

# CHARTING OUR OWN PATH FORWARD EDUCATION FORUM

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FIRST NATIONS AND SCHOOL BOARD RELATIONSHIPS IN ONTARIO

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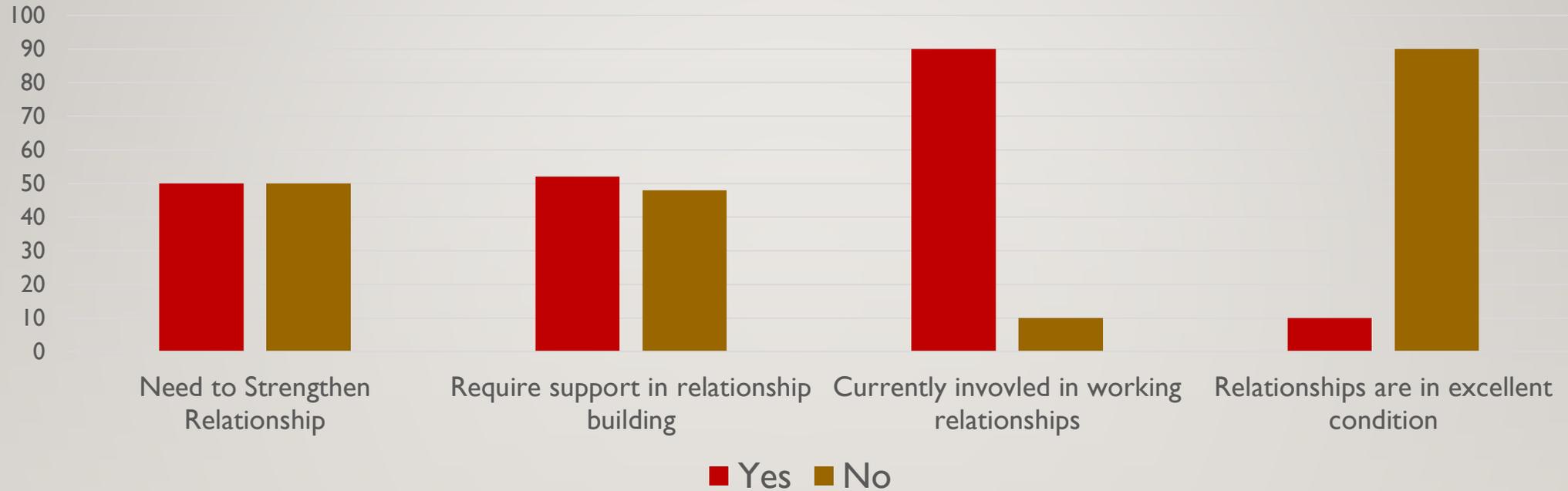
# METHODOLOGY

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- Online Survey Tool developed through three phases:
  - 1. Preliminary data collection from First Nations Education Directors**
    - Identified priority issues and challenges providing the scope for the survey tool
  - 2. Draft survey tool submitted to Chiefs of Ontario**
    - COO discussed the tool with the Ministry of Education and collated edits
  - 3. COO finalizes the survey tool with Johnston Research Inc.**
    - Survey tool is launched October 7 – 30 with 63 school boards invited
    - 14 school boards provided some evidence with 10 of these boards completing the survey.
    - **The 10 school boards completing the survey took great care to provide detailed information.**

# COO Special Education 2017 Study Highlighted Findings

## First Nations Education Directors relationship status with school boards



While 90% of all First Nations Education Directors were involved in a relationships with the Ministry School Boards, **50% needed supports and the relationships strengthened.**

The 1972 Chiefs in Assembly, Indian Control of Indian Education Policy articulates:  
values of life-long learning that are relevant to today's planning.



This Ministry School Board **activities we reviewed in this study barely scratch the surface**, in addressing the 1972 values, as core strategic directions for relationship building.

- Language immersion,
- Holistic and culturally relevant curricula,
- Well-trained educators,
- Focused leadership,
- Parental involvement and accountability, and
- Safe and healthy facilities founded on principles that respect First Nations jurisdiction over education.

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## DOCUMENT REVIEW RESULTS

Non-Completion Rate of High School



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While Aboriginal peoples have **seen no improvement in the completion rate** among those aged 20-24 years old,

non-Aboriginal people have seen improvements and these have upheld overtime,

over a 20-year period.

Article 31 of UNDRIP supports the **need for complex discussions to occur** in the defining of what relationships building means between the provincial school system and First Nations organizations and communities *(as depicted in the next quote)*.

*“Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts.”*  
(page 7).

# *SURVEY FINDINGS:* A JOINT-PROTOCOL FOR RELATIONSHIPS BUILDINGS DOESN'T EXIST

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- The provincial school boards are not unified in their approaches to relationship building
- Each school board approaches the relationship building from the skills-sets of the school board staff, their level of comfort in thinking out-of-the-box, and ability to undertake innovative practice.
- **None of the school boards have defined the relationship building process itself.**
  - Instead they have undertaken a series of activities which emulate the practice of relationship building. However, none are working from a definition of the process of what relationship building could and should entail.

# *SURVEY FINDINGS:* MOST RELATIONSHIPS ARE ABOUT ADMINISTRATIVE KNOWLEDGE SHARING

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- The typical relationship held by school boards with First Nations communities is about

## **Administrative Knowledge Sharing**

- sharing information related to enrollment,
- special needs services, or
- issues with invoicing.

# *SURVEY FINDINGS:* MOST RELATIONSHIPS CAN BE IMPROVED BY DEFINING ROLES

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- First Nations communities report a lack of understanding and communication on part of the provincial school boards
- **Little attention is spent on planning how to better meet the needs of the students**
- It is common to make relationships meetings more about misguided assignment of roles and administrative requests
  - For example, a provincial school principal had asked a First Nations Education Director to speak to parents of the school, when that is actually the role of the School Principal.

## *SURVEY FINDINGS:* **BEST PRACTICES IN SCHOOL BOARD RELATIONSHIPS BUILDING ACTIVITIES**

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- Together with LU, Pathways to University uses an Achievement Program where FN students with financial need can sign up in grade 4 and if they maintain a B, get involved in school activities and contribute to the community they receive tuition credits to earn them a full-year of university upon graduating high school.
- A Chief came and spoke with grade 5 teachers to provide training the right to self governance and First Nations elections so that Grade 5 teachers can include that content in their study of government
- Monthly meetings from school board and First Nation to discuss every voluntarily self-identified student and plan to meet the needs of each learner
- School staff engage with FNMI resource teacher and an Elder in Collaborative Inquiry to identify questions about each learner and to develop strategies to address the inquiry question and measure if the strategies work.
- 2 Principals in a high population area regularly walk in the community to meet parents, speak to families and walk children who may have missed the bus to school.
- Elders in our Schools program to support classroom learning and make connections with local Elders- Drum Teaching, Circle Teachings, Traditional Medicines teachings in all schools to build an appreciation and understanding of First Nations cultures.