deliver education programs and be the recipient of education funding. First Nations would choose from one of the following structures:

- A First Nation Education Authority operating one or multiple schools in one First Nation
- First Nation Education Authority operating multiple schools in multiple First Nations

In determining how to create education authorities, First Nations may consider current partnerships in education, aggregates in non-education programs, or considerations such as language or geography (See Annex C/D for examples of current education and non-education aggregates). Through enhanced cooperation between First Nations, students will continue to receive education in a culturally relevant environment in their community, while benefitting from improved resources and supports which will provide First Nation students with learning opportunities similar to those of other students in Alberta.

The use of First Nation Education Authorities will enable First Nations to develop enhanced supports for their schools through the hiring of authority-wide specialists (e.g. Language and culture specialists, speech and language specialists, special education specialists, etc.) to support students, central human resources services (e.g. hiring of teachers), assistance and leadership in education planning and reporting, and for the provision of professional development for teachers and administrators.

## **Support for the First Nation Education System in Alberta**

All First Nation Education Authorities will be supported by the Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom Centre (IKWC) (see Annex B). This new organization will be a centre of expertise and revitalization of First Nations languages and culture; through development of curriculum and resources related to a holistic approach to education, First Nation languages, and Treaty education, the IKWC will support enhanced understanding of First Nation cultures for all Alberta students. The IKWC will also be resourced to support First Nation Education Authorities to develop capacity in a number of areas, including planning for education accountability and reporting, management of education services agreements, and data management. The IKWC will also engage with Canada and Alberta, as required or as agreed, to make improvements in other priority areas identified in partnership by First Nations, Canada, and Alberta.

The community will continue to play a central role in their community schools through the creation of Parent and Community Councils (see Annex B) which will build relationships between parents, communities, and schools and collaborate with schools to develop and implement action plans to improve student attendance and community engagement.



Canada will continue ongoing responsibilities to support education of on-reserve First Nation students. Canada is committed to develop new funding methodologies that will provide a more predictable and sustainable funding formula to support a restructured First Nation education system.

As an interim step, Canada will also, within the existing policy authorities toward First Nation education in Alberta, look to develop innovative funding methodologies and mechanisms that will enable it to fund FNEAs for the management and delivery of the education services and support identified under the objectives of the First Nations education system in Alberta.

In addition, any new funding methodology will need to take into consideration other funding related recommendations coming from the MOU sub-tables and included in this Action Plan. The parties recognize that the development of any new funding methodology necessitates major changes to existing federal policies and will be subject to federal legislation.

Alberta will continue ongoing responsibilities to develop curriculum and set standards, evaluate curriculum and assess outcomes, support teacher development and manage certification, and oversee basic education policy and regulations. Additionally, Alberta will enhance, and not replace, federal funding by extending access to selected provincial initiatives to First Nation Education Authorities.

Both Canada and Alberta will support the development of collaborative frameworks between First Nation Education Authorities and Provincial School Boards that will support joint planning and actions to improve student success.

### **Accountability and Performance Measurement in the First Nation Education System in Alberta**

Current accountability measures, such as Nominal Roll compliance<sup>8</sup> and other federal education program reporting, will be adjusted to reflect new accountability measures to be developed by First Nations, Canada, and Alberta; new accountability measures will include public reporting of student outcomes, financial statements, and school/authority planning.

Education data informs system improvement to ensure an education system meets student needs. In keeping with commitment 3 (3) (a) (b) and (c) of the MOU, the parties have agreed to establish and implement a protocol concerning the collection, protection, ownership, use and disclosure of First Nation student information to measure and monitor educational outcomes for First Nation students and to develop and enhance programs.

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<sup>8</sup> The Nominal Roll process is used by AANDC to track students and their eligibility for funding. Under this process, First Nations submit names of enrolled students and AANDC undertakes compliance to determine if students are eligible for funding by assessing whether they meet the Department's age, attendance, and enrollment date criteria.



Upon establishment of the IKWC, a protocol for student information will be developed in partnership with First Nations, Canada, and Alberta.

When creating First Nation Education Authorities, First Nations will determine appropriate governance structures to ensure that accountability measures are met and that First Nation Education Authorities remain responsive to community needs. This may include the establishment of a board, with elected or appointed representation from each participating First Nation, to develop policies and oversee operations of the First Nation Education Authority.

As part of the process to establish First Nation Education Authorities, policies will be developed to:

- Determine relationships between the participating First Nation Chief and Councils, the First Nation Education Authority, school administration and staff, Community Councils, and other stakeholders;
- Outline roles and responsibilities of all parties;
- Create appeal processes to resolve disputes;
- Establish employment procedures which clearly address employment contracts; and
- Develop guidelines and procedures for evaluations of policies and programs

## **Legislation**

In keeping with commitment 2 (4) (a) and (b) of the MOU, the parties have agreed to review existing legislation and policies and to examine options for a legislative base for First Nations education in Alberta.

The significance of education legislation is well-documented. Legislation defines the relationship of an education system to students, parents and stakeholders while also providing for the system of administration and financing of education. Most importantly, education legislation ensures that a child's right to access education is properly defined and protected.

## **Framework Mechanism**

Canada, Alberta, and First Nations will develop a Framework Mechanism to which First Nations Education Authorities can opt-in.

The Framework Mechanism will set out understandings related to:

- The parties to the Framework Mechanism's responsibilities with respect to programs, services, and funding;
- Governance, accountability and reporting relationships; and
- The processes for its review and amendment.





## Roles in the Proposed First Nation Education System

*In the First Nation Education System, the child will have greater access to enhanced language/culture instruction, culturally appropriate curriculum and resources, and comparable access to supports and services as children who reside off reserve, including greater access to early learning programs and wraparound services.*

### Parent and Community Councils:

- Collaborate with school on strategies and activities to meet local needs.
- Facilitate access to community Elders and language and cultural expertise
- Orient teachers to community

### Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom Centre:

- Centre of expertise for First Nations languages and culture
- Supports curriculum and resource development
- Stewards First Nations research and data
- Collaborates with federal and provincial governments
- Provides supports to First Nation Authorities including:
  - Accountability and reporting assistance
  - Professional development for teachers
  - Advice on education services agreements

### First Nation School

- Delivers K-12 education programs
- Language and culture programs and resources
- Provides professional development and supports teacher retention
- Collaborates with parents and community on strategies to meet local needs



### First Nation Education Authority:

- Receives and manages education and initiatives funding
- Provides second-level supports, including authority-wide education specialists, human resources services, professional development, and administration of education service agreements
- Manages accountability and reporting to communities
- Develops collaborative frameworks with provincial school boards

### Canada:

- Make annual funding available for initial core operations and make annual funding available for individual initiatives undertaken by the IKWC.
- Provides stable and predictable funding for First Nation Elementary/Secondary education.
- Supports First Nation Education Authorities to enter into collaborative frameworks with provincial school boards.

### First Nations:

- Govern and operate the IKWC;
- Govern and operate First Nation Education Authorities, including Parent and Community Councils;
- Receives and administers federal and provincial initiatives funding through the IKWC and FNEAs;
- Receives and administers federal funding through the IKWC and FNEAs.

### Alberta:

- Provides support and expertise to the Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom Centre in order to build capacity in data collection and management; accountability and reporting; system improvement; and curriculum and resource development.
- Extends identified provincial initiatives to First Nation Education Authorities
- Supports provincial school boards to enter into collaborative frameworks with First Nation Education Authorities.



## Memorandum of Understanding for First Nations Education in Alberta

### Joint Action Plan

*This plan is considered to be a living document of initial priority areas with the understanding that further actions will be developed by all parties throughout implementation.*

Joint Action Plan						
Action Item	Participation from:					Timeframe <i>(note: based on September 2013 approval)</i>
	First Nations	IKWC	First Nation Education Authority	Canada	Alberta	
Establish and begin operations of IKWC.	✓			✓	✓	Fall 2013/Winter 2014
Develop opt-in Framework Mechanism for FNEAs	✓	✓*		✓	✓	November 2013 - September 2014
Establish First Nation Education Authorities, including Parent and Community Councils	✓	✓				Ongoing
Develop standards for education services agreements	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	November 2013 - March 2014
Develop collaborative Frameworks between First Nation Education Authorities and Provincial School Boards.			✓	✓	✓	Ongoing
Develop actions to further progress in commitment areas with consideration of sub-table recommendations.		✓		✓	✓	Ongoing
Develop performance indicators and complete annual reporting to monitor progress.		✓		✓	✓	December 2013 - ongoing
Ongoing analysis and comparison of Federal and Provincial K-12 funding methodologies.	✓			✓	✓	November 2013 - ongoing
Develop mechanisms to ensure stable and predictable funding for First Nation Elementary/Secondary education.	✓			✓	✓	November 2014 - Ongoing
Extend selected provincial initiatives to FNEAs			✓		✓	January 2014 - ongoing.

\* IKWC to provide support to First Nations, as required.



## Annex A: Proposed First Nation Education System

### The Child

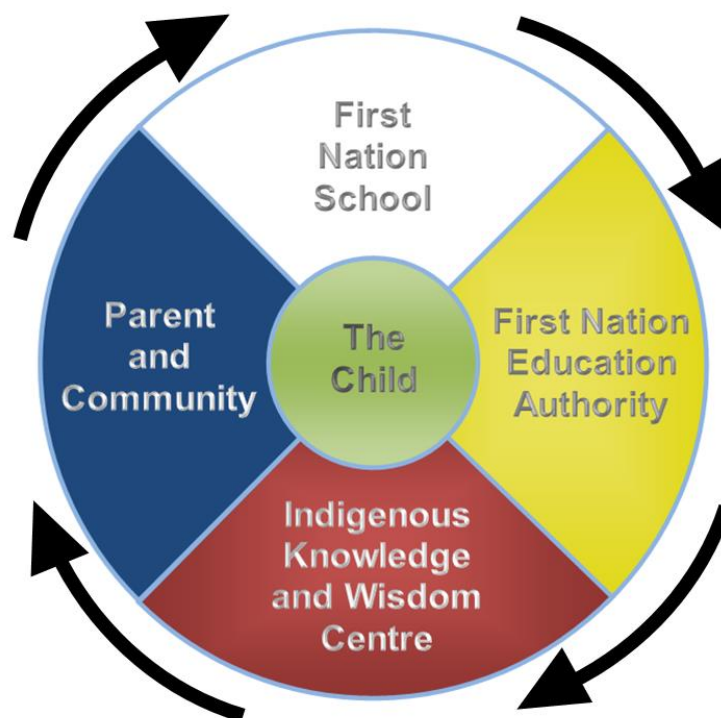
The child will have greater access to learning opportunities for improved outcomes and fluency in their own language through enhanced language/culture instruction, culturally appropriate curriculum and resources. The child will have comparable access to supports and services as children who reside off reserve, including greater access to early learning programs and wraparound services. The child will also benefit from community/school action plans to increase attendance and parental and community involvement.

### Parent and Community

The community will support improved student achievement through the establishment of a Parent and Community Council that will build relationships between communities and schools. The Council will collaborate with schools to ensure joint school-community activities, facilitate school's access to Elders and language and cultural expertise from the community and collaborate with First Nation school to develop community/school action plan to improve student attendance.

### Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom Centre

The IKWC will operate as Alberta-wide centre of expertise for the revitalization of First Nations languages and culture and for the provision of province-wide services to Aggregate Education Authorities. It will improve student achievement levels and cultural identity by developing curricula that integrates First Nations languages, culture, and ways of knowing, and will develop a legacy of knowledge and teachings for lifelong learning.



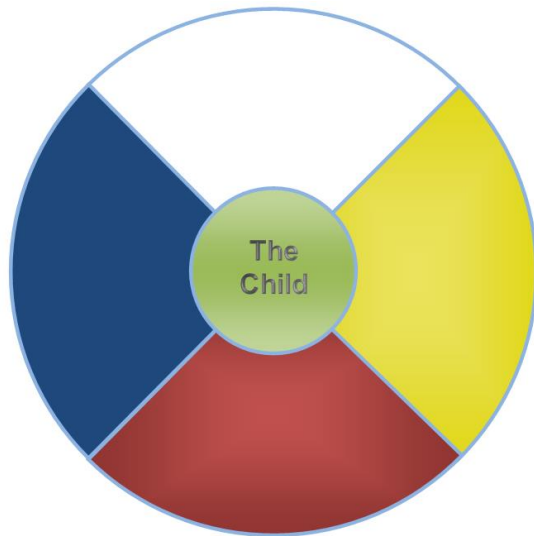
### The First Nation School

The First Nation school will be better supported to improve student achievement in a First Nations education system through improved teacher retention, professional development opportunities, greater access to language and culture resources, increased classroom supports and can offer a wider variety of programs.

### First Nation Education Authority

The First Nation Education Authority will support improved student achievement by providing 2<sup>nd</sup> level services to First Nation schools, such as Aggregate-wide specialists, human resources services, language/culture expertise and reporting to funding agencies/communities. It will assist schools with the development and implementation of school success planning.

## The Child



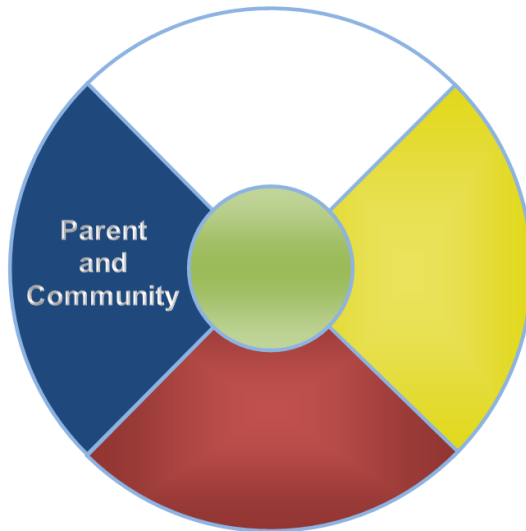
### Overview:

The child will have greater access to learning opportunities for improved outcomes and fluency in their own language through enhanced language/culture instruction and culturally appropriate curriculum and resources. The child will have comparable access to supports and services currently available to children who reside off reserve, including greater access to early learning programs and wraparound supports. The child will also benefit from community/school action plans to improve achievement and increase attendance and parental and community involvement.

### How does the child benefit in a First Nations education system?

- Right of access to education is protected in legislation
- Greater access to enhanced Language/culture instruction through culturally appropriate instruction, curriculum and resources
- Comparable access to supports and services as children who reside off reserve
- Increased opportunity for improved outcomes through access to additional supports, services, language instruction and cultural teachings
- Improved attendance through community/school action plan
- Improved transitions between First Nation and provincial systems through improved relationships developed through collaborative frameworks between First Nation Education Authorities and provincial school boards
- Children in care receive improved coordinated, comprehensive services through First Nation Education Authorities' participating with the Provincial Protocol Framework for Children and Youth in Care
- Greater access to early learning programs
- Improved learning opportunities due to enhanced teacher professional development
- Increased parental and community involvement
- Improved access to "wraparound" services

## Parent and Community



### Overview:

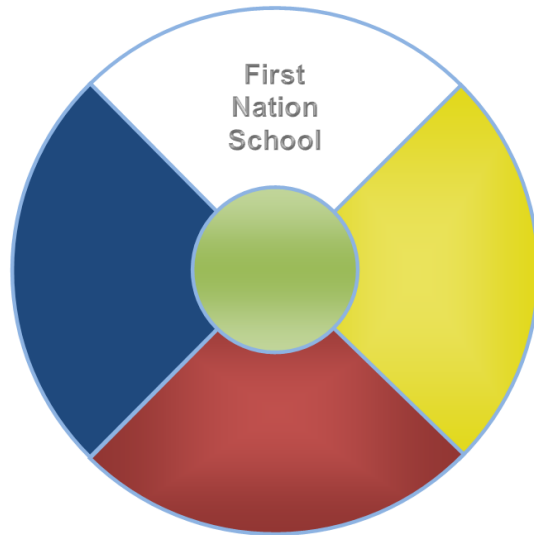
Parents and communities will support all aspects of the First Nations education system, including the establishment of Parent and Community Councils that will build relationships between communities and schools. The Councils will collaborate with schools to ensure joint school-community activities, facilitate the school's access to Elders and language and cultural expertise from the community and will collaborate with First Nation schools to develop community/school action plans to improve student attendance.

### Role of the Community:

Where one does not already exist, a Parent and Community Council will be established to:

- build relationships between parents and extended family, communities and schools;
- provide a “link” or “voice” from the community to the First Nation Education Authority;
- provide community orientation for new teachers;
- collaborate with school to ensure joint school-community feasts, performances, and recognition activities/awards;
- facilitate school's access to Elders, language and cultural expertise from the community; and,
- collaborate with First Nation and provincial schools to strengthen and support community/school action plan that defines roles, responsibilities and communications between the school and community, and identifies strategies to meet local needs, such as improving student attendance.

## The First Nation School



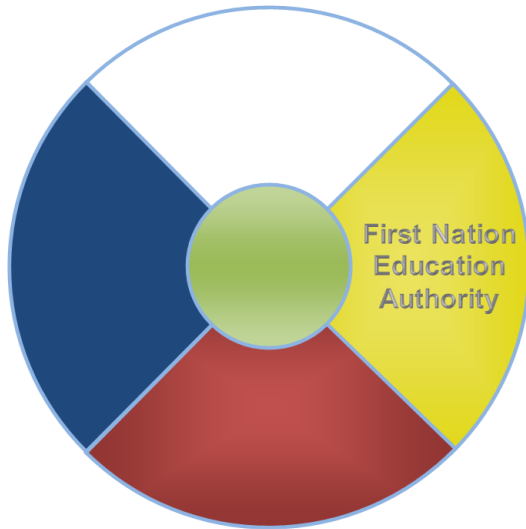
### Overview:

The First Nation school will be better supported to improve student outcomes and strengthen cultural identity in a First Nations education system through greater access to language and culture, improved teacher retention, professional development opportunities, increased classroom supports and can offer a wider variety of programs.

### How is the First Nation school better supported in a First Nations education system?

- Greater access language and culture resources
- Improved retention of teachers
- Professional development and support for staff through IKWC and First Nation Education Authority
- Support from Parent and Community Council
- Greater classroom supports available
- Wider variety of programs through coordination by First Nation Education Authority (Eg: sharing of specialized teachers across schools)
- Stable and predictable funding through FNEAs to ensure adequate programs and supports are in place to meet students' needs.

## The First Nation Education Authority



### Overview:

The First Nation Education Authority is delegated by band administration to be the recipient of education funding and will support improved student achievement by providing 2<sup>nd</sup> level services to First Nation schools, such as Aggregate-wide specialists, human resources services, language/culture expertise and reporting to funding agencies/communities. It will assist schools with the development and implementation of school success planning.

### Role of a First Nation Education Authority may include:

- Recipient of education funding (based on student registration and attendance on count date(s))
- Accountability/reporting to communities:
  - publicly reporting student outcomes
  - publicly reporting audited financial statements
  - publicly reporting school success plans
  - develop and publicly report aggregate-wide education plans
- Recipient of federal and provincial initiatives funding
- Provides second level services, such as:
  - Authority-wide specialists (Ex: Language and culture specialists, speech and language specialists, special education specialists, etc.)
  - Human Resources services (Ex: hiring of teachers)
  - provision of professional development for teachers and administrators
  - makes use of data to inform/assist programming at authority/school level
- Assumes administration of education services agreements with provincial school boards
- Develops collaborative frameworks with provincial school boards

## The Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom Centre



### Overview:

The IKWC will operate as an Alberta-wide centre of expertise for the revitalization of First Nations languages and culture and for the provision of certain province-wide services within the First Nation Education System. It will support improved student outcomes by developing curricula that integrates First Nations languages, culture, and ways of knowing, thereby developing a legacy of knowledge and teachings for lifelong learning.

### Role of the IKWC:

- The IKWC will act as a resource/support for the provision of the following province-wide services to First Nation Education Authorities:
  - support in the development of First Nation Education Authorities;
  - support to First Nation Education Authorities in the negotiation of new education service agreements;
  - manage/coordinate initiatives funding and research/publish promising practices – successes in First Nation schools/with First Nations students;
  - act as Data Steward/Warehouse for First Nations data;
  - provide guidance, as required, in the areas of accountability and reporting; and,
  - engage with Alberta Education and AANDC as required (see Alberta/Canada roles and responsibilities documents).
- The IKWC will act as a resource/support for schools, teachers and administrators through:
  - provision of professional development for teachers and administrators in collaboration with First Nation Education Authorities;
  - Facilitating the development of a First Nation Teachers Association and a First Nation Education Directors Association; and,
  - The development of a curricula and resources bank focusing on:
    - holistic Indigenous education;
    - First Nations languages; and,
    - Treaty education for Kindergarten to Grade 12.
- The IKWC will act as a resource/support to develop parent and community engagement strategies based on community needs. It will assist communities/First Nation schools in the establishment of Parent and Community Councils through the development of resources such as parent modules, handbooks and in-services.



# Annex C: Existing Education Aggregates in Alberta Map

First Nations are currently supported through various organizations to deliver an array of education programs and services – whether it be through Regional Management Organizations, Tribal Councils or as recipients of AANDC’s First Nation Student Success Program.

Capacity has been developed at these existing education aggregates and could be incorporated into the proposed First Nation education system.

## Regional Management Organization Education Advisory Services

### Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations

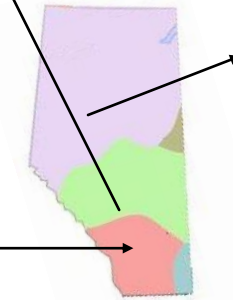
- Members:
- Alexander First Nation
  - Beaver Lake Cree Nation
  - Cold Lake First Nations
  - Enoch Cree Nation
  - Ermineskin Cree Nation
  - Frog Lake First Nation
  - Heart Lake First Nation
  - Kehewin Cree Nation
  - Louis Bull First Nation
  - Montana First Nation
  - O’Chiese First Nation
  - Paul First Nation
  - Saddle Lake First Nation
  - Samson Cree Nation
  - Sunchild First Nation
  - Whitefish Lake First Nation #128

### Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta

- Members:
- Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation
  - Beaver First Nation
  - Bigstone Cree Nation
  - Chipewyan Prairie First Nation
  - Dene Tha’ First Nation
  - Driftpile First Nation
  - Duncan’s First Nation
  - Fort McKay First Nation
  - Fort McMurray First Nation
  - Horse Lake First Nation
  - Kapawe’no First Nation
  - Little Red River Cree Nation
  - Loon River First Nation
  - Lubicon Lake Indian Nation
  - Mikisew Cree First Nation
  - Peerless/Trout Lake First Nation
  - Sawridge Band
  - Smith’s Landing First Nation
  - Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation
  - Sucker Creek First Nation
  - Swan River First Nation
  - Tallcree First Nation
  - Whitefish Lake First Nation
  - Woodland Cree First Nation

### Treaty 7 Management Corporation

- Members:
- Kainai First Nation
  - Piikani First Nation
  - Siksika Nation
  - Stoney First Nation
  - Tsui T’ina First Nation



## Tribal Council Education Advisory Services or Administration

### North Peace Tribal Council

- Members:
- Beaver First Nation
  - Dene Tha’ First Nation
  - Little Red River Cree Nation
  - Tallcree First Nation

### Athabasca Tribal Council

- Members:
- Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation
  - Chipewyan Prairie First Nation
  - Fort McKay First Nation
  - Fort McMurray First Nation
  - Mikisew Cree First Nation

### Western Cree Tribal Council

- Members:
- Duncan’s First Nation
  - Horse Lake First Nation
  - Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation

### Yellowhead Tribal Council

- Members:
- Alexander First Nation
  - Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation
  - Enoch Cree Nation
  - O’Chiese First Nation
  - Sunchild First Nation

### Kee Tas Kee Now Tribal Council

- Members:
- Loon River First Nation
  - Lubicon Lake Indian Nation
  - Peerless/Trout Lake First Nation
  - Whitefish Lake First Nation
  - Woodland Cree First Nation

### Treaty 7 Management Corporation

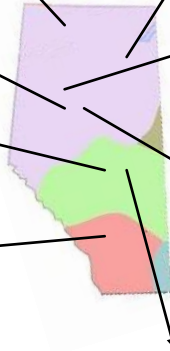
- Members:
- Kainai First Nation
  - Piikani First Nation
  - Siksika Nation
  - Stoney First Nation
  - Tsui T’ina First Nation

### Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council

- Members:
- Driftpile First Nation
  - Kapawe’no First Nation
  - Sawridge Band
  - Sucker Creek First Nation
  - Swan River First Nation

### Tribal Chiefs Ventures Inc.

- Members:
- Beaver Lake Cree Nation
  - Cold Lake First Nations
  - Frog Lake First Nation
  - Heart Lake First Nation
  - Kehewin Cree Nation
  - Whitefish Lake First Nation #128



## Current First Nation Student Success Program Recipients

### North Peace Tribal Council

- Members:
- Little Red River Cree Nation
  - Tallcree First Nation

### Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta

- Members:
- Bigstone Cree Nation
  - Chipewyan Prairie First Nation
  - Dene Tha’ First Nation
  - Driftpile First Nation
  - Horse Lake First Nation
  - Loon River First Nation
  - Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation
  - Sucker Creek First Nation
  - Swan River First Nation
  - Whitefish Lake First Nation

### Yellowhead Tribal Council

- Members:
- Alexander First Nation
  - Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation
  - Enoch Cree Nation
  - O’Chiese First Nation
  - Paul First Nation
  - Sunchild First Nation

### Saddle Lake First Nation

### Enoch Cree Nation

### Tribal Chiefs Ventures Inc.

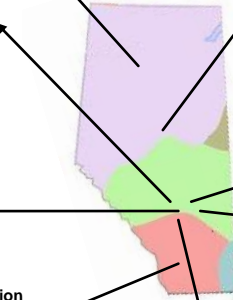
- Members:
- Beaver Lake Cree Nation
  - Cold Lake First Nations
  - Frog Lake First Nation
  - Heart Lake First Nation
  - Kehewin Cree Nation
  - Whitefish Lake First Nation #128

### Treaty 7 Management Corporation

- Members:
- Kainai First Nation
  - Piikani First Nation
  - Siksika Nation
  - Stoney First Nation
  - Tsui T’ina First Nation

### Ermineskin Cree Nation

- Members:
- Ermineskin Cree Nation
  - Louis Bull First Nation
  - Montana First Nation
  - Samson Cree Nation





## Annex D: Examples of Existing Non-Education Aggregates in Alberta Map

First Nations have also created various organizations to deliver an array of non-education programs and services – some examples include Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS), or Child and Family Services First Nation Delegated Agencies (DFNAs).

These are included as examples of other ways that First Nations' community and education leadership may wish to organize into First Nation education authorities.

There may also be other ways that First Nations' community and education leadership wish to organize into a First Nation Education Authority, such as by geographic or language groupings.

### Language Groupings of First Nations in Alberta

**Cree Language:**  
 Alexander First Nation  
 Beaver First Nation  
 Beaver Lake First Nation  
 Bigstone Cree Nation  
 Driftpile First Nation  
 Duncan's First Nation  
 Enoch Cree Nation  
 Ermineskin Cree Nation  
 Frog Lake First Nation  
 Goodfish Lake First Nation  
 Heart Lake First Nation  
 Horse Lake First Nation  
 Kehewin Cree Nation  
 Kapawe'no First Nation  
 Little Red River Cree Nation  
 Loon River First Nation  
 Louis Bull First Nation  
 Lubicon Lake Nation  
 Mikisew Cree First Nation  
 Montana First Nation  
 Paul First Nation  
 Peerless/Trout First Nation  
 Saddle Lake Cree Nation  
 Samson Cree Nation  
 Sawridge First Nation  
 Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation  
 Sucker Creek First Nation  
 Sunchild First Nation  
 Swan River First Nation  
 Tallcree First Nation  
 Whitefish Lake First Nation  
 Woodland Cree First Nation

**Dene Language:**  
 Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation  
 Chipewyan Prairie First Nation  
 Cold Lake First Nations  
 Dene Tha' First Nation  
 Fort McKay First Nation  
 Fort McMurray First Nation  
 Tsuu T'ina First Nation

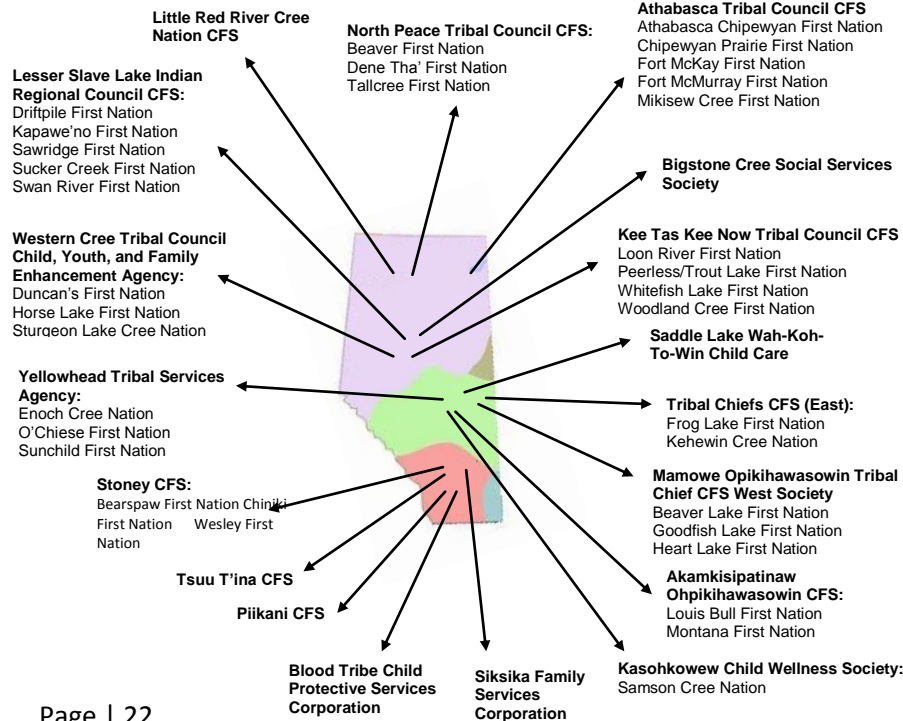
**Cree/Ojibway Language:**  
 O'Chiese First Nation

**Stoney/Sioux Language:**  
 Alexis First Nation  
 Bears paw First Nation  
 Chiniki First Nation  
 Wesley First Nation

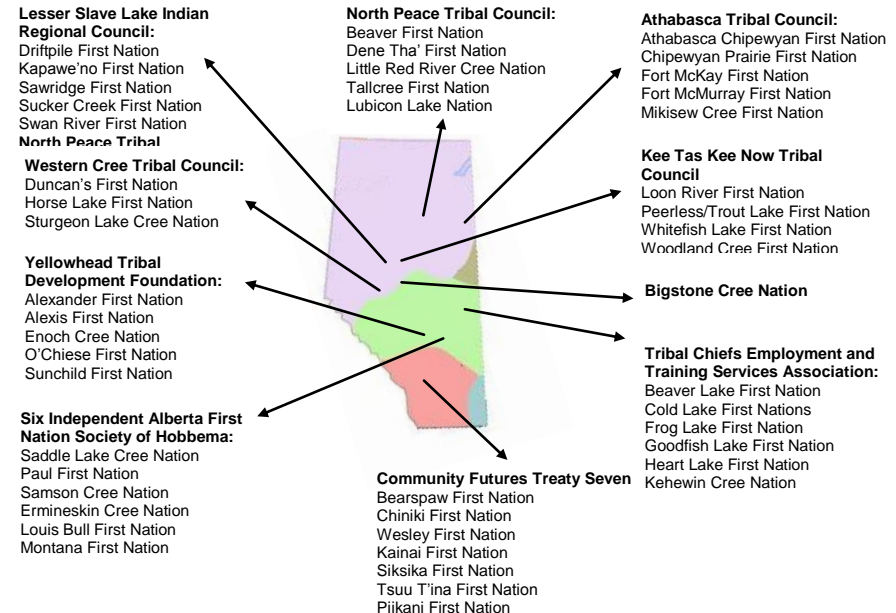
**Blackfoot Language:**  
 Kainai First Nation  
 Piikani First Nation  
 Siksika First Nation



### First Nation Child and Family Service Agencies\*



### Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS)



\* Alexander First Nation, Alexis First Nation, Cold Lake First Nations, Ermineskin First Nation, Lubicon Lake Nation, Smith's Landing First Nation, and Paul First Nation receive services directly from the province.