

INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN EDUCATION AND HEALTHCARE

INDIGENOUS HEALTHCARE EDUCATION AND PRACTICE:
A Community-Led and Community-Informed Collaborative Initiative



Please note:

This Companion Guide is a resource created to complement the online modules.

This online module was developed by the Office of Professional Development and Educational Scholarship (Queen's Health Sciences) and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) to address the Calls to Action set forth by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This project is made possible with funding by the Government of Ontario and through eCampusOntario's support of the Virtual Learning Strategy. To learn more about the Virtual Learning Strategy visit the [eCampus Ontario website](#) (*click to view*).



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the learning module titled “Biases, Racism, and Discrimination in Healthcare”. This module is part of the seven-module series titled “Indigenous Healthcare Education and Practice: A Community-Led and Community-Informed Collaborative Initiative”. Throughout the modules in this series you will be connecting the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (T R C) of Canada Calls to Action (C T A) report, a report designed to advance the process of Canadian reconciliation and redress the legacy of residential schools, to healthcare and education practice.¹

For your interest, explore the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action report.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action

Calls to Action (C T As) addressed in this module include: C T A 10, C T A 18, C T A 19, C T A 20, C T A 21, C T A 22, C T A 23, C T A 24, and C T A 62.

The modules in this series can be used to increase your awareness and knowledge of Indigenous healthcare education and practice. You will learn about historical perspectives of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and their implications for health outcomes, biases, racism, and discrimination in healthcare, Indigenous Ways of Knowing, healthcare rights and services, culturally safe healthcare, and intersections between education and healthcare. This module will specifically discuss the intersections between education and healthcare.

Note that these modules should be viewed as an introduction to Indigenous healthcare education and practice. It is important to continue to reflect and engage with this material over time, as our understanding and perspectives of this material are influenced by broader social and contextual factors. Please also recognize that decisions in regard to policy and legislation are constantly changing so it is important to keep up to date on current events. Gaining and understanding Indigenous healthcare education and practice is a lifelong journey that involves a willingness to learn, practice, and self-reflect. As you work through the modules of this series, please also acknowledge that the term health encompasses physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental wellness.

Content Warning: The content covered by this module may be difficult to process due to the challenging nature of the material. This may particularly occur if you have lived-experiences in relation to this material or are learning about these realities for the first time. We ask all learners to access supports if necessary.

Page Links:

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf



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INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN EDUCATION AND HEALTHCARE

In this module, you will learn about funding gaps for Indigenous programs and services, including elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education. You will also learn about how caps on education funding have created greater gaps over time. Finally, you will learn about false beliefs surrounding Indigenous students' education funding.

After completing this module, you will be able to:

- Describe the difference between federal and provincial education.
- Investigate and assess the insufficient funding challenges for Indigenous.
- Assess educational attainment levels and outcomes.

Federal and Provincial Education

While the provincial and territorial legislatures have enacted legislation that forms the basis of standards and service levels for the provision of government services off-reserve, Canada has not done so for Indigenous communities (on-reserve).

For example, in 2011 the Office of the Auditor General of Canada found that there was no legislation for drinking water, healthcare, or education for First Nation Peoples living on reserves. *Instead of being in unison, legislation on- and off-reserves varies greatly.*

Significant funding gaps are present between Canadian federal and provincial education systems due to **service delivery on a policy basis**. The phrase "Service delivery on a policy basis" means that there was/is no clear standard in place on the level of service to be delivered.² With no clear standard in place on the level of service to be delivered, many Indigenous Peoples are metaphorically left in a jurisdictional vacuum where they do not always receive the same level and quality of services as non-Indigenous people.

"They [service level and quality] are not always well defined and there is confusion about federal responsibility for funding them adequately"

- Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2011.³

Funding Concerns for Indigenous Communities

Funding for programs and services both on- and off-reserve has been an ongoing concern for Indigenous communities.

Learn about the progression of funding concerns for Indigenous communities.

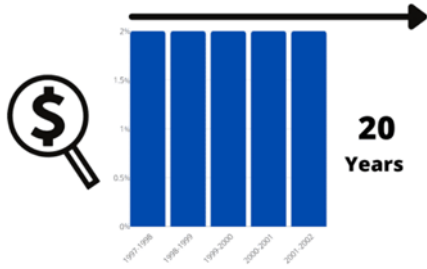
Capping of Funding Increases for Indigenous Programs and Services

Starting in 1997–1998, funding increases for Indigenous programs and services were capped at 2%. While this cap was meant to be temporary, as explained by Scott Serson, former Deputy Minister of



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then Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, “20 years of funding at 2 per cent” did not take into account inflation and population growth.²



Creation of Significant Gaps



A home on the Wasagamack First Nation.⁴

The cap starting in 1997–1998 of 2% increase per year led to “very significant gaps” in housing, education, and infrastructure, among other services in Indigenous communities.²

The Effect on Program and Service Delivery



A classroom on a First Nations reserve.⁵

Underfunding, combined with a lack of a legislative base for service provision, has affected program and service delivery. Jessica Gordon, Councillor from the Pasqua First Nation explained that “the grassroots have enormous amounts of knowledge that has been kept idle because their Indian Act leadership is constantly in crisis mode, just dealing with survival and tending to the basic needs of the people they are responsible for under the Indian Act administration.”²

The Effect of Capped Funding on Education of Indigenous Children



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Based on a 1988 draft proposal for the development of a funding formula, the formula contains a list of services to be included and excluded for band-operated and federally-operated schools.⁹ Also included is the basic calculation for funding.

$$\text{Funding} = \text{number of full time equivalent (FTE) students} \times \text{tuition rate}$$

The basic calculation for funding is determined by multiplying the number of full time equivalent (FTE) students by the tuition rate.

Under the BOFF formula, some bands have more flexible agreements with regard to their block contributions than others. Depending on band capacity and priorities:

- Basic per student funding can vary among and within regions depending on the regional agreements and approaches to funding.
- Per student funding also varies on the basis of the size, location, and composition of the particular community, although to a lesser extent than in some provincial jurisdictions.

Explore a summary timeline of the education funding cap for Indigenous communities.

1996-1997

Cap Placed on Annual Growth Rate of Core Program Funding to First Nations

In 1996-97, when the country was facing a serious financial deficit, the government placed a cap on the annual growth rate of core program funding to First Nations for elementary and secondary education, including on-reserve schools, and for other services such as social welfare and child and family services. The cap, which was at 6 percent the first year and 3 percent the second year, was set at 2 percent thereafter.

1997-1998 to Present

Permanency of Cap

Although the cap was initially contemplated as a temporary measure within the broader attempt to reduce the federal deficit, it remained in place long after the budget was balanced in 1997- 98; indeed it is still in place on core funding even though other areas of federal spending have since seen large increases. According to the FNEC, the formula was outdated and “was scheduled for revision after a period of two years to ensure a better rationale”, **but no such review occurred and the formula has remained in place.**⁸

The initial cap had minimal impact on the education funding gap in the late 1990's when provinces were also implementing austerity policies (a set of economic policies usually consisting of tax increases,



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"In much of the country, Aboriginal students on reserves receive about a quarter less funding for their primary school education than other Canadian children."^{9,15}



"Chronic underfunding of First Nations schools has created a First Nations education funding shortfall of \$747 million in 2010-2011, and a cumulative funding shortfall of over \$3 billion since 1996."^{9,16}



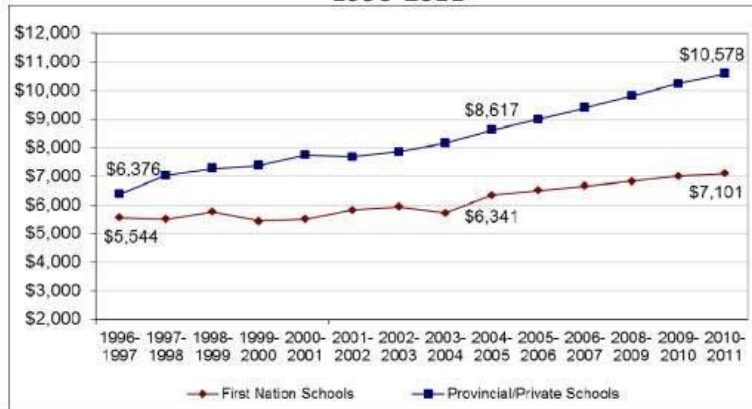
Average Per-Student Funding

"In 1996, A A N D C provided, on average, \$5,544 per-student to First Nation schools. This was up to 15% less than what INAC provided to First Nations attending Provincial or Private schools. Since 1996, the funding discrepancy has grown to an average of nearly \$3,500 less per-student. This means that A A N D C now provides nearly 50% more funding to First Nations attending Provincial or Private schools than to those attending First Nation schools."¹⁷



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Average per-student funding, First Nation schools and provincial schools, 1996-2011



*Average per-student funding, First Nation schools and provincial schools, 1996-2011.*¹⁷

Right to Education

Indigenous Peoples maintain that access to education is a right, as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

*View Articles 14, 15, and 21 in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.*¹⁸

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous Peoples also maintain that the Canadian government has a lawful responsibility to fund education for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students at all levels.¹⁹ In addition to this responsibility, the division of powers within the Constitution Act determined that “Indians” are a federal government responsibility while education is a provincial responsibility. Despite this jurisdictional distinction, Indigenous Peoples maintain that the federal government is responsible for funding education for Indigenous Peoples.¹⁹ Furthermore, the Indian Act specifies that the federal government is responsible for funding education on reserves. **Thus education is not only a right, but Canada has a moral, constitutional, and legislative obligation to fund education at all levels for Indigenous Peoples.**

Access and Funding Challenges

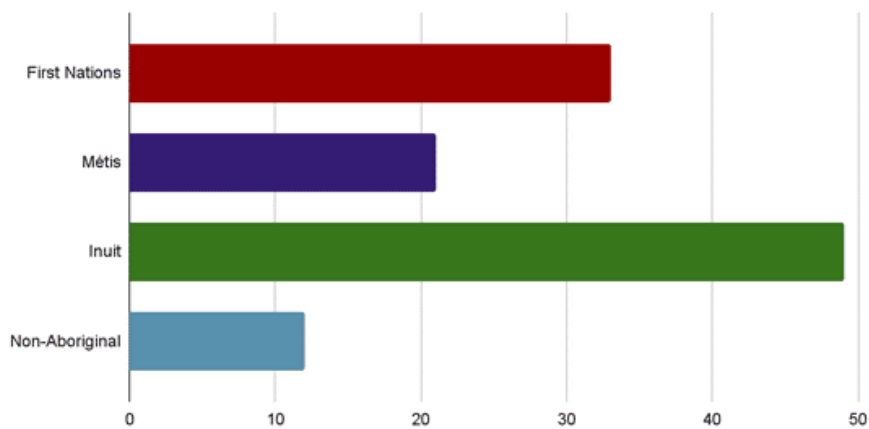
Funding challenges affect First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students at all levels: elementary, secondary, and post-secondary.

“First Nations leaders have alleged that federal funding for primary, secondary, and post-secondary education is inadequate.”²⁰



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Percentage of Population Age 25-64 Without Post-secondary Education Attainment



The gap between post-secondary education attainment continues to widen between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations.²²

The Assembly of First Nations has asserted that inadequate funding for education has resulted in high dropout rates and low graduation rates among high school-age students.²¹ Inadequate funding has a domino effect and impacts who is eligible to enroll in post-secondary institutions.

For Métis, Inuit, and First Nation peoples, post-secondary funding is administered separately.

View the differences between Métis, Inuit, and First Nation peoples' post-secondary funding.

Métis: Since 2019, eligible Métis students can apply for post-secondary funding through the Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education Strategy, administered by regional Métis organizations.

Inuit: Inuit students may be eligible for post-secondary funding through the Inuit Post-Secondary Education Program, which Inuit land claims organizations administer.

First Nation: First Nation students may be eligible for funding through the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (P S S S P), which is administered by First Nation communities or an organization designated to administer post-secondary funding.

While there are post-secondary funding programs for all three Indigenous groups, not all students will access this funding because more students apply than can be funded. If Indigenous students cannot access funding through one of these three programs, their options to attend post-secondary are limited. Lack of generational wealth among many Indigenous families has limited the ability to put money aside for their children to attend college or university. Although scholarships and bursaries are available to Indigenous students, these are very competitive, and only a select few will receive an award. Indigenous students are also reluctant to apply for a government loan such as the Canada Student Loans Program either because they are unaware that they are eligible or because they do not want to incur student debt.²³



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CONCLUSION

In this module, you learned about funding gaps for Indigenous programs and services, including for education at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels. You also learned about how caps on education funding have created greater gaps for Indigenous Peoples over time. Finally, you understood some of the false beliefs about education funding for Indigenous students.

You have completed one of the seven learning modules within the series “Indigenous Healthcare Education and Practice: A Community-Led and Community-Informed Collaborative Initiative.” The modules within this series aim to increase your awareness and knowledge of Indigenous healthcare education and practice. These modules explore how Indigenous Peoples’ health outcomes have been negatively impacted by colonial policies and practices, and how the health and well-being of Indigenous Peoples can be improved through the inclusion of traditional healing practices and by addressing biases, racism, and discrimination within the healthcare system.

Acknowledgements

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<https://vls.ecampusontario.ca/>

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