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Improving educational outcomes – a shared responsibility

L'amélioration des résultats scolaires – une responsabilité partagée

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FIRST NATION STUDENT SUCCESS PROGRAM QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q1. What is INAC's First Nation Student Success Program?

- A1.** The First Nation Student Success Program (FNSSP) is an initiative that supports First Nation schools on reserve in their ongoing efforts to respond to their students' needs and improve student and school results. Interested organizations must submit a proposal to be eligible for this Program. The FNSSP provides funding to develop and implement three interconnected components: school success plans, student learning assessments and performance measurement.

Q2. What is the School Success Plan component?

- A2.** This component will fund school success plans which are essentially a road map that sets out the changes a school needs to improve the level of student achievement, and outlines how and when these changes will be made. The development of such plans is informed by the information obtained from student information systems, school surveys, student learning assessment results and evaluations.

The school success plan process is a three-year continuous improvement cycle. Apart from an initial assessment and planning phase in the first year, educators are expected to carry out all elements annually, including assessment, plan development/revision, implementation, and measurement and reporting.

Q3. What is the Student Learning Assessments component?

- A3.** This component will fund student assessments, typically focused in fundamental academic areas, such as literacy and numeracy, and are used to inform schools to set the priorities, and monitor student achievement and progress. Provinces and some First Nation schools currently use standardized tests to assess the performance and progress of students, with some variation regarding the type of tests used.

First Nation schools may implement/purchase existing provincial assessment tools.

Q4. What is the Performance Measurement component?

- A4.** This component will fund the collection and analysis of data on student and school performance which is critical to a school's ability to advance and track student achievement. It allows schools to set targets and monitor results and report to parents and communities on how students are doing. Data includes the day-to-day record keeping of students, grades, results of standardized testing and other academic assessments, and attendance. Through these elements, INAC will support the collection of information such as student demographics, academic results and information regarding overall school performance.

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Q5. Are all three Program components (school success plans, student learning assessments and performance measurement) mandatory?

A5. Yes. The three Program components are interrelated. They are designed to help schools assess and monitor how their students are performing, and to support schools with the student and school improvement planning process. The Program requires that all three components be initiated within a three-year period.

Q6. Who will be eligible to access the First Nation Student Success Program funding?

A6. To encourage greater efficiencies and economies of scale, priority will be given to regional First Nation organizations representing an aggregation of First Nation schools. On a case by case basis, individual schools may be eligible for funding, via their band councils or delegated authority, providing they meet program guidelines.

Q7. Can self-governing First Nations submit proposals for funding under the FNSSP Program?

A7. Yes, all prospective applicants, including self-governing First Nations, can submit proposals to be considered for funding.

Q8. What is the benefit of going through a regional First Nation organization?

A8. Regional First Nation organizations can offer many benefits to schools that could not be realized otherwise. Because these organizations have established economies of scale, they can offer a wider range of services.

Regional First Nation organizations will be able to provide advice on broad implementation issues, such as encouraging the use of models and best practices (e.g., aggregation as a cost-effective means for the development of school success plans, referral to experts and reporting processes). Regional First Nation organizations can also provide the tools to better assist schools in the implementation of the Program components, including, for example, the development and delivery of train-the-trainer sessions and related training manuals. They also have the resources to share data and information widely (i.e., via the Internet, etc.) and can provide aggregated support to First Nation schools in working with the provinces and INAC.

Q9. Do all schools supported by a regional First Nation organization have to participate in order for the regional First Nation organization to access this Program?

A9. The FNSSP is an opt-in program. As the various schools will not necessarily be at the same readiness level, they could enter the Program in different years. Once a school enters the program, all three components must be implemented within a three-year period. Regional First Nation organizations will outline in their three-year proposal the strategy for starting each of the Program components in each year for all schools represented.



In other words, although every school participating in the Program must initiate all three Program components within a three-year period, some schools might implement only one or two of the components in the last year of the original work plan (phased-in approach). The remaining components would be carried out in the first year of the following three-year proposal.

Q10. Will there be sharing of information and success?

A10. In order to facilitate capacity and development of best practices, lessons learned and other pertinent resource materials, regional First Nation organizations will be encouraged to share their materials with other communities and organizations.

Q11. Is funding only available for schools on reserve?

A11. Yes, funding through the First Nation Student Success Program is limited to supporting students attending schools **on reserve**.

Q12. Our school already has a school success plan. Does it need to be modified?

A12. To be considered under the FNSSP, plans must focus on the three priority areas of literacy, numeracy and student retention. If your existing plan does not focus on these three areas, then, yes, you will have to modify it to meet Program guideline requirements.

Q13. Does the Program provide funding for the actual implementation of activities within the school success plan?

A13. Yes, the First Nation Student Success Program supports the development of the school success plan **and the costs associated with the implementation of those activities** identified within the plan.

Q14. What type of funding arrangements can be used?

A14. Funding is proposal driven and will be provided on an annual *basis only* in the form of Contribution Agreements. Proposals must be multi-year (maximum of three years) and revised annually as required.

Q15. What is the maximum level of funding for regional First Nation organizations?

A15. Eligible proposals will be funded based on an allocation methodology that considers per student amounts and fixed costs up to a maximum of \$2 million. This \$2 million would cumulate year to year (depending on the number of schools and students participating).



Q16. Is there any money available to assist in the preparation of proposal?

A16. No, funding for the preparation of the proposal is not an eligible activity under any of INAC's Education Branch programs. Applicants may, however, contact their INAC Regional Office if they have any questions regarding their proposal.

Q17. What if there are other areas within the school success planning component that a school would like to focus on?

A17. The aim of the Program is to introduce a consistent and comprehensive school success planning process, and to support the development and implementation of school success plans that focus on the three priority areas. While literacy, numeracy and student retention have been identified as key areas, this is the minimum requirement. Schools are not limited to these three.

Q18. What is the link between the First Nation Student Success Program and the Education Partnerships Program?

A18. The First Nation Student Success Program and the Education Partnerships Program both aim to improve student achievement and set the foundation for First Nation education reform. However, they achieve this by supporting different, yet complementary activities.

- The **First Nation Student Success Program** supports the development of school success planning, student learning assessments and performance measurement in individual First Nation schools. It also supports First Nations working with provincial schools or authorities to implement these activities.
- The **Education Partnerships Program** supports the development of tripartite and multipartite partnership arrangements and the sharing of expertise and services between First Nation and provincial schools.

Q19. Can one proposal address both programs?

A19. No, one proposal cannot address both programs as the requirements and reporting process for each program are distinct. Eligible applicants can submit concurrent proposals under the First Nation Student Success Program and the Education Partnerships Program. Refer to First Nation Student Success Program and Education Partnerships Program Guidelines for additional details.

Q20. What will INAC use the performance measurement information for?

A20. The aggregated core performance indicator data will be used to support policy development and strategic decision making aimed at improving Education Programs, and to meet parliamentary reporting requirements. INAC will follow established business practices and will comply with appropriate privacy legislation (i.e., the provincial privacy legislation and the federal *Privacy Act*).



Q21. How will the FNSSP address language and culture needs?

A21. Schools have the flexibility under the student retention component of the FNSSP to address both language and culture by implementing targeted activities related to one or both. Funding would support the purchase of resources or the development of activities that contribute to students' sense of connection to their schools, and that engender pride in their heritage and enhance their perception of the value of education.

For numerous real-life examples of language and culture programs that have worked in other First Nation schools, see the Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education Web site at www.saeec.ca. In 2007, the Society conducted a study called "Sharing our Success", which showcases 10 case studies covering all aspects of Aboriginal schooling.

Q22. How will language testing be implemented for First Nation schools that have language immersion programs?

A22. Schools with immersion programs not already using standardized testing will initially be able to decide which grade levels are the most appropriate to begin with. In the initial stages of the FNSSP implementation, implementing the testing at a senior grade may be the optimum choice.

Q23. What is the deadline for proposal submission?

A23. The program will be launched on December 1, 2008. The proposal submission process will begin with a call for proposals. The deadline for submitting proposals for consideration for the 2009–2010 fiscal year is February 16, 2009. Each subsequent year thereafter, proposals will be due in December.

Q24. Can applications be submitted electronically via First Nation and Inuit Transfer Payments (FNITP)?

A24. No, this option is unavailable at this time. Proposals can be submitted via fax or e-mail. Contact your INAC Regional Office for further proposal details.

Q25. How will eligible recipients be made aware of proposal results?

A25. Applicants will be notified of the results of the selection process six to eight weeks after the submission deadline.

Q26. Where do I send my proposal?

A26. Proposals should be directed to your INAC Regional Office. Contact information for INAC Regions is available on INAC's Education Web site at: <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ro/rgcon-eng.asp>.

Q27. Who can I contact for more information about the Program?

A27. Applicants may contact their INAC Regional Office for more information regarding the Program.

English: www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/edu/index-eng.asp
Phone: (toll-free) 1-800-567-9604
TTY: (toll-free) 1-866-553-0554

Français : www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/edu/index-fra.asp
Tél : (sans-frais) 1-800-567-9604
ATS : (sans-frais) 1-866-553-0554