



---

---

Reciprocal Tuition, continued from page 1

province for their important role in the comprehensive BC education system. This is a welcome step, even though it does not close the funding gap between First Nations schools and public schools, which is an issue that must be addressed by the federal government.

As final details of these reciprocal tuition funding arrangements are made, the FNSA will issue further communications. Schools needing more information are also welcome to contact Jan Haugen, Manager of Executive Service at FNEsc at 1-877-422-3672.

### Teacher Certification Pilot Update

This school year, fourteen schools embarked on a new pilot project called the Teacher Certification Process. The Teacher Certification model was created by the FNSA working with member schools. It emphasizes the creation of Professional Growth Plans by all teachers, as well as a process for monitoring teachers' progress toward their professional goals.

Each participating school has been assigned a regional principal, who provides ongoing support and training for everyone involved with the project.

The goal of the pilot projects is to test the strengths and weaknesses of the process, as well as the effectiveness of the FNSA's support structures. Results of the pilot projects will be reported to the FNSA membership at the 2009 FNSA AGM. For any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Sue Gower at 1-877-422-3672.

### Call for Workshop Proposals Aboriginal Languages Conference July 5-6, 2009, Vancouver, BC

#### **Workshops are invited on the conference theme, "Bringing Language to Life"**

Application forms are available from the First Nations Education Steering Committee at [www.fnesc.ca/conferences/index.php](http://www.fnesc.ca/conferences/index.php).

Application deadline: Monday, May 11, 2009.

Watch for registration information in late May, 2009.

### A Letter of Introduction from Curtis Mallett, the New Director of Special Education

Hello. Tansi. My name is Curtis Mallett and I'm very pleased and excited to announce that I will be taking over from Kelly Kitchen as Director of Special Education. I'd like to express my sincere gratitude to the First Nations Education Steering Committee and the First Nations Schools Association for giving me the opportunity to join the management team.

As a member of the Fisher River Cree Nation Band from the Treaty 5 area in Manitoba I bring greetings to the Elders, the First Nations leadership, and to all the First Nations community members of this beautiful land. I eagerly look forward to meeting and working with you, to learning your customs and traditions, and to sharing some of the knowledge that I have gained during my career in inclusive and special education.

For the last nine years, I have been a Special Education Specialist at the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, providing professional development and consultation to First Nations schools in all the tribal regions of Manitoba. Prior to this, I was a classroom and special education teacher in the Winnipeg School Division for six years.

I would like to thank Kelly for her support and encouragement during this transition process, as well as acknowledge her ground-breaking work in making the Special Education Program here in BC one of the exemplary First Nations educational service delivery programs in all of Canada. I will do my utmost to continue to provide and coordinate this same level of service delivery and accessibility to which you have become accustomed.

In closing, I ask for your patience and understanding as I adjust to this important and challenging position, and as I learn from Kelly, Barb and the rest of the Special Education Team.

Thank you, Ekosani.

Curtis Mallett B.Ed PBCE M.Ed

Director, Special Education, FNEsc

---

---

## Employment Histories To Be More Transparent

A new agreement between the BC College of Teachers (BCCT) and the FNSA aims to make it much easier for employers to track and verify the employment history of staff working in First Nations schools. The FNSA Board and the BCCT signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the subject of information disclosure in the fall of 2008.

Under the Teacher Profession Act, the BCCT has traditionally collected employment information about BCCT members employed by boards or authorities, but not those employed by non-Independent First Nations schools. Potential employers, however, have routinely used the BCCT records system to confirm employment histories and better understand any gaps in employment.

With this new agreement, First Nations schools and the FNSA will, on a voluntary basis, submit employee information to the BCCT databank. This will make the BCCT database much more complete, transparent, and relevant to First Nations schools. It is also notable that the agreement has strong wording around confidentiality; only BCCT employees who have clearance will have direct access to the database.

At the FNSA Conference, BCCT and the FNSA will formally sign the MoU, signifying that our organization will encourage and support First Nations' schools' participation in this process.

The BCCT has agreed to provide technical assistance to help First Nations schools and the FNSA implement this agreement. Watch for more news about the process soon.

## Industry Training Authority Memorandum of Understanding

The Industry Training Authority, or "ITA," is the provincial crown agency responsible for regulating British Columbia's industry training and apprenticeship system. In October of 2008, the FNSA and the ITA signed a Memorandum of Understanding to formalize their intent to work together to create new apprenticeship preparation opportunities for First Nations youth.

As outlined in the agreement, the first stage of that work will involve a survey of First Nations high schools, which will be implemented in the next school year. It will focus

on identifying current student barriers and needs.

Furthermore, a working committee with representatives of the FNSA and the ITA will plan for the effective delivery of trades training programs in First Nations schools and also engage the federal government in discussions about appropriate funding levels to sustain such programs.

If you have any questions about the initiative, please contact Marie Matthew at 1-877-422-3672.

## Vancouver Conference hosts David Rattray, Keynote and the Kagan Group

The FNSA Conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM) has a prominent place on the annual calendar for many who work with First Nations schools in BC. It offers an opportunity to reconnect with colleagues, develop new skills, and contribute to the collective activities of First Nations schools. This year, the Conference and AGM is happening from April 24-25 at the Coast Plaza Hotel in Vancouver and the theme is *Realizing the Potential of Each Student: Approaches that Work*.

Highly respected for his progressive views on First Nations education and his "tell it like it is" approach, David Rattray will deliver the conference keynote address. Rattray is a member of the Tahltan Nation and long-time secondary school level Aboriginal Counselor in the Peace River North School District.

Jason Conway of the USA-based Kagan Group is another much-anticipated guest and he will be leading a workshop at the special invitation of the FNSA Board. His workshop will introduce the teaching concept of Cooperative Learning, which involves small, diverse groups of students working together to achieve common goals and taking responsibility for their teammates' learning as well as their own.

A full schedule of twenty-three unique workshops has been planned; each carefully selected to reflect the expressed needs of First Nations schools.

In addition, the FNSA AGM is taking place to discuss the collective work of First Nations schools and to give participants an opportunity to elect their representatives to the FNSA Board.

Watch for the FNSA website for updates about the conference and AGM.



## [www.aboriginallearning.ca](http://www.aboriginallearning.ca)

If your students are looking for a post-secondary funding resource, tell them about **Aboriginal Learning Links (ALL)**. It's a one-stop website for information on scholarships, bursaries and resources for post-secondary education around BC.

Designed for Aboriginal adult and post-secondary learners, ALL has links to financial support, post-secondary institutes, child care, housing, career opportunities and much more.

Aboriginal Learning Links is an initiative of the BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners Group.

## FNSA Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is elected at the FNSA Annual General Meeting by authorized FNSA representatives from their region, to serve a 2-year term.

**Note** Elections will be taking place at the April 24-25/09 Annual General Meeting. Visit [www.fnsa.ca](http://www.fnsa.ca) after the AGM for the updated director list.

Greg Louie, President  
Nuu-chah-nulth/Coast Salish

Ernie Hill, Vice-President  
Haida/Tsimshian/Haisla/Nisga'a

Victor Jim, Secretary  
Gitksan/Wet'suwet'en

Karen Smith, Treasurer  
Kootenay/Okanagan

Andreas Rohrbach  
Kaska/Dene/Tahltan/Tagish/Inland  
Tlingit

Len Merriman, Regional Rep  
Nuu-chah-nulth/Coast Salish

Robert Matthew, Regional Rep  
Secwepemc/St'at'imc/Nlaka'pamux

Karen Aoki, Regional Rep  
Kwakwaka'wakw/Heiltsuk/Nuxalk/  
Oweekeno

Jacquie Ledoux, Regional Rep  
Secwepemc/St'at'imc/Nlaka'pamux

Louise Lacerte, Regional Rep  
Tshilqot'in/Carrier/Sekani

## Events

**April 24-25, 2009**, Vancouver. FNSA Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting

**April 30-May 2, 2009**, Vancouver Successful Transitions 2009 Indigenous Education Forum

**May 1-2, 2009**, Vancouver. Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) 6th Annual General Meeting and Conference - Celebrating our Strengths

**July 5-6, 2009**, Vancouver Aboriginal Languages Conference

**Nov. 26-28, 2009**, Vancouver Annual Provincial Conference on Aboriginal Education

## Aboriginal Youth Perspectives, Online

TEKKRU Media is a group of First Nations youth from around BC that use new media to communicate with other First Nations youth about what's going on in Aboriginal politics, business, culture and communities.

Visit their blog at

<http://tekkru.wordpress.com/>

## Seeking Employment?

For opportunities in First Nations schools, visit [www.fnsa.ca/teacher\\_links.htm](http://www.fnsa.ca/teacher_links.htm)

The First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) is a non-partisan organization directed by representatives of BC First Nations schools. Visit the FNSA online at [www.fnsa.ca](http://www.fnsa.ca)

**Our Vision:** The First Nation Schools Association will collaborate with First Nation schools to create nurturing environments that develop learners' pride and competence in their First Nations language and heritage and will equip them to realize their full potential, within self-governing First Nations communities.