

Summaries of New Agenda Working Group Focus Group Sessions

Summary of Toronto Focus Group – February 6-7, 2013

Purpose of FG1

- to deepen our collective understanding of the current education systems in which First Nations work
- to identify ways in which the success of the various systems could be augmented through coordinated activity between individual First Nations and collective organizations

What we did

- Overview – background – Julia Candlish
- Introductions – all participants provided an overview of their unique situations
- Presentation by Anishinabek Nation – Tracey O’Donnell
- Presentation by AIAI – Gina McGahey
- Group work - Question - Understanding the complexity and diversity of the delivery of First Nation education in Ontario, how could efforts be supported and possibly coordinated?
Benefits/drawbacks
 - Ideas and comments were grouped into categories by the larger group
 - Voting exercise conducted to determine priorities

Findings

Key Ideas from FG1

1. Need a provincial Cabinet Secretariat Office, with designated funding stream for First Nations, regional education co-ordination/authority supporting and recognizing all the approaches in development
 - a. We should not allow our authority to be usurped by the Ministry of Education
2. Need to develop a First Nations Education Commission to streamline and coordinate FN education
3. Education authorities should be separated from politics
4. Accountability of a central body is key
5. We need to start collecting our own data to challenge Ontario school boards and Canada
6. We need a coordinated effort to develop culturally specific curriculum
7. We need a language strategy for community schools and provincial schools
 - a. We need cultural and linguistic standards
8. Importance of working together
 - a. Sharing with each other
 - b. Learning from each other

Key Questions from FG1

1. How can we coordinate a shared effort so we are not doing this forever?
2. Should we coordinate by PTO or province-wide?
3. Is federal legislation required to guarantee sustainable funding?

Next steps from FG1

1. Outline what will the structure look like (see below)
2. Environmental scan
3. Gather and share information about Best Practices
4. Find sources of funding to complete work on development of a coordinated system – do not want to take from what we currently have
5. Development of template for Education Codes – requires legal advice
6. FG2 – build on outcomes and ideas and comments from FG1 – merge ideas together

~ the following charts and models have been created for discussion purposes only ~

Ontario First Nation Education Commission

- Early Learning
- Elementary
- Secondary
- Post Secondary
- Adult Learning
- Human Resources
- Teaching Standards
- Language and Culture
- Learning and Curriculum
- Data Management
- Finance
- Intergovernmental
- Communications

OFN Education Authorities

Ensure communication flow

Advocate for needed change

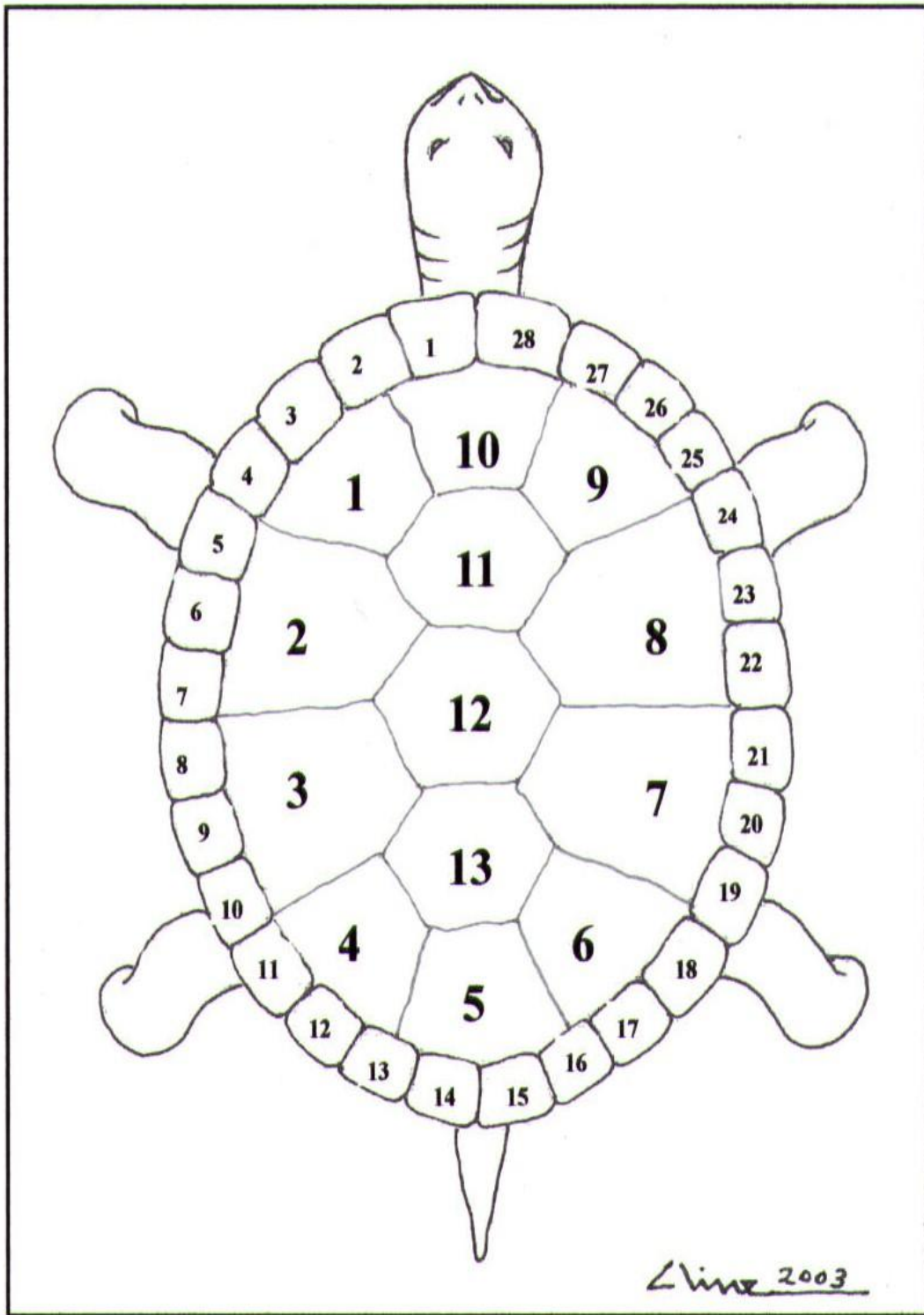
Assist work of Commission on Committees and Task Teams

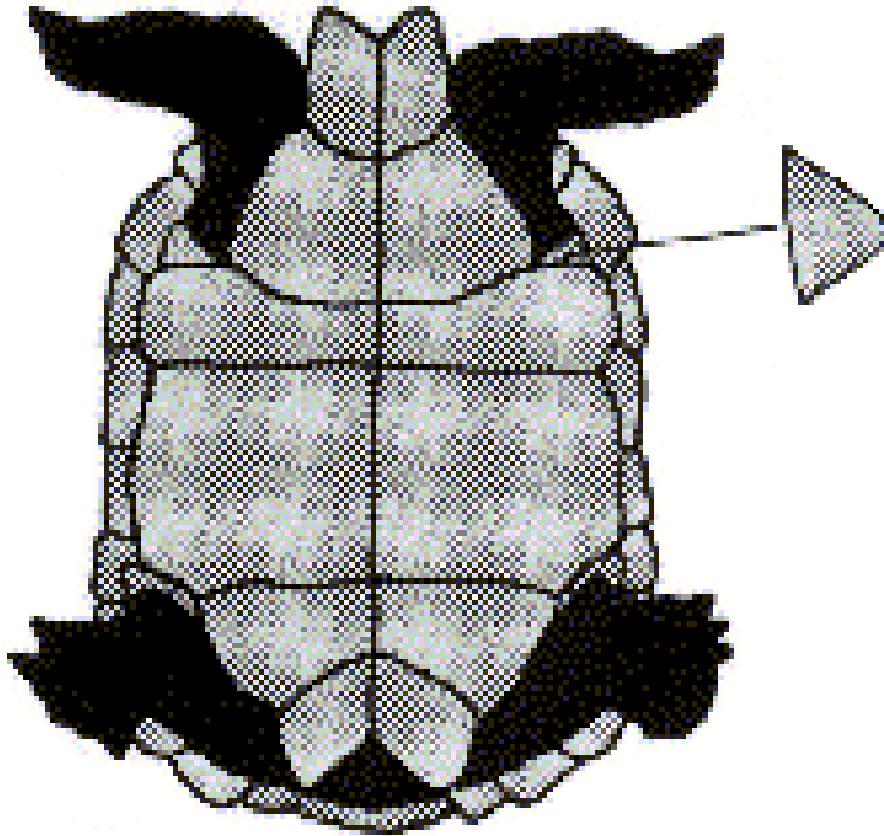
First Nations / Students

Jurisdiction stems from here

Community engagement

Education Code





The turtle shell is broken up into three parts. We have:

The Carapace. This is the upper part of the shell.

The Plastron. This is the lower part of the shell.

The Bridge. A line of bone inbetween the fore and hind limbs that connects the plastron to the carapace.

The turtle shell can be used to illustrate the Framework of a First Nation Education System for Ontario as such:

The scutes (markings) on the main part of the carapace (back) can symbolize the central elements of an Education Commission while the outer scutes can symbolize individual or aggregate education authorities (see diagram below).

- The plastron (underside) is divided in two – one side could represent students attending provincial schools / daycares / postsecondary institutions and the other side could represent students attending FN schools / daycares / postsecondary institutions
- Anterior and posterior bridges connect bottom of shell to top of shell – connecting FN schools and provincial schools to the top of the shell (authorities and Education Commission)
- The head, paws, tail and body could be used to symbolize the vital connection with the PTOs, IFNs, COO and Elder/youth councils



Key Functions(pillars) of the Ontario First Nations Education Commission(OFNEC)

Carapace

Middle (5) – Lifelong learning

1. Early Learning
2. Elementary
3. Secondary
4. Postsecondary
5. Adult training

These departments work in concert with the departments listed on the right and left of the turtles back to ensure coordination that results in high quality delivery of education that meets the needs of First Nation students attending First Nation and non-First Nations institutions.

Left (4)

6. **Data Management**
 - a. Includes research, statistics and analysis
7. **Finance**
 - a. Includes financial analysis, accountability and capital management
 - b. Bulk purchasing where feasible
8. **Intergovernmental and Sectoral Coordination**
 - a. Includes legal and dispute resolution – leave to FN jurisdiction
 - b. charged with representing the interests of First Nations by investigating and addressing complaints of maladministration or violation of rights
 - c. ensure alignment and compatibility of First Nation governance over education with provincial and federal policies and laws (eg apprenticeship act) Address existing barriers in credentialing
 - d. Foster good relations with province and feds
9. **Communications**
 - a. Communication, Analysis and dissemination of information to First Nations and general public
 - b. Develop mechanisms to streamline the sharing of effective practices

Right (4)

10. **Human Resources**
 - a. ensure that the people, in the proper roles, are professionally qualified for their respective roles
 - b. ensure comparability in teacher salary grids
 - c. establish professional ethics
 - d. ensure supervisory officers are in place to oversee application of standards

- e. establish recognition of years of service for education professionals

11. Teaching Standards and Development

- a. Teacher and administrator professional development, training, induction
- b. Develop cultural and linguistic standards
- c. need to be based on the needs in each community. Community developed standards. Diversity needs to be recognized.

12. Language and Culture

- a. Ensure language and culture are appropriately infused in curriculum, PD, etc.
- b. Develop appropriate language progression scales

13. Learning and Curriculum

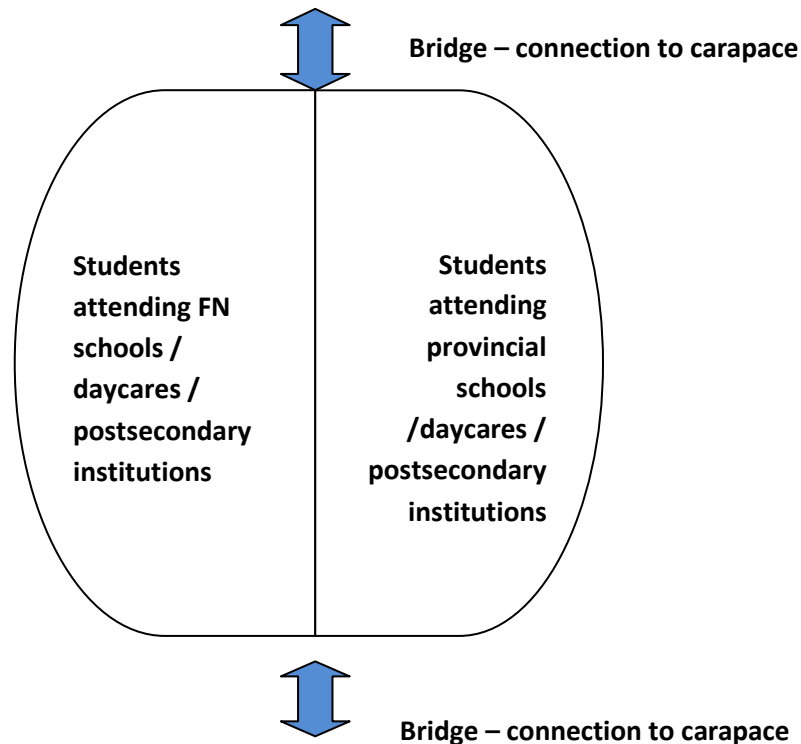
- a. Includes assessment and special education
- b. Development of culturally responsive Indigenous curricula
- c. Development of reading programs that meet or exceed provincial standards
- d. Development and distribution of Indigenous assessment tools, approaches

The 28 scutes on the outside of the turtles back represent Education Authorities – single or aggregate.

All scutes are interconnected and work together.

Plastron

The autonomy and diversity of all First Nations in Ontario are respected in the plastron which includes all 133 First Nation communities. It is divided by circumstance of student (whether or not they attend a First Nation institution or a public institution).



Summary of Thunder Bay Focus Group – February 26-27, 2013

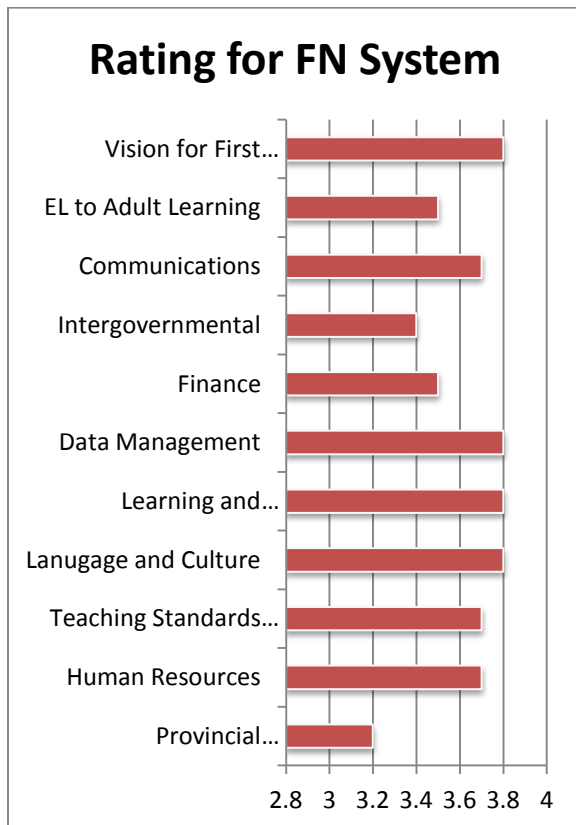
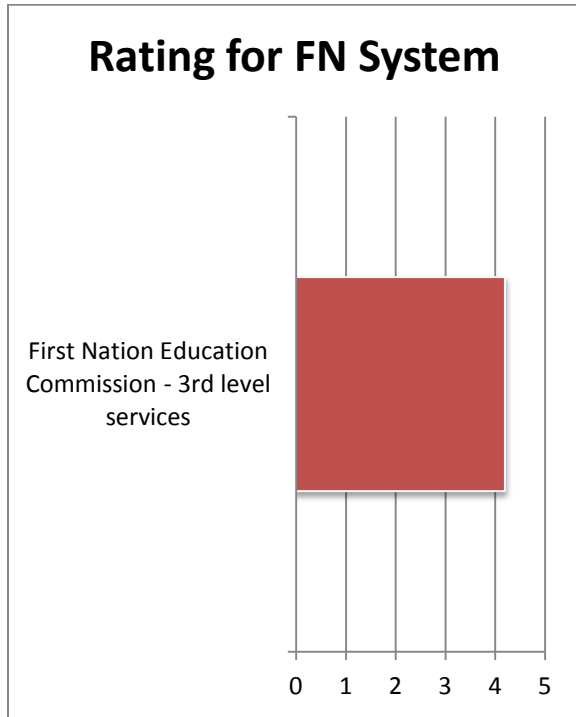
Purpose of FG2

- To identify and document the elements of fluid and responsive systems that will meet the diverse lifelong learning needs of our people and foster student success.
- With a focus on identifying elements related to the two basic principles of recognizing the lifelong learning continuum and the centrality of culture and language within learning systems.

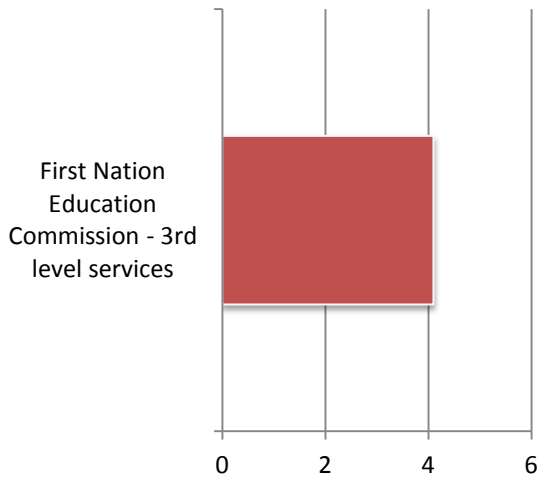
What we did

- Background on initiative (see NAWG Background ppt) and Summary of FG1 – Julia Candlish
- Discussion on the Turtle Model Concept drafted as per recommendation and input from FG1
- Presentation by KTEI (see KTEI Anishinabe Odziwin – Language Passport Tool for Staff) – Stephanie Roy
- Presentation by EIC (see Lifelong Learning – Indigenous Education Coalition) – Bruce Stonefish
- Presentation by NAN re KERC (see link <http://www.kwayaciiwin.com/>) – Dobi-Dawn Frenette
- Voting exercises on Think Tank software:
 - On the agreement to establish a First Nation Education Commission and each element as previously discussed (Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree);
 - To rate the positive impact of the First Nation Education Commission and each element as previously discussed (5 point scale 1-5)
 - To rate the ease of application of the First Nation Education Commission and each element as previously discussed (5 point scale 1-5)

Findings



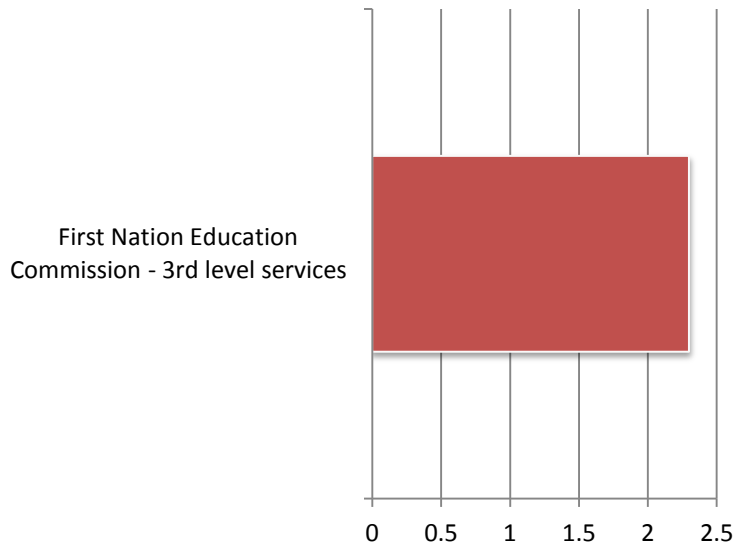
Positive Impact



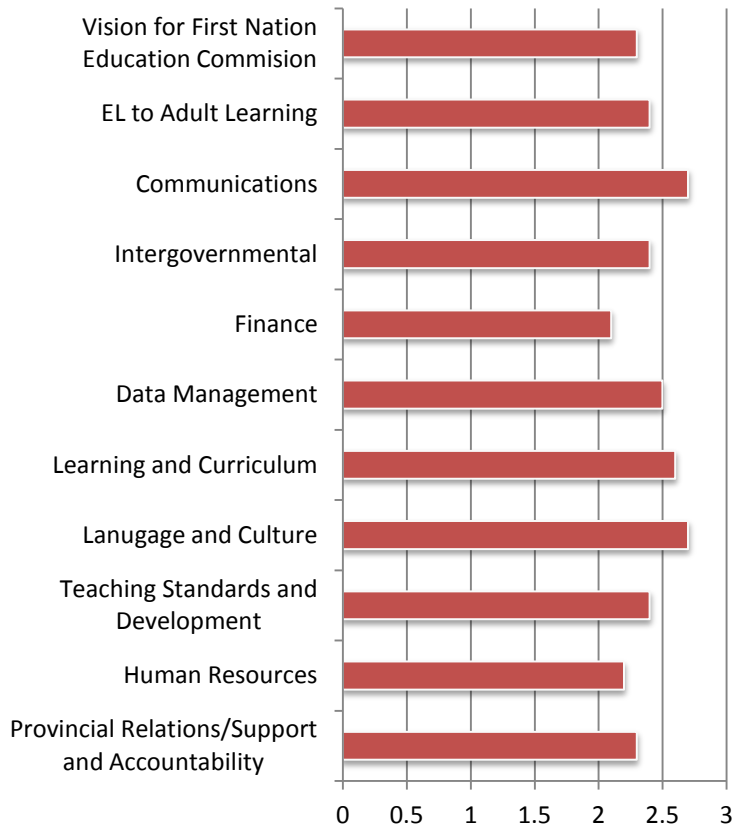
Positive Impact



Ease of Application



Ease of Application



Overall Combined Ratings

Total		Rating for Commission / Component	Positive Impact	Ease of Application	Total
1	First Nation Education Commission - 3rd level services	4.20	4.10	2.30	10.60
2	Vision for First Nation Education Commission	3.80	3.20	2.30	9.30
3	EL to Adult Learning	3.50	3.10	2.40	9.00
4	Communications	3.70	3.50	2.70	9.90
5	Intergovernmental	3.40	3.30	2.40	9.10
6	Finance	3.50	3.40	2.10	9.00
7	Data Management	3.80	3.20	2.50	9.50
8	Learning and Curriculum	3.80	3.70	2.60	10.10
9	Language and Culture	3.80	3.80	2.70	10.30
10	Teaching Standards and Development	3.70	3.70	2.40	9.80
11	Human Resources	3.70	3.50	2.20	9.40
12	Provincial Relations/Support and Accountability	3.20	3.30	2.30	8.80

The overall data provides the most support for the establishment of a First Nation Education Commission with the most support for inclusion of the coordination and support components related to Learning and Curriculum, and Language and Culture.

Key Ideas from FG2

- Suggestion to utilize COO website to disseminate and collect information related to this initiative (similar to what was done for Education Report 2012)
- Ensure we engage in a “visionary approach” as opposed to a deficit approach
- Ensure we are building something based on our needs not modelling provincial / federal systems (egs. Provincial and federal focus on literacy and numeracy, possibly base progression on development stages)
- Recognize the strong link between assessment standards and jurisdiction
- Need to define student success in our own terms – and set standards accordingly (what is taught, how it’s taught and how to assess it)
- Need to define second and third level services for clarity
- Ensure the diversity of First Nations is respected, encouraged and recognized
- Expressed support for a First Nations Education Commission that serves a support and coordination role

Key Questions from FG2

- Can we incorporate an Educators of First Nations Students Federation – where would this fit?

Next steps from FG2

- Finalize the template for a First Nations education code to be used by FN communities.
- Create a mandate for the proposed Commission

Summary of Sault Ste. Marie Focus Group – April 16-17, 2013

Purpose of FG3

The focus group session is to build on the findings of the first two focus group sessions and deepen our collective understanding of how jurisdiction is held currently in all of its forms by First Nations Governments in Ontario. We will examine the strengths and weaknesses of the methods of control with a view to designing a framework that represents jurisdiction over First Nations education with an appropriate funding model and mechanism.

What we did

- Background/overview presentation on Charting Our Own Path Forward Initiative including key ideas and next steps from focus group sessions – Julia Candlish
- Presentation on education jurisdiction – Diane Longboat
 - Think Tank software captured comments on the presentation and general discussion
- Think Tank activity focused on the following questions
 - Outline the next steps that should be taken to assert First Nation jurisdiction over education?
 - Briefly outline the roles of Chiefs and councils, Tribal Councils, the federal and provincial governments and a collective education support organization?
 - Considering the importance of creating First Nation education codes or laws - how can we build on and coordinate based on the work of NAN and UOI?
- Three presentations on funding – Julia Candlish, Andrew Arnott and Steve General
 - Think Tank software captured comments on the presentations and general discussion
- Think Tank activity focused on the following questions
 - In light of today's presentations - what funding role would a collective education organization play in Ontario?
 - In light of discussion yesterday about jurisdiction what type of mechanism would be appropriate to ensure needs-based, stable and predictable funding for First Nations lifelong learning?
 - What should be included in a needs-based funding model?

Findings

- Grassroots input is key to this work
- Nation building and education systems development must go hand-in-hand
- Unity is central to this work
- Capacity building must be ongoing at all stages of COOPF
- We must explore other avenues of funding to assist in developing and implementing a plan
- Internal sharing of expertise is key
- An open mind and positive focus is key
- Must have the political will to move beyond the status quo and keep abreast of the COOPF initiative

Key Ideas from FG3

Jurisdiction

- Clearly define in all documents and capacity development training
- Integrally connected to nation building
- Need to explore options for delegating authority to collective organizations

Collective education support organization

- create a representative task force to draft a model
- collective standards for culturally responsive education
- must be designed from the grassroots up and be responsive to the needs of First Nations
- must include technical and political teams
- will take time and resources we do not have

Funding

- find funding outside the federal government to develop the systems and structures
- compel federal government to provide needs-based funding required
- funds flow directly from Treasury Board to First Nations

Key Questions from FG3

1. How do we ensure that the organizations that exist are not jeopardized by the development of a collective education support organization?

Next steps from FG3

Phase 1

- Conduct a comprehensive environmental scan
 - Includes rationale for disbanding INAC for education programming
 - Includes analysis and recommendation on provincial relations and funding streams (i.e. FNMI Framework)
- Collective agreement on an overarching position – a declaration? – a constitution? – an education act?
- Focus on capacity development regarding jurisdiction, rights and responsibilities
 - Education codes/laws – handbook or toolkit
 - Possible development training for leadership
- Explore other avenues of funding

Phase 2

- Develop models for collective education support organization building on environmental scan and previous work of First Nations, Tribal Councils and governance tables.

Phase 3

- Develop a long term plan (7 generations?)

Summary of Charting Our Own Path Forward: Education Symposium – May 7-8, 2013

Purpose

To review findings of the previous Focus Group sessions and obtain input to formulate recommendations to Chiefs in Assembly at AOCC 2013.

What we did

Day 1

- Presentation on background of initiative and findings of previous Focus Group sessions
- Keynote speakers on jurisdiction, funding and systems
- Panel presentation on systems and funding
 - FNEESC – B.C.
 - Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey, Nova Scotia
 - Union of Ontario Indians, ON

Day 2

- Participants attended each of three discussion circles on jurisdiction, funding and systems

Findings

Prominent and overarching themes included:

- The need to assert our jurisdiction over education;
- The need for First Nations communities and organizations in Ontario to work together in unity on designing a more effective education system that includes more appropriate funding mechanisms;
- The need for capacity development at the community level (including Chief and Council, technicians, teaching staff, parents etc) to ensure full understanding of First Nation jurisdiction over education and the many challenges we face;
- The understanding that we must move forward from the grassroots – community level as this is where the jurisdiction is held;
- The need to establish a unified vision from a position of empowerment and strength – a vision based on our worldview and most importantly the needs of our children.

Key Ideas

- We must establish a comprehensive representative working group that is open to all First Nations to build on the work that has been done to date in the areas of jurisdiction, funding and systems;
- We need our First Nation Leaders to immediately sit down and work out issues until they come to one mind on education issues so we can continue charting our own path forward with one voice;
- Comprehensive political and communication strategies are necessary to move forward.

Key Questions

1. Can we achieve unity?
2. Can we believe in ourselves?

Next steps

Immediate

- Develop a concept paper on the need for an environmental scan
- Find resourcing to begin comprehensive environmental scan to form the basis of the work moving forward

Recommendations to Chiefs in Assembly – AOCC 2013 to include:

1. The establishment of a comprehensive representative working group that is open to all First Nations to oversee the work going forward in the areas of jurisdiction, funding and systems. This work will build on key themes and ideas generated through the 2012/13 work of the New Agenda Working Group. The working group will work as a subgroup of the FNECU, which will report to the Chiefs in Assembly on or before AOCC 2014 with a workable systems and funding model for First Nations in Ontario.

This working group will establish task teams to address the following areas and others as deemed necessary:

- a. Jurisdiction team
 - i. Work with PC on the development of an overarching education code and assist with community and organizational codes/laws
 - ii. Develop tools for community engagement team
- b. Community capacity and engagement team
 - i. Community capacity development
 - ii. Collecting pertinent information for the overall work of the working group
- c. Communications team
 - i. To ensure all FN communities and organizations are kept informed
 - ii. Includes a political agenda for leaders to lobby for nation to nation relations related to education
 - iii. To provide information appropriate for the general public to garner support for our activities
- d. Funding team
 - i. Explore alternative funding sources and an alternative funding mechanisms for the transfer of education funding to First Nations
 - ii. Ensure funding is available to support the work of the working group and associated task teams
- e. Collective entity team

- i. Further develop the role of a collective entity to provide practical support to First Nation students and learning environments;
2. The Political Confederacy will ensure the PTO's and IFNs come together, share information and unite around the development of a unified position on jurisdiction over education. This could be in the form of a code or declaration to further support any codes or laws currently in use or in development.