

Ontario High Cost Special Education Funding Review

For Chiefs of Ontario

Final Report

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According to First Nations Natural Law, we believe that every First Nations learner is gifted. We believe that every First Nations learner must have access to an education from early childhood to post-secondary. That education must be characterized by quality and excellence of instruction, appropriate academic content, safe learning environment, and adequate professional and fiscal resources. That education must be equal to or exceed the standards of education received by other Canadian learners.”

Minister’s National Working Group on Education Final Report, p.9

“In the conceptualization of what Special Education is and how it is interwoven into the fabric of “regular” education, it must not be thought of as a separate entity. Serving special needs students is integral in providing quality and excellence of instruction, appropriate academic content, and safe learning environments for all. Ideally there is no Special Education. An effective education system provides for the needs of all students in an environment that is not restrictive, one that is inclusive of all. Special Education is, ultimately, good education grounded in strong beliefs and sound practises. For First Nations that means being guided by our ways of knowing, and implementing practises that we know to be relevant.”¹

¹ Elizabeth Bigwin, Education Advisor, Ogemawahj Tribal Council For Chiefs of Ontario and included in the Education Manifesto

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to review and provide an analysis of the High Cost Special Education Program. This report will provide the Special Education Working Group with:

- i. A complete financial analysis of the High Cost Special Education program in Ontario;
- ii. A comparative analysis of what is happening in other provinces (Alberta, Quebec, B.C.);
- iii. A roll-up report on recommendations and options on the future funding formula of the SEP;
- iv. An interim and final report with a detailed list of sources/information consulted or cited will be attached to both interim and final reports.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The funding for Special Education Program (SEP) is intended to be an investment in programs and services for First Nation children with identified special needs. Program funds have been identified to improve the quality of education and level of support services for eligible students with special needs.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) Headquarters is responsible for the management and administration of SEP nationally, and achieving the planned results within the resources made available.

INAC Regional offices are responsible for implementing and administering the SEP in accordance with the national terms and conditions and guidelines. At minimum, regional special education guidelines must adhere to the National Special Education Program Guidelines. The regions are also responsible for assessing the applications for SEP funding to ensure that all program terms and conditions are met.

First Nations are responsible for providing the direct services to students and accessing indirect services. First Nations are also responsible for providing regional offices with program and financial information, data and other documentation as specified in the guidelines, in the First Nation Regional managing Organization Annual Report on SEP, and the First Nation School Annual Report on SEP. All First Nations are required to have a written Special Education policy.

Special Education Program funding is provided by INAC through a Contribution Agreement mode of funding transfer to Ontario First Nations and identified organizations. The SEP funding is intended to provide for the resources and services required to address identified areas associated with special education. The scope of resources and services includes, but not limited to, additional staffing (special education teachers, teacher assistants, tutor-escorts, etc.); professional services (educational psychologists, speech/language pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, etc.); specialized programs; assistive technology; modifications to physical environment; and professional development.

The current High Cost SEP funding envelope is subject to accountability provisions aimed to ensure adherence to the program terms and conditions of funding transfer and acknowledged through formal financial audits. The program terms and conditions of the SEP funding identify that the funds provided are strictly used for the administration of and delivery of special education programs and services.

The entire High Cost SP funding has been used according to two categories of services:

- i) Direct Services – a minimum of 75% of the High Cost SEP funding must be used for immediate, direct services to students with special needs. These include programs and services such as specialist services, additional staffing, purchase of resources, etc.;
 - ii) Indirect Services – up to 25% of the High Cost SEP funding may be used for indirect services – services that will increase the capacity of schools and their staff to support students with special needs.
- *Note – the management of High Cost SEP funds nationally vary in terms of the division of responsibility for all or one of the categories of services.*

The current model of funding utilized in the Ontario Region is formulated utilizing the following data:

Base amount: a base of \$72,000 is allocated to First Nations with a nominal roll;

The **balance** of High Cost SEP funding is developed utilizing a method based 4 factors:

- i) Nominal Roll - 70% of the balance of SEP: based on the total units identified on the nominal roll;
 - ii) Remoteness - 10% of the balance of SEP: based on the remoteness of a given First Nation as identified as geographic indices with the Federal government;
 - iii) Small School Factor - 10% of the balance of SEP: this factor is to assist with the higher costs associated with the provision of services with smaller schools (*school population of less than 100 students*);
 - iv) Northern Factor – 10% of the balance of SEP: this factor acknowledges the reality of higher costs related to a Northern location for provision of services (*north of Mattagami First Nation as per the Chiefs of Ontario map*)
- * Adjustment Factor – to ensure that no First Nation experiences losses, an adjustment factor which mitigates the losses is applied.

Program and Service Standards

This is a controversial area in the delivery of Special Education programs. Although INAC, for the most part, does not have a written policy on program and service standard there is generally a referral to provincial standards and comparability to the provincial system (First Nation students should not be

academically disadvantaged when moving among school systems – First Nations or provincial – in the same region. This statement has always been interpreted to mean First Nations must follow provincial standards.

In general, First Nations do not have difficulties with provincial standards. Many of the First Nations informally contacted indicated that their policies state that provincial standards will be followed. Again, it is not that First Nations do not want “standards” but how those provincial standards are viewed. This can be viewed as insinuating First Nations incapability and irresponsibility in regards to education.

First Nations view provincial standards in many cases as minimum standards or a starting place. INAC, through its funding, has often set the provincial standards as the maximum. The second major point is the variation of standards province to province. Therefore, thought should be given to reflect on the correlation with the respective standards and compliance with such when comparing what is happening in other provinces.

Education Service Agreements

Education Service Agreements, or tuition agreements, is an invaluable tool ensuring appropriate programs and services are provided through a positive relationship between the First Nation and an education service provider, typically a provincial board of education, and articulated in a formal agreement.

In respect to provincial boards of education, First Nations would greatly enhance accountability through the development and implementation of solid education service agreements. The education service agreements provide the mechanism to identify upfront what the First Nation is responsible for in respect to financial obligations and for what they are not responsible.

Key terms in the education service agreement would state that “authorization” for any student, service, or program would have to be provided by the First Nation prior to any acceptance. Other key terms would identify specialized programs and services through the agreement itself or through an addendum to the agreement outlining the specifics of what additional programs and services is being sought and the identification of financial responsibility.

Education Service Agreements identify the terms and conditions of the programs and services to be provided with financial responsibility attached.

Education systems must be built on sound principles. Within the Ontario Special Education context, the success of our students means ensuring a system that is built around our statements of belief — a philosophy articulates the vision of the successful learner, is guided by clear and concise policy guidelines, consists of a supportive infrastructure, is supported by adequate funding, and is accountable.

*Elizabeth Bigwin, Education Advisor, Ogemawahj Tribal Council
For Chiefs of Ontario and included in the Education Manifesto*

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The consultant completed a review of literature and documents (written, data formats, etc.) for Ontario, Quebec, Alberta and B.C.; Chiefs of Ontario briefings and resolutions; documents from the Ontario First Nation Special Education Working Group.

The consultant contacted a sampling of First Nations for input related to financial information for High Cost special education.

4.0 SPECIAL EDUCATION – OVERVIEW OF FUNDING

Nothing is so unequal as the equal treatment of unequal people”
Thomas Jefferson

A variety of funding models for Special Education Program delivery at the First Nation level were reviewed. Models of funding were crossed and reviewed to assess the viability of such. The review and analysis of the following funding concepts were utilized in the completion of the funding models presented in Section 6 Conclusions, Options and Recommendations.

The following information provides a description of the various funding concepts and include benefits and concerns for each concept.

Regional Management Organizations (Full)

Regional Management Organizations (Full) are bodies set up top provide and deliver special education services on behalf of First Nations for First Nations. The Regional Management Organization sets policies for the delivery of services and/or funding access for the delivery of services at the First Nation level.

British Columbia utilizes a similar process and appears effective in the provision, however, this is a solution made elsewhere and may not be as effective due to the logistics and history of education in Ontario.

Benefits – economy of scale opportunities built-in; able to maximize service provisions cost-effectively; data management for a larger number of schools and students is able to be conducted and managed in an efficient process; financial control over a larger amount may lead to opportunities realized through leveraging of dollars, and through re-distribution of resources to meet needs (surpluses and deficits for a single First Nation accommodates surpluses and deficits of other)

Other benefits identified:

- May be more economical to pool resources; economy of scale;
- RMO could support First Nations through an advocacy role (with INAC; Provincial school boards);
- Reporting opportunities may be better addressed;
- Information clearinghouse for special education; better flow of information to First Nations in general;
- Create more partnerships (through size of First Nations represented with government agencies, publishers, etc.);
- May be opportunities to reallocate money according to areas of greater need;

- Availability of professional services – better access.
- Possibility of the development of standardized approaches shared by all First Nations; policy development; assessment and evaluation.

Concerns – sense of loss of local control; process may appear to remove some, or all of, local decision-making; impact of financial resources not fully determined (*the RMO is entitled to take up to 25% off the top of regionally-based funding for administrative expenses*). Regional Management Organizations may be viewed as “replacing” INAC and their responsibilities and inheriting all shortfalls of any delivery mode (*inadequate funding levels; historic inequitable distribution of special education funding*).

Other concerns identified:

- No guarantee of equality;
- Fear of excessive administrative fees;
- Fear of loss of control over funds;
- Potential to create conflict between RMO and First Nations;
- Feelings that this model would not work province-wide;

It is noteworthy to reiterate concerns of several First Nations who are opposed to a province-wide RMO.

Regional Management Organizations (Partial)

Regional Management Organizations (Partial) are bodies set up to provide and deliver special education services on behalf of First Nations for First Nations. The Regional Management Organization sets policies for the delivery of services and/or funding access for the delivery of services at the First Nation level with pre-determined limitations.

Benefits - economy of scale opportunities built-in; able to maximize service provisions cost-effectively; data management for a larger number of schools and students is able to be conducted and managed in an efficient process; financial control over a larger amount may lead to opportunities realized through leveraging of dollars, and through re-distribution of resources to meet needs (surpluses and deficits for a single First Nation accommodates surpluses and deficits of other); greater opportunities for First Nation decision-making and sense of local control;

Other benefits identified:

- Treaty based or Tribal Council based RMOs may work if communities are able to determine how they should work;
- Availability of professional services and greater access to services;
- Better reporting opportunities (aggregate);

Concerns – still has a sense of loss of local control; process may appear to remove local decision-making if process not clearly identified; for the RMO – not having control of all of the resources may impact delivery (*i.e., administrative costs*)

Other concerns identified:

- Lack of communication/collaboration with all First Nations;
- Loss of control over direct services;

RMO (Partial) Funding Formula

Regional Management Organizations (Partial) Funding Formula are bodies set up to provide and deliver special education services on behalf of First Nations for First Nations. The Regional Management Organization sets policies for the delivery of services and/or funding access for the delivery of services at the First Nation level. The Funding Formula component is reflected in the current mode of special education access to funding. In respect to this option, the RMO would receive administrative dollars off the total regional allocation for special education.

Benefits - economy of scale opportunities built-in; able to maximize service provisions cost-effectively; data management for a larger number of schools and students is able to be conducted and managed in an efficient process; financial control over a larger amount may lead to opportunities realized through leveraging of dollars, and through re-distribution of resources to meet needs (surpluses and deficits for a single First Nation accommodates surpluses and deficits of other);

Other benefits identified:

- All communities would have access to professional services;
- Reporting opportunities may be better addressed;
- Information clearinghouse for special education; better flow of information to First Nations in general;

Concerns- sense of loss of local control; process may appear to remove some, or all of, local decision-making; financial impact at the local end for service delivery; for the RMO – not having control of all of the resources may impact delivery (*i.e., administrative costs*)

Other concerns identified:

- No guarantee of equality;
- Fear of excessive administrative fees;
- Fear of loss of control over funds;
- Potential to create conflict between RMO and First Nations;

Formula Based

Formula Based funding model is reflected in the current mode for accessing special education funding for First Nations. Currently, First Nation school service delivery and provincially-based service delivery is funded through this mechanism as one item. This model is deemed effective with some Ontario First Nations and not so with many others. Where there is a change in the “incidence rate,” such impacts the effectiveness of this model. (*see appendix for a financial description of the current funding formula to determine First Nation access*).

Benefits – based on an established incidence rate; provides a general expectation of what funding levels will be – supports planning;

Other benefits identified:

- Greater understanding of how First Nations are funded;
- Supports planning annually with an idea of what the near future holds;
- No loss of admin dollars

Concerns - based on an established incidence rate that may not be accurate with need.

Other concerns identified:

- Funding is a year behind (impacts First Nation delivery);
- Count date is only once per year – would require two count dates to get a better student count;
- This approach is deemed unfair as it does not address the needs of each First Nation – the incidence rate is not the same with each First Nation;

Assessment Based

The Assessment Based funding model has been used in previous times in Ontario. This model provides access to funding based on criteria established by the funding agency through an identification process that is supported by assessments. The Assessment Based model provided funding based on identified need. Although this model satisfied some schools in creating an access to special education funding it was deemed by First Nations as an inequitable approach to the limited distribution of funding designated to the Region. This model prompted the initial reviews of accessing special education funding in Ontario in the late 1980s for the funding agency to identify a more fair and equitable distribution of special education funding.

Benefits – has an accountability factor built in; monies are provided based on assessments and identified needs;

Other benefits identified:

- Accountability/credibility;

- Student needs are verified;
- Would promote proactive strategies in FN schools including pre-school screening;
- Supports student needs in provincial schools to fully identify related costs;

Concerns – is restrictive by design; too structured and inflexible restricting opportunities to address from an holistic perspective; inequalities exist as funding is determined by who is more adept in the provision of assessments and not reflected by the needs of each setting.

Other concerns identified:

- Limited access to assessments by many First Nation schools;
- Parental reluctance to consent for assessments;
- No allowance for unseen needs;
- Student needs are verified;
- Does not address issues related to poverty;
- Inherent with inequities in the funding;
- Manpower is limited;
- Timelines: often a long wait for services;

Needs/Application Based

The Needs/Application Based model for accessing special education funds is by virtue of respective First Nations identifying the needs in their setting and submitting an application to the funding agency for funds. This model certainly has benefits, yet is determined as having implications of being unfair and inequitable in the accessing of special education funding by Ontario First Nations. The First Nations that have strength in writing applications and proposals receive benefit from this model, whereas, First Nations who do not have that strength have difficulty accessing the same funding, yet their respective needs may be the same, or greater, than First Nations who do access.

Benefits - has an accountability factor built in; monies are provided based on assessments and identified needs;

Other benefits identified:

- Accountability/credibility;
- Student needs are verified;
- Would promote proactive strategies in FN schools including pre-school screening;
- Supports student needs in provincial schools to fully identify related costs;

Concerns - is restrictive by design; too structured and inflexible restricting opportunities to address from a holistic perspective; will require strong writing skills; applications for funding does not support equitable distribution of funds;

Other concerns identified:

- Limited access to assessments by many First Nation schools;
- Student needs are verified;
- Does not address issues related to poverty;
- Inherent with inequities in the funding as access is based on who has the best writers of proposals;
- Manpower is limited;
- Timelines: often a long wait for services;

Assessment Based and Needs Based Models

The Assessment Based and Needs Based Model to access special education is a blend of previously mentioned models. The criteria for access is determined by the funding agency and is inclusive of a needs identification process at the First Nation level that is supported through formal documentation provided through acknowledged assessments. The criteria set by the funding agency has some merit in the provision of funds based on formal documentation that supports accountability, however, lacks development of special education service delivery from a holistic standpoint.

The First Nations that have strength in the provision of formal assessments and formally identifying needs receive benefit from this model, whereas, First Nations who do not have that strength have difficulty accessing the same funding, yet their respective needs may be the same, or greater, than First Nations who do access.

Benefits - has an accountability factor built in; monies are provided based on assessments and identified needs;

Other benefits identified:

- Accountability/credibility;
- Student needs are verified;
- Would promote proactive strategies in FN schools including pre-school screening;
- Supports student needs in provincial schools to fully identify related costs;

Concerns- is restrictive by design; too structured and inflexible restricting opportunities to address from an holistic perspective; will require strong writing skills; applications for funding does not support equitable distribution of funds;

Other concerns identified:

- Limited access to assessments by many First Nation schools;
- Parental reluctance to consent for assessments;
- No allowance for unseen needs;
- Student needs are verified;
- Does not address issues related to poverty;
- Inherent with inequities in the funding;

- Manpower is limited;
- Timelines: often a long wait for services;

Nominal Roll Formula Based

The Nominal Roll Formula Based model provides access to special education funding based on a pre-determined percentage of the nominal roll. The pre-determined percentage is identified by the funding agency and may include pre-conceived factors such as a regional special education incidence factor. Although this model is a valiant attempt for the equal distribution of regional special education funds it is not equitable in design as schools with greater needs may not be acknowledged.

Benefits - based on a prorated amount multiplied by the student count; provides a general expectation of what funding levels will be – supports planning; may be viewed as a practical method to determine “core” funding for special education.

Other benefits identified:

- Greater understanding and knowledge of how First Nations are funded;
- Supports planning annually with an idea of what the near future holds;
- No loss of admin dollars

Concerns – if determined as the model for funding it does have its concerns in that the higher needs of some communities may not be acknowledged. It is inherent with limited access to funding based on needs.

Other concerns identified:

- Funding is a year behind (impacts First Nation delivery);
- Count date is only once per year – would require two count dates to get a better student count;
- This approach is deemed unfair as it does not address the needs of each First Nation – the incidence rate is not the same with each First Nation;
- Creates surpluses and deficits;
- Inequities due to sizes of schools;

Current Formula~Banking Date

The Current Formula~Banking Date model utilizes the approach of accessing special education funding through the current formula with an established banking date. The banking date is an added feature that suggests a time for a special education identification – special education nominal roll format.

Benefits – based on an established incidence rate; provides a general expectation of what funding levels will be – supports planning at the First Nation level.

Other benefits identified:

- Greater understanding of how First Nations are funded;
- Supports planning annually with an idea of what the near future holds;
- No loss of admin dollars;
- Supports usage of potential surpluses for deficit areas;

Concerns - based on an established incidence rate that may not be accurate with need. Factors such as Banking Date may preclude identification of need throughout the year.

Other concerns identified:

- Funding is a year behind (impacts First Nation delivery);
- Count date is only once per year – would require two count dates to get a better student count;
- This approach is deemed unfair as it does not address the needs of each First Nation – the incidence rate is not the same with each First Nation;

Current Formula~Modified

The Current Formula~Modified model is utilizing the current funding model with modifications and adjustments to support the equitable distribution of special education funds. The modifications and adjustments could include factors specific to the First Nation such as policy implementation and access to resources and specialists.

Benefits – based on an established incidence rate; provides a general expectation of what funding levels will be – supports planning; First Nations with higher needs than identified regionally would benefit from more equitable access to funding.

Other benefits identified:

- Greater understanding of how First Nations are funded;
- Supports planning annually with an idea of what the near future holds;
- No loss of admin dollars

Concerns - based on an established incidence rate that may not be accurate with need. This model may have financial impacts on current funding levels for First Nations.

Other concerns identified:

- Funding is a year behind (impacts First Nation delivery);
- Count date is only once per year – would require two count dates to get a better student count;
- This approach is deemed unfair as it does not address the needs of each First Nation – the incidence rate is not the same with each First Nation;

Current Formula~Modified with Weighted Factors

The Current Formula~Modified model is utilizing the current funding model with modifications and adjustments inclusive of weighted factors to support the equitable distribution of special education funds. The modifications, adjustments and weighted factors could include factors such as small school size; remoteness; northern factor. Other weighted factors used as items for consideration included a variety of costs attached to the volume (number of students) with values provided in incremental application.

Benefits – based on total school volume (total number of Full Time Equivalents); provides a general expectation of what funding levels will be – supports planning; The fairness and equity of the distribution of funding is provided a very equal funding approach regardless of the school size due to the inclusion of additional factors.

Other benefits identified:

- Greater understanding of how First Nations are funded;
- Supports planning annually with an idea of what the near future holds;
- No loss of admin dollars

Concerns - based on total school volume (total number of Full Time Equivalents) that may not be accurate with need. For example, smaller schools may have higher need than what the formula may provide.

Other concerns identified:

- Funding is a year behind (impacts First Nation delivery);
- Count date is only once per year – would require two count dates to get a better student count;
- Although this approach addresses fairness and equity, it does not address the needs of each First Nation specifically – this model would benefit from the inclusion of the opportunity for a First Nation to apply for additional funds when warranted;

Summary

Blending of some of the previewed models was identified by some First Nations as an opportunity. For example, First Nations could receive a portion of High Cost Special education funding directly with a Regional Managing Organization receiving funding to support those First Nations with a process built-in where such First Nations could access additional funds in accordance with set criteria developed by the collective.

Core funding for SEP delivery was identified as a critical component of any funding model to be considered. Access to supplementary funding is deemed also as critical, in that quality programs and service delivery may be impacted.

There is a belief with many First Nations that a body that would provide assistance, advisory and support services to their respective schools would be of great benefit and value. Local decision-making would have to be maintained.

There is acknowledgement that a few First Nations are offering very little in special education. The rationales vary with the First Nations but include items such as maintaining regular programming due to insufficient monetary resources generated through the Council Formula; utilization of special education funding for deficit recovery; tweaking regular programming with classroom supports (teaching assistants) for unspecified needs; etc.

Provincial schools are provided funding on a dollar figure attached to the student count. First Nations are invoiced for a “tuition fee” that includes the referenced dollar figure. More support and work is required to create solid working documents (tuition or education service agreements) that provides transparency and accountability of service provision and what has to be paid for in light of what is covered through the agreements.

5.0 FINDINGS/ANALYSIS

There has not been a consistent “pattern” of funding over the seven years of audited data provided by INAC. Similarly, there has not been a consistent “pattern” of expenditures.

At first glance, an assumption can be made that First Nations in Ontario are sufficiently funded to meet the needs of the High Cost Special Education Program. This assumption generates from the fact the amount of surplus dollars in the SEP over those seven years is of significance.

However, upon further scrutiny, there are many factors that lend itself to the generation of the so-called surplus and that the high cost special education need is not being addressed satisfactorily.

High Cost Special Education - Ontario

Table 1

Band Operated - Direct Services	Actual Funded	Actual Expended	(Deficit)/Surplus	INAC Determined Surplus	# of Incomplete Audits of Total Audits Expected
2008/2009	22,052,725	22,247,460	(194,735)	671,894	3/122
2007/2008	22,356,894	21,141,708	1,215,186	1,154,881	19/123
2006/2007	11,506,144	14,589,395	(3,083,251)	111,924	21/95
2005/2006	10,296,100	11,517,033	(1,220,933)	468,831	14/79
2004/2005	10,076,489	11,096,358	(1,019,869)	365,052	22/83
2003/2004	9,647,200	9,988,766	(341,566)	426,753	31/79
2002/2003	2,980,200	3,857,870	(877,670)	11,801	25/78
2001/2002	21,759,576	3,051,497	18,708,079	3,208,559	91/123
Totals	110,675,328	97,490,087	13,185,241	6,419,695	

First, Table 1 provides the funding level summary for eight years with the related expenditures. The presentation of this data on its own lends to the assumption previously mentioned – the assumption that SEP in Ontario meets the needs of the special needs students.

Additionally, the assumption is reinforced through the “accountability” process designed by INAC which is captured by a formal year end audit. The accountability process is somewhat suspect with the number of incomplete audits (audits incomplete and/or not showing expenditures) producing a range of 74% of audits incomplete to 3.5%. The year 2001/2002 demonstrates an overall surplus of \$18,708,079 (*INAC determined the surplus to be \$3,208,559*) with 91 incomplete audits out of 123 audits. Conversely, the year 2008/2009 demonstrated an overall deficit of \$194,735 (*INAC determined a surplus of \$671,894*) in the program for that year with 3 audits incomplete out of a possible 122 audits.

It is the belief of the reviewer that if only this information is utilized that assumption plays out. Further, if only the audited information is considered then continued developments of standards of service provision may be jeopardized.

Table 2

Band Operated - Direct Services	Actual Funded	Actual Expended	(Deficit)/Surplus	INAC Determined Surplus	Reported Deficits through Audit
2008/2009	22,052,725	22,247,460	(194,735)	671,894	(908,044)
2007/2008	22,356,894	21,141,708	1,215,186	1,154,881	(542,183)
2006/2007	11,506,144	14,589,395	(3,083,251)	111,924	(3,105,038)
2005/2006	10,296,100	11,517,033	(1,220,933)	468,831	(1,662,664)
2004/2005	10,076,489	11,096,358	(1,019,869)	365,052	(1,384,921)
2003/2004	9,647,200	9,988,766	(341,566)	426,753	(768,319)
2002/2003	2,980,200	3,857,870	(877,670)	11,801	(910,471)
2001/2002	21,759,576	3,051,497	18,708,079	3,208,559	(175,527)
Totals	110,675,328	97,490,087	13,185,241	6,419,695	(9,457,167)

Although there is a surplus of \$13,185,241 identified from monies funded and monies expended (*INAC determined the surplus to be \$6,419,695*), First Nations reported an overall deficit of \$9,457,167 in the special education funding for the First Nations experiencing deficits.

Table 3

Band Operated - Direct Services	# Reporting Deficits	Reported Deficits through Audit	# Reporting Surplus	INAC Determined Surplus
2008/2009	30	(908,044)	7	671,894
2007/2008	22	(542,183)	20	1,154,881
2006/2007	35	(3,105,038)	8	111,924
2005/2006	20	(1,662,664)	9	468,831
2004/2005	17	(1,384,921)	6	365,052
2003/2004	16	(768,319)	7	426,753
2002/2003	18	(910,471)	2	11,801
2001/2002	4	(175,527)	28	3,208,559
Totals		(9,457,167)		6,419,695

Table 3 illustrates a greater number of First Nations reporting deficits than those reporting any surplus with the exception of 2001/2002 over the eight year period reviewed.

Table 4

Direct Services Budget – INAC Commitment				
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Federal Schools	485,200	493,200	502,502	502,502
Ministry Schools (Demonstration)	1,120,687	1,252,839	952,359	952,359
Provincial Boards	1,274,000	0	0	0
Total	2,879,887	1,746,039	1,454,861	1,454,861

INAC has financial commitments to the Federal Schools under their governance for the high cost special education component (primarily Special Education EAs and transportation). This amount is taken directly off the top of the Regional allocation for High Cost Special Education.

The budgeted item for the Ministry Schools (Demonstration Schools primarily for the deaf and blind) is based on costs related to tuition, accommodations and travel for an average of twenty (20) students and is paid directly by INAC to the Ministry Schools for tuition and accommodations, and to First Nations for travel and some accommodations not covered in tuition. *Please note a vociferous point of contention from First Nations in relation to this aspect of funding. First Nations want to have the same access to these dollars for services potentially delivered at the First Nation level. The intention by some First Nations is to keep their children closer to home and have access to the same level of service provision. There is a need to review this aspect on its own merit as the cost of service provision may seem higher in some instances but can be outweighed by the social benefits for the recipient.*

In 2007-08 Provincial Boards in Southern Ontario were paid directly for related high cost special education. This is no longer paid directly as at 2008-09 and is now contained in the formula.

Table 5

Direct Services Budget				
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Total Budget	25,000,000	25,007,200	25,415,509	25,007,200
INAC Commitment	2,879,887	1,746,039	1,454,861	1,454,861
Total Budget Available	22,120,113	23,261,161	23,960,648	23,552,339

The total budget available is to cover the accepted formula for the equitable distribution of High Cost Special Education.

Many factors contributed to the cumulative surplus identified on paper. The funding changes included a different reporting mechanism. SEP funds were provided as a Contribution Agreement item. The reporting on expenditures for Contribution Agreement items is very different from its prior methodology. Many of the First Nations indicated there was, and is, an “*information and communication gap*” at various levels that contribute to the generation of that surplus and its’ subsequent assumption.

- INAC ↔ First Nations
INAC provided new guidelines with the funding as it changed; however, there was limited understanding of what those changes represented – reportable expenditures; aspect of surplus and deficits; it is felt that more information should have been communicated to support delivery at the First Nation level;
- First Nation (internally)
At the local level, the schools administrative personnel and special education service providers concern themselves with the delivery of quality programming and services. Information related to the funding and how it was to be reported was either not relayed to them or simply not provided (here is your budget) by other First Nation officials.

Two auditing firms provided feedback suggesting “in-service” is required for appropriate measures to be incorporated at the First Nation level to meet the reporting requirements of the various funding agencies and in particular in relation to SEP funding provided by INAC. For example, many resources purchased were shown expended under the Council Formula. With some First Nations, the auditing firms stated, take all education revenues identified for the school under one catchment and report all expenditures under the same format.

- Several schools that had surplus in the SEP line item had over-expenditures in the regular Council formula funding for their school. The First Nations in this instance relied on other revenue sources (*such as Rama \$*) to offset the over expenditures.
- In some instances, the surplus generated was real. The schools were impacted by shortage of trained special education providers and resulted in minimal provision of special education program and services.
- In many other instances, the intentions were there to provide services but the First Nations were unable to access professionals (Educational Psychologists; Speech and Language Pathologists).

SEP Summary – 2009 Statistics

Table SEPI

School Type	Total Number of Students	Special Education Needs	% SEP of Total Student Count
Federal schools 6	1,521	235	15.5%
Provincial schools 167	6,380	943	14.8%
Private schools 6	480	24	5%
Council schools 94	12,709	1604	12.6%
273 schools Total	21,090	2,806	13.3%

Table 1 illustrates the statistical count of identified students accessing special education for 2009. The summary of the collected data suggests a regional average of 13.3% incidence rate.

The incidence rate is somewhat misleading in that it is based on reportable numbers. The actual incidence rate appears to be much higher after discussion with First Nation schools that articulated that many students are not assessed and not reported for a variety of reasons. The criteria utilized to determine high cost special education by First Nations is generally similar in description yet varies in application thus leading to inaccurate reported numbers. Due to the fact that some First Nations maintain difficulty in accessing specialized and professional services for support with assessments, programs and services also factor in.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Review of special education and the funding is a step in the right direction. INAC's responsibility was, and is, to ensure adequate funding is made accessible to First Nations in an equitable mode of provision.

Both INAC and First Nations will require clear information on definitions of and goals for special education. To further ensure successful implementation, an accountability system will also need to be developed that informs the teaching-learning relationship, as well as the policy decision-making process. This must be undertaken in conjunction with First Nations.

Building a strong special education component in First Nations schools is a long term process. There is a shortage of trained teachers and specialists in special education across the region of Ontario. The capacity and infrastructure of First Nations regions to meet the staffing requirements is limited.

- Regular classroom teachers require further training in special education methodologies;
- Support staff (resource room and ancillary personnel) require additional and specialized training;
- Educational Psychologist and Speech/Language Pathologist training specific to First Nations culture and language;
- Development of effective practices for special education students and appropriate resources made available for teachers;
- Development of procedures for the early identification and intervention for pre-school children with special needs;
- Hiring of personnel to consult with teachers and parents in the development of appropriate programming.

The integration of services through Health, Education, Social Development, etc. is also very limited. The need for integration of services is becoming increasingly clear as First Nations attempt to deal with the variety of needs (especially preventable needs such as ones related to FASD).

It is very noteworthy to stress the fact that while there may be a surplus annually shown regionally in relation to special education funding and special education expenditures, there are more First Nations demonstrating over expenditures than First Nations demonstrating any surplus. (see Table 3, p 21 of this report)

Recommendations for Funding Options

The information, input and suggestions of participants to the content of this study suggest the following options for consideration. The option that is determined should include characteristics of **accountability; flexibility; measurable; equitable; with access to additional funding.**

It is of value to reflect on the inequities identified with the current mode where some First Nations felt that they received less than other First Nations on a per student basis. A few smaller schools received special education funding levels near equivalent to what funds were generated through the Council Formula generating speculation from neighboring First Nations. First Nations with higher needs felt that they were underfunded. The bottom line is that there will be great difficulty identifying a single option that will satisfy all, however, the attempt is made to focus on an equitable distribution of special education funding.

The following options are included in the attached spreadsheets providing the outputs for each option. All options on the attached spreadsheet include a roll out with Northern communities/organizations identified in the first grouping and Southern communities/organizations included in the second grouping, with the name of the respective First Nation and its identifying number.

The spreadsheets also include a breakdown of the 2006-07 Funding level with identification of what was distributed between Provincial and Council Operated allocations.

The following options and descriptions are presented in a comparative format to provide an easy preview to each option. *See Attachment - 2011-12 Special Education Funding Options - Comparative Format All Options*

Other Recommendations

1. The Special Education Program is considered by many to be an invaluable tool in addressing the needs of First Nation special needs learners. It must continue to be a **protected program**.
2. Ontario First Nations will need to design and implement a process to collect the data that will show the **real need**. To ensure accountability, the Special Education Program in Ontario requires a plan to set expectations and desired outcomes to demonstrate effective management of this resource (through program and service standards and funding protocols & accountability).
3. Ontario First Nations **may** benefit from the inclusion of a Regional Management Organization, or territorial organization, which is partially funded to provide advisory and support services to several First Nations. Such services could include activities related to policy development and implementation; collection of data; maintain a repository of materials, etc. for access by First Nations; as a conduit for teacher training and professional development in respect to inclusion of special education in the classroom; coordinate activities with Special Education Resource Teachers or provide Special Education Resource Teachers for schools; and for advantages attached to bulk purchasing of resources and assessment tools.
4. That efforts are made to establish pools of professional services to support access by First Nations. The professional bodies (educational psychologists, speech/language pathologists, occupational therapists, etc.) could standardize an approach for testing, assessments and other forms of data collection leading to the future design of culturally appropriate diagnostic tools based normative data related to the aboriginal learner. Further, the costs related to testing and assessments could be better controlled through a collective approach.
5. That more support is provided to First Nations, in general, for the continued development and implementation of meaningful Education Services Agreements with provincial Boards of Education to create greater transparency and accountability of monies for services particularly with costs related to the provision of special education programs and services.
6. That an information and communication strategy is developed to ensure all First Nations are working with the same information for accessing funding and reporting on the funding. This strategy could provide in-service training for areas of report writing, data collection, and financial reporting.

Special Education – Ontario Region - A Chronology since 2002

Pre 2003

- Band Operated Funding Formula (BOFF) included low cost Special Education within the formula; we also had additional funding for Special Education based on need
- Pre 2000, SEP funding was identified as a percentage of the BOFF and a proposal driven process was put into place by INAC Ontario Region
- In the 2001 Speech from the Throne, \$60m was committed to supporting special needs children living on-reserve. This resulted in Ontario Region's allocation from the \$60m topping off the amount the Region was already spending on SEP.

2003

- In January 2003, Treasury Board approved the creation of the new High Cost SEP
- Ontario Region in collaboration with the Chiefs of Ontario, lobbied and was granted "Intervention Based" project status for the administration of High Cost Special Education Funding
- Funding was formula-based and supported costs for on-reserve special needs students attending band operated schools.
- Provincial school High Cost Special Education needs were paid through separate approved invoices. FN's could apply to the Region for additional funds if funds were available.
- The Region and the Chiefs of Ontario via the Education Coordination Unit recognized that the current funding formula did not address the unique needs of the small northern FNs. This resulted in a \$500K allocation for Nishnaabe A'ski Nations (NAN). This allocation was accessed through an application process.
- NAN and INAC representatives reviewed the applications for approval.

The Special Education Working Group

- Increasing demand for services, particularly from the provincial school system, increased need to more effectively manage the regional allocation and the desire to ensure First Nation involvement in the process resulted in the ongoing work of the Ontario Special Education Working Group (SEPWG)

- The SEPWG is comprised of:
 - Six First Nation representatives (Grand Council Treaty #3, AIAI, UOI, NAN, Independents, COO)
 - Four INAC representatives (Two Funding Service Officers and Two Senior Education Officers representing north and south)
- SEPWG was mandated by the Ontario Chiefs in Assembly to review the funding methodology and to further develop formula funding options for consideration

This review included working closely with the Ministry of Education to ensure that the provincial schools board were not over identifying First Nation students. The review also included SEP funding within Tuition Agreement Negotiation.

2006 – 2007

Review of the Funding Methodology

- Special Chiefs Assembly - the Ontario First Nation SEPWG presented a formula to the Chiefs in Assembly for consideration
- The First Nations SEP Guidelines and revised funding formula for 2006-2008 were approved by All-Chiefs Resolution 06/101
- The revised SEP formula combined the band operated and provincial high cost funding into one amount. This provides First Nations the opportunity to determine their priorities within their Council Operated Schools and enhanced their ability to negotiate services with provincial boards.

The REVISED FORMULA is based on the following:

A base amount of \$72,000 will be allocated to every – First Nation with a nominal roll (either provincial or council operated schools)

70% of remaining funding based on nominal roll

10% for remote communities

10% for northern communities

10% for small schools

A principle of the formula is that no First Nation would be reduced to a level lower than what they received in 2006-07.

2009

- The All-Chiefs Resolution 06/101 provided approval for the current funding formula for Ontario to June 2009
- The Ontario First Nation Chiefs in Assembly mandated the SEPGP to conduct an Audit and Evaluation of High Cost SEP in Ontario through an RFP process

- The Focus of the Audit and Evaluation was to:
 - Gain a better understanding of the level of services the current funding formula has provided – effectiveness of funding formula
 - Review of National SEP audit and evaluation to provide recommendations for a “made in Ontario” approach to inform the authority renewal
 - Create awareness and understanding of the status of SEP in FN communities
 - Identify capacity needs related to implementation of the SEP

December 2009

- The audit and evaluation has been completed
- The evaluation revealed that more work had to be done in order to make a better informed decision around the current funding methodology
- Approval was granted by the All Chiefs at their meeting in December to extend the current funding formula to allow more time to review the program and funding methodology

Special Education Overviews - Canada

Summary

Saskatchewan

The INAC SEP funding allocation for 2009-2010 is \$27,785,012.

- The Region provides Special Education funding to First Nations, Tribal Councils and the PAGC SEP RMO. The funding is included in their First Nation Contribution Agreement. There are 83 Band Operated, 2 Private, 53 Provincial and 0 Federal schools in Saskatchewan.
- The FN Student population in 2008-2009 is 20,020 (based on 2008 Nominal Roll).
- The number of federally funded students identified as having moderate to severe special education needs is 1,390 (Region administered). All SEP funding has been expended for the 2009-2010 fiscal year and no new designations will be processed until the 2010-2011 fiscal year. PAGC SEP RMO administers SEP funding on behalf of 12 First Nations.

Introduction

- Prior to the 2002 Special Education Funding envelope, Saskatchewan Region funded level 1 and level 2 special education students from A-Base funding.
- In 1999, a Targeted Behaviour Policy was developed in conjunction with FSIN Directors of Education.
- The National SEP Funding was transferred to Regions in September 2002. In 2003-2004 Saskatchewan's SEP allocation of \$21,919 K included \$16,294 K that HQ transferred from the Saskatchewan Region's A-Base into the controlled allotment.
- Saskatchewan Region administered the SEP for 2002 to 2006 until the PAGC SEP RMO was created in September 2006. The RMO administers SEP funding to their member 12 First Nations.
- Saskatchewan Region administers SEP funding to 58 First Nations.
- Saskatchewan Region provide PAGC SEP RMO, Tribal Councils and Independent First Nations SEP Indirect Service Funding.
- Saskatchewan Region is application driven rather than Block Funded as per FSIN Director of Educations' request.
- Saskatchewan Region's Elementary/Secondary Education Program Planning and Review Officer conducts on-site compliance for SEP Program (on-going previous to 2002) for both First Nation and Provincial Schools.

Number of FN school operated bands / number of HCSE students / current challenges:

- The Saskatchewan Region has 83 First Nation Operated Schools with a total of 16,482 students (2008 NR).
- Current challenges:

- *Hiring and retention of qualified special education teachers.
- *Speech and language not being a designation category.
- *Level 2 funding (\$16,109) insufficient to pay a full time education assistant.
- *Nominal Roll Census Report Section 2 is to report on the previous school year and with a fairly large turn over in staff this can be an issue. It can be difficult for the First Nation to get this information from provincial schools.
- *It is difficult to get assessments done in a timely fashion especially for the chronic illness category. A temporary designation may be granted on a case by case basis.

Number of Provincial schools / number of HCSE students / current challenges:

- Saskatchewan has 29 school divisions. There are 18 Public, 10 Separate and 1 Francophone (2008-2009 data). Saskatchewan Region administers SEP for 53 Provincial Schools and 301 students.
- Current challenges: In 2006 the province moved to more categories of designation and block funding. INAC paperwork is seen as taking up a lot of time as it is required per student.

Number of Private schools / number of HCSE students / current challenges:

- There are 2 Residential/Independent Schools for “At Risk Youth” for which Saskatchewan Region provides SEP funding. Students are placed there by ICFS Agencies (mainly through court order). The Region provides funds indirectly under the Targeted Behaviour category.
- Current challenge: Per student allocation is very expensive due to the varied specialized services provided.

Current Initiatives sponsored or involved with (Research, development of early intervention methods, partnerships / stakeholders...)

- Saskatchewan Region Program Planner and Evaluation Officer sits on a panel for the Shared Standards and Capacity Building – SEP subcommittee. This panel looks at SEP research and Provincial/Federal issues, policies and practices. The subcommittee has initiated research in the qualification of SEP teachers nationally.

Share a success story or best practice ...

- PAGC SEP RMO and the Tribal Councils in the Saskatchewan Region have provided SEP guidance and access to assessment to their First Nation member schools. Indirect Service SEP funds are provided to PAGC SEP RMO and the Tribal Councils who in turn retain/contract personnel such as speech and language therapists, educational psychologists, special education co-ordinators, occupational therapists. Professional development for SEP is also arranged and presented to the staff of member schools. Guidance on writing and implementing the Individual Education Plan is provided.

Current special education needs challenges voiced by the schools (HR, funding, policies, timelines, program objectives...)

- Speech and Language is not a designation category.
- Classroom management is an issue as Targeted Behaviour staff becomes the drop off spot for students not designated in the program.
- Level 2 funding (\$16,109) does not cover the cost of a full time education assistant

Current challenges experienced by the Region (HR, funding, policies, timelines, program objectives...)

- Intensive workload for 1 FTE.
- Questions on NR look back one year instead of capturing the current school year designation.
- SEP RMO development is progressing at a slow pace. Administration for the RMO is taken out of the SEP funding envelope and is perceived as taking the funding from the student programs. A percentage of the Band Support funding decreases for the individual First Nation when an RMO is created and in reality there are still administrative costs to the FN for hiring/firing staff, ordering technical aids etc.
- Controlled Allotment creates financial issues at both the INAC and First Nation level (forecasting provincial tuition expenditures- high cost component; splitting salaries between programs).

First Nations Special Education Program BC **SEP Data Collection and Reporting**

BC SEP Data Collection: Background

2003

Access Database

- First Nations School Annual Reporting Forms
- SEP School Workplans and Final Reports

Other Data Collected separately and added to final report to INAC

- Provincially coordinated Psycho-educational Assessments
- Program Evaluation 2004/2005

In 2003, the FNEESC Board passed a motion supporting First Nations schools in not reporting special needs on the nominal roll

2006/2007

- FNEESC/FNSA recognized the need for more specific data related to types and extent of different special needs
- Screening template and reporting tool
 - Types of special needs
 - Assessment type
 - IEP
 - M/F
 - Grade
 - Workplan Activity that supports student (linked to SEP funding)

2007/2008

After 2 years of discussions, FNEESC/FNSA began to implement:

- Reviews of the SEP programs at the school level as part of the FNSA School Assessment process. The FNSA membership passed a motion at the 2008 AGM making this a requirement of School Certification.
- Collection of more specific data related to IEP goals attained as a way of measuring the impact of SEP.

Special Education Program

Funding provided to schools using a base-plus per-capita formula (85% of funding)

Provincially coordinated activities

- Special Education Consultant
- Toll-free Special Education Resource Line
- Toll-free Speech and Language Resource Line

- SET-BC services
- SLP services
- Psycho-educational assessments
- Bulk purchase of resources
- Professional development

Highlights of Data

- At the time the data was compiled, 86% of First Nations schools representing 88% of the student population submitted reports.
- 29.8% of students have *moderate to severe* special needs.
 - 16.7% formally identified
 - 13.1% informally identified
- ***27% of students had more than one designation***

Atlantic Region

Summary

The INAC SEP funding allocation for 2009-2010 is \$4,381,010 (not including vote 1).

The Region has included all SEP dollars via the contribution authority as follows:

- 16 FNs with SEP supports in BOS only,
 - 4 FNs with SEP supports in Prov schools only,
 - 3 FNs with SEP students in both systems, and
 - 2 FN RMO's.
- PLUS 2 distinct SEP Management streams;
- 1 MK SEP committee, 1 for “everybody else”

The FN student population for '09 is just being finalized, however the count for fall 08 NR was about 6375.

- this includes an estimate of 200 for Miawpukek (grant agreement).

The number of FN students identified on the '09 NR as having moderate to severe special education needs is not available yet.

- the '09 NR content specific to Special Education has not yet been verified.

SEP is limited to E/S now. Some FN students trying to access the PSE system require SEP supports as well.

Introduction

- First Nations appreciated the SEP program however the program arrived significantly short of expected resources (2003).
- With 2 officially recognised SEP FNRMO's in the region it was anticipated that both would take up significant management of Direct Services (2003). Not so. Sept 09 for 1, not yet for the other. Admin costs would cut into Direct Service Less than expected SEP \$ + BOFF resources not keeping pace = provinces being weaned.

Number of FNs with band operated schools / number of HCSE students / current challenges:

- 13 FNs in NS; 10 are MK (grant) and could be full FN RMO.
- 15 FNs in NB; 12 are FNEII and is a fully functioning FNRMO since Sept 09, 3 are MAWIW, without FN RMO status
- 2 FNs in PEI; both are MCPEI, not RMO
- 3 FNs in NL; 1 on the island (grant), 2 Innu with Innu Board since Sept 09, not RMO

Number of Provincial schools / number of HCSE students / current challenges:

Since 2003, the number of students supported with SEP funds in provincial systems is decreasing by graduation from Prov schools and not funding SEP for students when they transfer to prov school

- 08/09 the SEP allocations = 405k
- 09/10 the SEP allocations = 183k

Innu schools & current challenges:

- 2 Innu First Nations – recent additions to reserve status, new to Innu Board control since Sept 09
- Mushuau is remote (fly in only)
- Sheshatshiu is 20 minutes by road from Happy Valley-Goose Bay
- “The Philpott Study” from 2002 (?) suggested that SEP needs were approx 4.6M at that time.
- With Innu control of Education the leadership had anticipated more children attending school
- If all eligible students attended school, in addition to the +/- 600 on the NR there should be +/- 300 more. Regional NR is only +/- 6375.
- 2 new school facilities; 1 with the move from Davis Inlet to Natuashish, the second just opened in Sept.

Private schools / number of HCSE students / current challenges:

- APSEA = Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority
- Deaf and hard of hearing
- Blind and visually impaired

- APSEA provides supports in schools, but no specialized schools for deaf resulting in 1 child from NB in an Ontario school.

Current Initiatives sponsored or involved with (Research, development of early intervention methods, partnerships / stakeholders...)

- NS: through NS Tripartite Forum Health, Social and Education are working in ECE.
- NB: through EPP, FNSSP and willing partners, there are 0-3 curriculum pilots, plus investments in screening for school readiness and interventions at age 4 and literacy supports in K-4 and K-5.

Share a success story or best practice ...

- Co-sponsoring Professional Development with FNEII for staff in BOS (Art Lamrock, child psychologist) in NB. 4 – 1.5 day PD's Sept to March and hungry for more
- SEP PD modules (pending) for staff of MK schools as part of the MK SEP committee.
- Working ECE within the NS Tripartite structure (incl Head Starts, Daycare, etc)

Current challenges experienced by FNs (HR, funding, policies, timelines, program objectives...)

- SEP students arriving unexpectedly and others being refused school access without SEP (FNs learning to be more assertive)
- Provincial Education Act(s) not matched by INAC SEP policy
- School viability, RMP, Co-Mgmt, TPM
- Continual training and retraining (turnover)
- MONEY – BOFF ~ unfinished, Innu BOS

Current special education challenges in region (HR, funding, policies, timelines, prgm objectives)

- 4 provinces = 4 similar, but different, systems
- Always lack of vote 10 but challenged to use all of vote 1 O&M. Roadblocks to contracting with vote 1 and we surplus.
- FNSSP – emphasis on data systems – 4?
- EIS – emphasis on data collection - ??

Alberta

Introduction

The INAC SEP funding allocation for 2009-2010 is \$19,122,800.

- The Region has established 63 2009-2010 SEP Contribution Agreements that will serve 57 Band operated, 0 Private, 91 Provincial and 1 Federal schools.
- The entire Band Operated and Provincial School FN Student population in 2009-2010 is 16,606.
- The number of FN students identified as having mild/moderate needs is: 1559 and the number of FN students identified as having severe special education needs is: 739.
- The number of HCSE students estimated to receive SEP services this year is 2298.

Statistics

T 6 - 24 Schools

T 7 - 17 Schools

T 8 - 16 Schools

**Currently 2 more schools being built*

Special Education #s

T6- mild/moderate – 689 severe - 317

T7- mild/moderate –376 severe - 282

T8- mild/moderate – 494 severe - 140

Provincial Schools

- 33 School Boards – currently 91 schools **This fluctuates yearly*
 - T6 - 15 (1 overlap with T8)
 - T7 - 11
 - T8 – 8 (1 overlap with T6)
- Estimated # of HCSE this year is: 341 students (rate is \$16,465)

CURRENT CHALLENGES

- Although we match the provincial rate for severe disabilities we occasionally get requests for more money – either for individual aids or assistive technology.
- Do not fund for PUF only provide severe disabilities rate for speech for K5 if there is no FN school available.
- Accountability Process – we are currently getting out more often to the provincial boards to complete file & program reviews

FUTURE CHALLENGES

- Future Challenges – Alberta Education is planning to implement changes to their funding and that may impact how we currently allocate

Assessment based funding approach

PUF-is an early childhood program for students who are 2.5-6.5 years old but limited to 3 consecutive years. It involves an interdisciplinary team who may provide programming in

preparation to enter the school system a bit more prepared. Includes: Speech, OT, PT, Medical, Home visitation, low Staff/TA/Student ratios...

\$\$-Costly program available to all students who live off reserve. Our budget is limited to funding what we have never mind this extra program. Maximum per eligible funded child is \$24,560 and then max for each additional funded child is \$6,094.

Currently we have requests for funding for a K4 student to attend an early childhood program geared at hearing impaired students but according to our guidelines (National and Regional) we are unable to provide funding. This may become a larger “RED DOCKET” issue.

Private Schools

- The decision to limit SEP funding to students attending First Nation and provincial schools was a regional decision. INAC Alberta Region meets annually with the 3 Regional Management Organization (RMO) Special Education Coordinators to jointly develop the regional guidelines for both the First Nation and provincial school boards.
- The First Nation RMO Special Education Coordinators requested that special education program funding be limited to First Nation and provincial schools because broadening the scope of the program to include private schools would dissipate limited resources. INAC AB Region agreed with this request, as working cooperatively with the treaty area schools and assisting them to develop special education programs is a key departmental objective.
- Exceptions are made for extreme cases where no program is available (i.e. Parkland School in Red Deer)
- This matter continues be of concern and is under review

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