



# effective hiring practices

for FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS in BC

*prepared for*

First Nations Schools Association &  
First Nations Education Steering Committee



*a companion publication to*  
employment handbook for First Nations Schools



EMPLOYMENT RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

EMPLOYEE RETENTION PRACTICES

CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS & FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS

FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS "BRAND" IMPLEMENTATION MANUAL

FIND THIS PUBLICATION AND TEMPLATES AT:

[www.fnsa.ca/publications](http://www.fnsa.ca/publications)



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# Introduction

Effective hiring practices are one of the key aspects of operating a strong school. Student achievement and success depend to a large extent upon the quality of the staff members who interact with learners while they are in the care of the school. Successful school leaders work continuously to select the right people for available employment positions, support their continued commitment to the school and its students, and develop their staff to ensure they can make the most positive contributions possible.

Yet establishing and implementing research-based recruitment and retention practices can be challenging, and the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and First Nations Schools Association (FNSEA) are committed to supporting First Nations schools with these critical areas of school operations.

Included in this package are four separate but related resources.

1. Recognizing the complexity and vital importance of effective recruitment practices, *A Guide for Training Sessions for First Nations Schools: Employee Recruitment Practices* has been created to accompany related training and support activities available from FNESC/FNSEA.
2. *A Guide for Training Sessions for First Nations Schools: Employee Retention Practices* is also included in this package. That resource is intended to help facilitate collective consideration of school culture and employment practices that can help retain quality education staff for the benefit of students, families, and members of communities and schools.
3. As it is imperative that all First Nations schools appropriately address the topic of criminal record checks for individuals who have access to children, an information pamphlet focused on this issue is included within this package.
4. To assist First Nations schools promote their employment positions, FNESC/FNSEA sponsored the creation of a “brand” for First Nations schools in BC – intended to

bring greater attention to the unique and positive job opportunities the schools offer to potential educators. A manual for making use of the brand in a meaningful way is included within this package.

*An Employment Handbook for First Nations Schools* is also available to complement the materials included in this package, which outlines in detail related promising practices, legal requirements, and policy considerations. That document can be accessed by contacting the FNEC/FNSA office at 604-925-6087, or downloaded from [www.fnesc.ca](http://www.fnesc.ca).

As with all FNSA and FNEC materials, comments and feedback on this information package are welcome, as we are committed to continually reviewing and improving our publications to ensure that they best meet the needs of First Nations schools and communities in BC.

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**The information included in this Handbook is NOT presented as, or intended to serve as, legal advice. First Nations are encouraged to seek independent legal advice as required regarding their particular employment circumstances.**

**In addition, this Handbook was created for the BC context. While many of the concepts presented within have widespread application, some information may be provincially specific.**

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# Employee Recruitment Practices

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Recognizing the complexity and vital importance of effective recruitment practices, the First Nations Schools Association and First Nations Education Steering Committee are committed to providing First Nations schools with both training sessions and direct, locally-delivered support for hiring processes – including telephone and email support, or visits to communities to assist with any aspects of the process. *This Guide has been developed to accompany that training and support, and is not intended to serve as a stand-alone document.*

For further details and information, an *Employment Handbook for First Nations Schools* is also available, and a Training Guide for employee retention practices has also been developed to facilitate information sharing about this critical issue, as well.

NAME OF TRAINING FACILITATOR	DATE OF TRAINING
HIRING COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE (IF APPLICABLE)	

A fair and effective hiring process works for everyone!

## OVERVIEW

### The Reasons for Developing a Formal Hiring Process

1. Developing a fair and effective hiring process will lessen the chance of any problems arising, legally and otherwise.
2. A research-based hiring process is more likely to result in finding the right person for the position.
3. Finding the right person will increase the chances of that person staying employed with you longer, which will be less expensive in the long run.

As described further in this guide, the following steps are suggested for an effective formal hiring process

1. **Setting Criteria** – deciding what qualities, skills, and abilities are needed for the job, and for a person who will be a good fit in the school and community.
2. **Marketing the Position** – from the criteria, developing an advertisement that outlines the qualities, skills, and abilities that you require.
3. **Shortlisting** – comparing each application to the criteria to shortlist the people who match the criteria most closely.
4. **Behavioural Interviewing** – using questions that ask candidates to tell stories about themselves and how they have worked in the past. Research shows that past practice is the best indicator of how people will perform in the future. Candidates' answers are scored against the established criteria to identify the best person for the job.
5. **Reference Checking** – using the criteria and the behavioural interviewing techniques to check references. Reference check answers are compared to the criteria and are cross-referenced with the interview; the answers arising from the reference checking process should support or match the interview responses.
6. **Analyzing the Results** – bringing together and discussing all of the information gathered about each candidate. The candidate who best fits the criteria and school is chosen.
7. **Offer of Employment** – making the offer. Once the offer of employment is accepted and the contract is signed, other candidates are informed that another applicant better fit the criteria.

## WHY FOCUS ON EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT AND HIRING PRACTICES?

- Using effective hiring practices is a key component of operating an effective school. Successful schools work continuously to select the right people, and to support and develop their staff.
- Establishing and implementing effective recruitment practices, while critical, is challenging. Hiring can be time consuming, labour intensive, and sometimes politically unpopular. However, taking the time to effectively hire can result in improved student achievement, increased respect for teachers and other employees, and enhanced public relations. It is, in fact, one of the most important activities of any school.

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## Take the Time To Do It Right!

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- Selecting an inappropriate employee because of an incomplete hiring process or hasty decision can have serious and costly consequences – for students, the school, and the chosen applicant!
- Whenever possible, planning a comprehensive and holistic review process is essential.

### Sample Time Allocations

Defining Criteria	1 - 2 hours
Developing a Posting	1 - 2 hours
Distributing the Posting	1 hour
Shortlisting	15 minutes / candidate
Interviewing	1 - 2 hours / candidate
Reference Checking	1 hour / candidate
Meeting to Choose the Candidate	1 hour

***All of these steps are described in more detail in this guide.***

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## STRIKING A HIRING COMMITTEE

- The first step in a hiring process is determining who will be responsible for its implementation.
- Usually, the school's governing agency will have responsibility for filling only the most senior positions.
- Responsibility for hiring other staff can be delegated to either the principal, or more often to a small group of people – often with the principal as the lead.
- Why create a Hiring Committee? Having a group of individuals consistently engaged in the hiring process from beginning to end incorporates a variety of perspectives and expertise.
- The size and composition of the Hiring Committee will depend on the position that is available, as well as community structures and protocols (see sample policy in Appendix One).
- Generally, the Committee should not be so large that it is unwieldy and threatening for the people being interviewed. It is usually recommended that the Hiring Committee include a minimum of three people, and 6 – 7 people is a maximum size.
- The following individuals can be considered for a Hiring Committee.
  - The principal
  - A member of the school governing agency
  - A teacher
  - A parent and a high school student
  - The Education Director or Coordinator, if that individual works closely with the school, and/or the community's Human Resources Director, if such a position exists

Are you hiring a new principal?

You can call FNEC / FNSA for assistance.

### Key Considerations For Hiring Committees

- In forming a Hiring Committee, think about the team's combined knowledge and experience. Try to include people who will contribute different skills and strengths to the hiring process.

- Ensure that everyone involved understands the time commitment needed to implement an effective process.
  - Preparations can take 1 – 2 days
  - Each interview is usually at least an hour long
  - Follow-up may require another day

The Hiring Committee leader will likely spend even more time.

- All members of the Hiring Committee must fully understand and respect the need for confidentiality.
  - Confidentiality begins with the formation of the Committee and continues even after the hiring is complete.
  - No one can share information about the applicants or the Hiring Committee’s discussions.
  - All information that is submitted in writing must be held by the Committee leader, and should be filed in a locked cabinet for 7 years.
  - No one other than the Hiring Committee members should know who has applied for the job at any point in time – either before or after the hiring is complete.
- All Hiring Committee members *must* avoid conflicts of interest.
  - A conflict of interest exists when an applicant is a Hiring Committee member’s spouse, relative or friend.

## DEFINING CRITERIA

- The hiring process will involve collecting information from job applications, interviews, reference checks, and possibly performance demonstrations. That information is then systematically analyzed and compared to school needs. (These practices are all discussed in more detail further in this handbook).
- The hiring process must begin with a thoughtful consideration of who is needed for the job – which should be done *before* the search begins.
- Hiring Committees must choose their own selection criteria because each school and community’s needs are unique.

Respecting confidentiality and avoiding conflicts of interest are legal requirements of a fair hiring process.

Not addressing these issues appropriately could have serious legal implications.

In order to avoid any human rights complaints, the screening, interviewing and evaluation criteria should be based upon the selection criteria that have been developed.

## Sample Criteria

The Hiring Committee may begin by asking: **“Who do we want to employ?”**

The answer might include an individual with ...

- Strong interpersonal skills (eg. relationship building ability, perseverance, a team player, a good communicator, a sense of humour, etc.)
- Instructional leadership skills for a principal, or instructional skills for a teacher (eg. planning, assessment, behaviour management skills etc.)
- Appropriate professional qualities (eg. good decision-making ability, sound and ethical judgment, a willingness and demonstrated ability to learn new things, etc.)
- Fit for the community (resilience, positivity, relevant attitudes / personal attributes, “grit”, etc.)
- Knowledge of the reading and/or math program being used in the school
- Knowledge of the assessment techniques and instruments being used in the school
- Knowledge and understanding of First Nations education / experience in a First Nations school

Then the Hiring Committee can consider: **“What skills must the applicant already have (must-haves), and what skills can they learn on the job (nice-to-haves)?”**

The answer *might* be:

SKILLS THE APPLICANT MUST ALREADY HAVE	SKILLS THE APPLICANT CAN LEARN ON THE JOB
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong interpersonal skills (eg. relationship building ability, perseverance, a team player, a good communicator, a sense of humour, etc.)</li> <li>• Instructional leadership skills (for a principal) or instructional skills (for a teacher – eg. planning, assessment, behaviour management skills etc.)</li> <li>• Appropriate professional qualities (eg. good decision-making ability, sound and ethical judgment, a willingness and demonstrated ability to learn new things, etc.)</li> <li>• Fit for the community (resilience, positivity, relevant attitudes / personal attributes, “grit”, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of the reading and/or math program used in the school</li> <li>• Knowledge of the assessment techniques and instruments used in the school</li> </ul>

- Each Hiring Committee will have to determine whether the applicant “must have” or “can learn” knowledge and understanding of First Nations education, and “must have” or “can gain” experience in a First Nations school. This decision may vary, depending on each situation.

## DEVELOPING A JOB POSTING

- The criteria developed for the position are the foundation for the job posting.
- The best techniques for writing effective job postings are the same as for other forms of advertising. The job is your product; the readers of the advertisement are your potential customers.
  - Know your target audience, address them in language they can understand, and offer them what they want.
  - The aim is to attract interest, and then communicate quickly and clearly the essential, appealing and relevant points about the job.
  - Outline a clear response process and mechanism.
  - The design should focus on clarity and on conveying a professional image.
- In writing the job posting / advertisement, emphasize the positive aspects of the job, but do not exaggerate the opportunity.
- Describe the unique and potentially exciting possibilities that are associated with working in your school and community, while also being realistic about the challenges that are associated with the setting so that you find someone who is an appropriate “fit”. If the candidate who is eventually selected for the position has unrealistic expectations, he or she may not remain in the job, which is of no benefit to your school or the employee.
- The Hiring Committee may find it useful to consider the following questions.
  - What is great about your school?
  - What is unique about your community / territory that potential employers may find attractive? What might they find challenging?
  - Do you know of any reasons why previous school staff have chosen to leave your community? Have you attempted to address these issues? If so, how?
  - What are your terms of employment?

### Suggestions for Writing a Job Posting

- Be specific about the role
- Provide a salary range so potential applicants know what to expect and whether the position matches their needs
- Clearly indicate what skills are essential, what skills are desirable, and what previous experiences are preferred
- Provide a phone number for questions
- Clearly indicate what information you need – a cover letter, resume, references, and evidence of teaching credentials
- Talk to the reader, using phrases like “in this position, you will ...”
- Include a closing date – ideally at least two weeks from the posting date

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### Market Market Market Your School

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Employers are competing for the most talented and skilled candidates. It is critical that potential employees perceive your position as their best employment option.

From the beginning to the end of your hiring process, present the most appealing image possible.

- Prepare a professional and positive job posting
  - Ensure all school staff are helpful and courteous if potential applicants call with an information request
  - Be positive and personable when calling to arrange interviews
  - If candidates visit the school, make them feel welcome and at ease
  - Be excited about the job and passionate about your school and students
  - Make each candidate feel wanted
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## **Job Posting Template**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In the introduction (first paragraph), explain what your community has to offer. Explain: where you are located; if there are drawbacks or perceived drawbacks to the location; how any challenges can be overcome. Make sure to highlight what opportunities are available to people moving to your community and making it their home. The description must be truthful, including the challenges and drawbacks, but it should be written in a positive manner to elicit interest from people who will be a good fit. A drawback or challenge for one person might be considered exciting or an interesting way of life to another. The applicants might be giving up a lot to commit to your community and you must explain why it would be worthwhile.

### **THE JOB**

Describe what job is being offered and the general expectations. Your goal is to market the position in a way that is completely truthful and also exciting.

### **CRITERIA**

Describe the criteria you are looking for that will ensure the successful candidate is a good fit for the community and school. Include required qualifications, attributes, and skills.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Describe the process of applying, where to find out more information, and the follow-up the candidate can expect. Includes dates, phone numbers and name/s of contact people.

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## Job Posting Sample One

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### **A unique opportunity to work with a dynamic team to ensure learning for our community.**

With a positive and collaborative culture, [our school] embraces team members with a “whatever it takes” attitude. We are looking for a person who has the courage to take risks for the benefit of our students. Our school is transforming and offers unprecedented professional development opportunities.

In this highly visible position, you will work and possibly live in a community that is committed to seeing positive change for their children at school. As part of a collaborative team, you will take an active and important role in leading this transformation. Your multi-grade class size will be small and you will have support staff to assist you in ensuring student success.

You have impressive references! You are excited to take on the challenge of living in a new community and developing and sharing your teaching skills and ability. You have proven experience in best practice and a genuine desire to extend your learning.

You have an unwavering commitment to First Nations education, superior skill in building positive relationships with students, parents, and co-workers, and profound respect and understanding of First Nations histories and worldviews. You see yourself as a learner as well as an educator, and look at challenges as opportunities for growth.

Please submit your application by <DATE> to <NAME>, Principal

You must include in your application package the following:

- Cover Letter
- Copy of your valid BC Teaching Certificate
- Resume
- At least three professional reference names with contact information

Send your application to <email>.

Please call <phone> if you require additional information.

***We are an equal opportunity employer and welcome applications from all interested candidates.***

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## Job Posting Sample Two

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The [people] of [community] are strong and proud. We care deeply about our language and traditions. We are active stewards of the environment and work together to protect our territory. We see our greatest resource as our children and are looking for a teacher to join the collaborative team at [our school].

We know that the successful candidate will bring certain skills and expertise and we expect that they will also join our team as a learner. We provide world-class professional development and the opportunity for personalized coaching. We want the best for our children and know we must support teachers to be the very best.

[Our community] is located [positive description]. Our community is steeped in tradition and we welcome teachers to fully participate as visiting community members. Although we are almost six hours from the closest movie theatre, we have access to [two communities] that are [distance away]. Comfortable furnished housing and a moving allowance is available.

If you are the candidate we are looking for, you enjoy the outdoors and ample recreation activities, and you also bring essential skills and abilities. Your classroom management creates a safe, positive, and respectful learning climate for all students. You have high academic expectations for students and understand how powerful individualized planning can be for students. You also are willing to join a progressive team that is focused on student achievement and is prepared to do whatever it takes to support students. You see yourself as a learner and seek professional development in the form of coaching, professional learning communities, and feedback on your instruction.

[Our school] has undergone a transformation over the last year. Our focus is student achievement and we are looking forward to adding qualified teachers to our team. You must hold BC certification. Our school's salary reflects the neighbouring school district.

Please send your application package including the following information:

- Cover letter and resume
- Three professional references with contact information
- Copy of BC Certification and Current criminal record check

Forward application package via email to <email>.

For further information call <phone>.

***We are an equal opportunity employer and welcome applications from all interested candidates.***

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## Sample Worksheet: Developing Your Posting

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What is great about our school?

What is unique about our community / territory that may attract potential employees?

What is unique about our community / territory that potential employees might find challenging? Do we know any reasons why school staff have chosen to leave our community?

Have we attempted to address issues / challenges? If so, how?

What are our terms of employment?

Salary Range ..... •

Pension ..... •

Benefits ..... •

Moving Allowance ..... •

Northern Living Allowance ..... •

Housing ..... •

Sick Days/Discretionary Days ..... •

Other ..... •

Did you know ...  
**CRAIGSLIST** is a widely-used, effective and inexpensive mechanism for advertising available positions?

**INDEED.CA** is also an excellent option for employment advertising -- offering free job postings.

## ADVERTISING

Usually, when hiring a new teacher or principal it is important to cast a wide net, using an aggressive and strategic approach.

- Develop, maintain and use professional networks to share information when vacancies arise.
- Formally advertise positions through pre-service certification programs and professional associations.
- A new partnership between **Make a Future** and the FNSA provides First Nations schools with access to the Make a Future services and website, which facilitates high quality, innovative promotion of employment opportunities to a broad audience, enhancing the recruitment efforts of First Nations schools. See [www.makeafuture.ca](http://www.makeafuture.ca) for more information.
- When advertising for a new job, you should anticipate increased website traffic and requests for information. Plan to update the school website and have information packages ready for easy distribution – possibly including pamphlets showcasing the community, nearby provincial and national parks, etc.

Note: Internal recruitment of employees is a complex issue that is discussed in the FNSA / FNEC Employment Handbook for First Nations Schools.

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*Remember ... the Canadian Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination in employment based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability, and conviction for which a pardon has been granted.*

*Those prohibitions extend to job postings / advertisements.*

*However, you can indicate in your advertisement that the successful candidate ideally will have experience working with First Nations people, or that an excellent understanding of First Nations issues is a benefit. For further details, see the full Employment Handbook for First Nations Schools.*

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## SHORTLISTING

- To ensure a fair hiring process, it is useful to implement a clear and consistent approach for reviewing all applications and shortlisting the applicants who will be invited to an interview.
- For efficiency, the task of shortlisting can be delegated to the leader of the Hiring Committee.
- Developing a screening chart will enable the person who is shortlisting to score each candidate according to the established job criteria. See Appendix Three for a sample screening chart.

### Applicant's Declaration and Agreement

- Schools are encouraged to ask all short-listed candidates to sign and return a declaration and agreement, verifying that the information they have provided is truthful and confirming permission to contact references and check social media sites.
- In practice, applicants are often given a time-limited opportunity to sign and return the declaration, such as 24 hours.
- You may also inform applicants that if they do not return the signed declaration, they will not be interviewed.

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**Sample: Applicant's Declaration and Agreement**

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1. I declare that all of the information I have given in my application, interview and résumé and any other attachments is complete and true in every respect. I understand that if any of this information is found to be untrue or incomplete, or if I fail to respond completely and truthfully to any questions asked, my application may be rejected, or in the event that my application is successful, my employment may be terminated.
2. As a condition of application and possible employment, I authorize [person] on behalf of [school or organization] to contact any references, schools or past or present employers named in this application form, or in my résumé and any other attachments including Social Media sites, for the purposes of:
  - a. Verifying my qualifications and the other information in these documents;
  - b. Assessing my past work performance; and
  - c. Determining my suitability for employment.

This information will be used by the search team and the interview committee. The material will be securely stored with all application materials for a period of one year.

3. I understand that all references will be received in confidence by [person] on behalf of [school or organization] and will not be released to me without the referees' consent.
4. If a Confidentiality Agreement is in existence between myself and a former school district or employer I agree to provide the name and contact information of the person assigned to provide reference information to a prospective employer.
5. I also understand that any offer of employment is conditional on my providing, at my own cost, a complete criminal record search, as well as a satisfactory review of the results of the search by [person].

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Official: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## INTERVIEWING

### Preparing for Interviews

- Make sure that you allow adequate time for the interviews and all follow-up that is needed. A common rule of thumb is to allow one hour per interview, plus fifteen to twenty minutes after each interview to allow the interview panel members to discuss the applicant's presentation and responses.
- When arranging interviews, remember that they can be intensive and therefore tiring.
- While it is usually most effective to conduct interviews in-person, interviews done using skype or conference calls are possible if applicants are unable to visit the school. In either case, it is important to arrange the interview setting in advance, choosing an environment that is quiet, free from distractions, and private.

### Developing the Interview Questions

- Many human resource experts recommend that interviewing should be behavioural-based. There is no real difference in the actual format of behavioural-based interviews. The difference is in the type of interview questions that are asked.
- Behavioural based interviewing is focused on discovering how the candidate acted in previous, specific employment-related situations. The reasoning behind the approach is that "past performance is the best predictor of future performance."
- Instead of asking how the candidates *would* behave, the questions focus on how they *did* behave. The interviewer asks how candidates handled a situation in the past, instead of what they might do in the future.
- The questions aim to elicit specific, "real life" examples of how people behaved in regard to the established hiring criteria.
- Behavioural-based interviews also involve follow-up questions, asking candidates to share more details about what they did, what they said, and how they reacted or felt.

A sample teacher interview guide is attached as Appendix Four.

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*Interviewers should not make any written comments based on prohibited grounds of discrimination – not even rough notes on interview comment sheets. Personal identifiers (such as noting the person’s gender, race, approximate age...) may be useful for remembering the applicants after they have left, but records of that nature increase the risk of a human rights complaint.*

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There are several questions that are inappropriate and possibly illegal to ask during an interview. For example, you should not ask an applicant about his or her age, height, weight, marital status, spouse’s name or occupation, religion, national or ethnic origin, number and/or age of children, potential disabilities, sexual orientation, affiliation with unions, child care arrangements, or future plans to become pregnant or have children.

The following illustrates an appropriate and inappropriate way to phrase a question during an interview.

- *An inappropriate question:* Do you have any young children who might interfere with your work?
- *A more appropriate question:* In this job, you may be required to work varying hours, such as an occasional Saturday or evening. Will that be a problem for you?

See Appendix Two for further information about questions that can and cannot be asked.

### Interview Tips

- Ask open-ended questions that encourage the applicant to talk.
- Interviews should be structured, but should also allow for questions that arise. Follow-up on interesting and unusual responses, and use probing questions to learn more about the applicant.
- Demonstrate enthusiasm for your school and community.
- Emphasize what is needed and the key aspects of the job.
- Take notes.

- Stay open-minded; don't make up your mind too early, and don't let one factor make your decision.
- At the end of the interview, tell the applicant what to expect next, such as when you will call or if the applicant should phone you.
- It is important to remember that if interviews have been scheduled, they must proceed. It might be useful to have a back-up plan ready in the event that unexpected situations arise, such as agreeing that the principal will conduct interviews alone if absolutely necessary.

### Evaluating Interview Responses

- Following each interview, the Hiring Committee members should take time to consider the applicant, thinking primarily about which candidate aligns best with the criteria.
- Hiring Committee members should review the notes they took and compare scores.

### Simulations

- If you are filling a teaching position, candidates may be asked to teach a 10-minute simulation lesson to the committee or even to a class of students.
- If so, candidates should be provided the same instructional objective, and the Hiring Committee can observe the lesson and then review the session with the candidate.
- Simulations should only be included in the interview process if you can guarantee that all candidates will have the same opportunity. For example, if a candidate will not have internet access and will be interviewed by phone, it is unfair to include a simulation as part of the interview process. Also, although simulated lessons *may* be an accurate portrayal of a person's on-the-job skills, they may not. Simulations therefore should be used with caution; when they go well, they are powerful; when simulations fail, they can be meaningless.

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## Sample Lesson Simulations

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Interviewer: “ We are now going to ask you to simulate a lesson for the panel. I will give you three choices and you will choose one. We will give you ten minutes to prepare and you can then give your mini lesson.”

*This simulation adds to the time it takes to complete the interview. If the interview is taking place on the phone or through a video link, you may want to give the candidate an opportunity to hang up and call back in ten minutes.*

Choices of mini lessons:

1. Treat the panel as if they are all members of a new drivers class. Today, you want them to learn how to fill their car with gas.
  2. Treat the panel as a class of [grade xx] students. Today, you want to teach them a lesson on a topic of your choosing or on bullying.
  3. Treat the panel as a group of colleagues with whom you have been working for some time. Today, you want them to learn and/or deepen their knowledge of basic lesson design.
-

## REFERENCE CHECKING

- Reference checks can be among the most reliable selection methods – as long as relevant questions are asked and sufficient time is allocated for a thorough dialogue.
- Reference checks should therefore be implemented for all applicants who have been interviewed.
- It is critical that the people providing references have actually seen the applicant perform their work.
- The same person should conduct all reference checks in order to ensure a consistent approach and scoring.

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*It is important to watch for false references. In rare cases, people who feel that they really need a positive reference may ask a friend or someone they do not know well to write one for them. In fact, there are even new web-based services that offer fake work histories and references to job seekers. This makes it more important than ever to follow-up on written references with thoughtful personal phone calls and careful questioning about past employment performance.*

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## Sample Reference Checking Form

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### CONFIDENTIAL Behavioural Reference Checking Form - Teacher

CANDIDATE NAME		INTERVIEWER NAME		
DATE	TIME	PERSON CONTACTED   POSITION   ORGANIZATON		
Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of your call				
The candidate has agreed that all references will be received in confidence and therefore will not be shared with the candidate except in summary form with no identification of the person supplying the information. Do you wish to provide this reference to me in confidence?			YES	NO

QUESTIONS / PROMPTS	NOTES
Are any of your comments limited by a Confidentiality Agreement? If yes, what is the nature of this agreement? Who is the designated spokesperson?	
How long have you known [the Candidate]?	
What was your working relationship?	
During what period did you work together?	
<p><b>1. PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works cooperatively and supportively with colleagues as part of a team effort</li> <li>• Makes positive contributions to the school by participating in school events / assuming a leadership role in some aspect of school life</li> <li>• Reflects on teaching practice and devises ways for self-improvement on an ongoing basis</li> <li>• Is present, visible and engaged with the school and students in the community in the operationalization of the community's educational goals</li> <li>• Provides a positive role model for students</li> <li>• Demonstrates commitment to lifelong learning for self and others</li> <li>• Willingly does work without being asked or prodded</li> <li>• Maintains confidentiality</li> <li>• Makes sound judgments based on a cause and effect approach with students' best interest in mind</li> </ul> <p>Tries different approaches to solve a problem before seeking assistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes decisions in a timely manner and based on data</li> <li>• Demonstrates commitment and steadfastness to student academic achievement</li> <li>• Follows prescribed processes</li> <li>• [other]</li> </ul>	

QUESTIONS / PROMPTS	NOTES
<p><b>2. INTERPERSONAL SKILLS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates an ability to work with diverse groups of people / individuals in a respectful manner</li> <li>• Demonstrates knowledge of strategies to work through conflict with others in a productive and respectful way</li> <li>• Demonstrates self-awareness, self-management and social and situational awareness</li> <li>• Displays a sense of humour</li> <li>• Perceives and reacts empathetically to the needs of others</li> <li>• Voluntarily helps others</li> <li>• Demonstrates confidence and humility</li> <li>• Does not give up easily when faced with adversity / challenge</li> <li>• Sets and maintains high standards for self and others</li> <li>• Willingly spends extra time to ensure work is done well</li> <li>• Identifies needs/takes initiative to complete tasks</li> <li>• Always finds time to work with students who need support</li> <li>• Acknowledges mistakes/is willing to make change</li> <li>• Expresses oneself clearly in writing in an organized and grammatically correct manner</li> <li>• Listens to and understands others</li> <li>• Uses non-verbal communication effectively, gently and carefully</li> <li>• Seeks out information about students and their needs</li> <li>• Understands: their own actions can change relationships; they have responsibility to lead the development of positive relationships; relationships may affect achievement</li> <li>• Creates a context that is responsive to the culture of the learner, allowing the learner to bring who they are to the learning context</li> <li>• [other]</li> </ul>	

QUESTIONS / PROMPTS	NOTES
<p><b>3. INSTRUCTION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connects and adapts instruction to students' prior knowledge, life experiences and interests</li> <li>• Understands and is experienced with assessment</li> <li>• Understands how literacy affects achievement across the curriculum and grade levels / demonstrates proficient use of literacy strategies to affect student achievement</li> <li>• Demonstrates an understanding of student-centred learning and culturally responsive teaching</li> <li>• Uses appropriate questioning and problem-solving techniques</li> <li>• Models and promotes the appropriate use of technology to enhance student learning</li> <li>• Delivers effective lessons – The Hook, Learning Objective and Purpose, Instructional Input, Modelling, Checking for Understanding, Guided Practice, Independent Practice</li> <li>• Demonstrates excellent classroom management</li> <li>• Collaborates with students where appropriate</li> <li>• Creates a classroom environment based on respect and rapport, ensuring positive interactions between and among adults (teachers, visitors etc.) and students to support learning</li> <li>• Creates a welcoming environment that is respectful of diverse ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds</li> <li>• Treats students with consideration, sensitivity, kindness and fairness</li> <li>• Creates a culturally responsive classroom reflective of the local culture's history and dynamics</li> <li>• Employs strategies that ensure maximum student ownership and participation in their learning</li> <li>• Has strong academic / subject matter expertise</li> <li>• Plans based on learning outcomes – ensuring students are assessed and provided support to meet essential learnings</li> <li>• Uses overviews as working documents, making revisions and noting reflections</li> <li>• Links planning and preparation to end goals</li> <li>• Engages in collaborative school-wide assessment practices</li> <li>• [Other]</li> </ul>	

QUESTIONS / PROMPTS	NOTES
<p><b>4. FIT FOR COMMUNITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Other]</li> </ul>	
<p><b>5. FIRST NATIONS UNDERSTANDING AND KNOWLEDGE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates effective and authentic communication processes to and from the community</li> <li>• Understands and supports the integration of First Nations language and culture in all subject areas, in collaboration with Elders and community members</li> <li>• Creates a culturally responsive classroom that is reflective of the local culture, history and dynamics</li> <li>• Is aware of / understands First Nations' worldviews and history, specifically knowing the community and its cultural, linguistic and traditional values (pre and post colonization)</li> <li>• Respects and honours current community realities</li> <li>• Willingly learns and follows First Nations protocols</li> <li>• [Other]</li> </ul>	
What do you consider [the candidate's] strengths?	
In what areas do you feel [the candidate] could improve?	
Were there any problems with [the candidate's] attendance or time management?	
Were you aware of any outside issues that may have affected [the candidate's] work?	
Can you add anything else that might be helpful in working with [the candidate]?	
Would you rehire him/her?	
Other comments	
<p><b>CLOSE THE INTERVIEW</b> Thank you very much for your information; I can assure you that your information will be treated discreetly and confidentially.</p>	

<p><b>Evaluate the Behavioural Reference Check</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Information obtained indicates no problems / corroborates the interview ratings</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Information is vague, generalized, inconsistent or inconclusive. More references needed.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Information indicates definite problem with certain criteria</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Contact would not provide any information about the selection criteria.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Overall Rating</b></p>	

## SELECTION

In order to select the applicant who most closely matches the school's needs and the established criteria for the position, the Hiring Committee should carefully discuss all of the information collected for each applicant, comparing interview and reference check scores, and taking into consideration other factors and "gut feelings" regarding whether each applicant would be a good fit for the school and community.

### Following the Selection

- Once a decision has been made, the successful applicant can be made an offer of employment.
- The decision can be shared with the successful applicant in person or in a telephone conversation, but if it is shared verbally, the conversation should make it clear that the employer will be making an offer in writing, and that the conversation itself should *not* be regarded as the offer.
- The written offer should include:
  - the terms and conditions of employment.
  - any conditions (such as a criminal record check or verification of teaching qualifications).
  - notice that the employee will be bound by the school's employment policies, as amended from time to time.
  - an explanation of whether there is a probationary period and the possibility that it may be extended.
- A letter sent with the offer can contain other details, such as the start date, hours, and the starting salary and benefits.
- A full job description can also be included with the offer as an attachment.
- Policies or documents referred to in the written agreement should be available for the person to review before accepting the employment.
- Potential employees should have a clear understanding of their job responsibilities prior to accepting employment.
- The offer also may be subject to the signing of a contract, or to the signing of the offer by both the employer and employee.

More details about written employment agreements are provided in the *FNSA's Employment Handbook for First Nations Schools*.

A contract that an employee is required to sign after employment has commenced, or even after the offer has been accepted, may be unenforceable.

### Licensing and Membership Checks

- If a job applicant is required to be a registered member of an organization or to be licensed, those requirements should be specified, preferably in writing, at the time you offer the employment.
- For example, an offer to a teacher could state that the offer is conditional upon the applicant being a member in good standing of the BC Teacher Regulation Branch and providing satisfactory evidence of that status.
- Licensing requirements should also be indicated in the job advertisement and in the employment contract.

### Criminal Record Checks

It is wise to require satisfactory criminal record checks of all employees working in a school as a condition of employment.

Further details about criminal record checks are provided in the *Employment Handbook for First Nations Schools*.

### Responsibilities to Unsuccessful Candidates

- Ideally, you should phone the other applicants you interviewed, thanking them for their interest in the position and informing them that the job has been filled.

You should be fully prepared to account for your hiring decision if asked to do so by an unsuccessful applicant. Hiring processes should be formalized and systematic, and each step in the hiring process should be documented. Should questions arise about search committee decisions, it is important that documentation can be produced to show that the search proceeded systematically and without bias.

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### **Sample: Script for Contacting Unsuccessful Candidates**

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“I am calling you today to follow-up on your interview with us and let you know that another candidate better satisfied our hiring criteria. That person has accepted our offer of employment and the panel has reported the outcome to our Board/Band Council. On behalf of the hiring committee, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to you for your time and attention, and we wish you great success in your future. Thank you.”

Some unsuccessful applicants may wish to engage with you in a conversation about why you made the hiring decision. Don't!

If you feel that you have to say anything else in response, repeat in different words what you already said:

“As I said, the successful candidate better satisfied our hiring criteria and the panel has completed this competition. Thank you again.”

If you went through the hiring process and did not find a suitable candidate you should still call the candidates that did have interviews and let them know the outcome.

“I am calling you today to follow-up on your interview with us and let you know that none of the candidates satisfied our hiring criteria. Because we did not have a successful hire, we will be re-posting. On behalf of the hiring committee, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to you for your time and attention, and we wish you great success in your future. Thank you.”

Some individuals may ask if they can re-apply and you can certainly say, “Yes.” But do not get into a conversation or offer suggestions or tips for improving their chances. They are familiar with your process and it is up to them to improve their application, interview and references. Remember, they did not satisfy your hiring criteria in the first hiring attempt; it is unlikely that they will be successful if they try again.



“Hire very slowly ...  
Fire very quickly”

And a Last Word ...

What Do Many Human Resources Experts Say?

*“Hire very slowly ...  
Fire very quickly”*

- Recruitment practices should be implemented carefully and thoughtfully to find the best person for the job. Don't rush.
- If the person you hire is not meeting the job expectations, act in a timely way. Putting off difficult decisions won't make them easier. Don't delay.

The FNESC/FNSA *Employment Handbook for First Nations Schools* provides further information about dealing with concerns and addressing employment problems if they arise.

# APPENDIX ONE:

## Hiring Responsibility Sample Policy

**Reason for the Policy:**

To recruit and hire the best qualified individual available for employment in the organization.

**Job Postings:**

Prior to any recruitment and hiring, the principal will develop a job description that: outlines the level of responsibility; defines the salary range; and identifies the knowledge, skill requirements, and personal suitability required for the position.

**Procedure:**

The principal will be responsible for leading the process to: determine the need for the position; define the term of the position (continuing, term, or casual); establish the functions required for the position; identify the level of responsibility; identify the qualification requirements; define the salary range; identify and secure the budget; and post the available positions.

**Hiring:**

All continuing positions will be filled by a Hiring Committee appointed by and reporting to the Governing Authority. The number of members of the committee and criteria for their selection will be determined by the principal. This committee will recruit and hire the best qualified individual available for the position.

**Procedure:**

1. The qualification requirements for a position, together with a detailed job description (which will be written and kept on file), shall be posted when a position is advertised.
2. The principal will first consider candidates from within the organization to determine if an existing employee can fill the position.
3. If no internal candidate is appropriate, the position will be advertised throughout BC.
4. A Hiring Committee will implement the process of short listing and interviewing.
5. The final hiring decision is the responsibility of the principal.
6. All employees are required to read and abide by the "Code of Ethics."
7. Depending upon the position, it may be a condition of employment that the individual provide a satisfactory criminal record check.

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# APPENDIX TWO:

## Questions that Can and Cannot be Asked

Have you ever worked under a different name?	Generally, no. You may only ask about this after the selection process, if necessary to check references.
How many children do you have?	No.
Are you planning to start a family soon?	No.
Would you be able to work Saturdays when necessary?	You can ask this if it is a job requirement.
Can we see your birth certificate before we hire you?	You cannot ask this question until after a person is hired.
Do you have any disabilities?	No.
This job requires heavy lifting. Is that o.k. for you?	You can ask this if it is a job related requirement.
Were you born in this country?	No.
If you're hired will you provide a photo for your file?	Yes.
Will you provide a photo to attach to your applications?	You cannot request this until after a person is hired.
Have your wages ever been garnished?	No.
Who referred you for a position here?	Yes.
Are you single, married or divorced?	No.
Do you plan to move any time soon?	No.
Do you own or rent your home?	No.
Do you speak any languages fluently?	You can only ask this if it is a job related requirement.
Do you attend Church? Which one?	No.
What is your ancestry?	No.
What schools have you attended?	Yes.
Have you ever been arrested?	You can only ask about <i>convictions</i> , and only if it is job related.
Who should we notify in case of an emergency?	Yes.
Have you ever had trouble getting credit?	No.
Have you ever worked with a First Nations organization?	You can ask this if it is a job related requirement.

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**APPENDIX THREE: Shortlisting Resume Screening Tool**

<NAME OF SCHOOL>

Strictly Confidential

Rating - based on 5 point scale:

- 5 – **Excellent:** Demonstrated the criterion to an extremely high degree
- 4 – **Good:** Demonstrated the criterion to a fairly extensive degree
- 3 – **Satisfactory:** Demonstrated the criterion to an average or moderate degree
- 2 – **Less than satisfactory:** Demonstrated the criterion to a limited degree
- 1 – **Poor:** Demonstrated the criterion to minimal or no degree

Candidate Name	Professional Qualities • Resume • Cover letter • References • Credentials	Interpersonal Skills • Clear communication • Criteria is communicated	Instruction • Years of experience • Aligned experience • Programs	Fit for Community • First Nations experience • Success in similar circumstances	Locally Developed	Reject or Shortlist	Reason for Rejection Please tick one option. If more than one applies, choose the predominant reason.
						<input type="checkbox"/> Shortlist <input type="checkbox"/> Reject	<input type="checkbox"/> insufficient details on application <input type="checkbox"/> lacks essential experience <input type="checkbox"/> lacks essential qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> lacks essential skill/competence <input type="checkbox"/> meets essential criteria but other stronger candidates are available <input type="checkbox"/> lacks suitable research profile
						<input type="checkbox"/> Shortlist <input type="checkbox"/> Reject	<input type="checkbox"/> insufficient details on application <input type="checkbox"/> lacks essential experience <input type="checkbox"/> lacks essential qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> lacks essential skill/competence <input type="checkbox"/> meets essential criteria but other stronger candidates are available <input type="checkbox"/> lacks suitable research profile
						<input type="checkbox"/> Shortlist <input type="checkbox"/> Reject	<input type="checkbox"/> insufficient details on application <input type="checkbox"/> lacks essential experience <input type="checkbox"/> lacks essential qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> lacks essential skill/competence <input type="checkbox"/> meets essential criteria but other stronger candidates are available <input type="checkbox"/> lacks suitable research profile



<NAME OF SCHOOL>

Strictly Confidential

Candidate Name	Professional Qualities • Resume • Cover letter • References • Credentials	Interpersonal Skills • Clear communication • Criteria is communicated	Instruction • Years of experience • Aligned experience • Programs	Fit for Community • First Nations experience • Success in similar circumstances	Locally Developed	Reject or Shortlist	Reason for Rejection Please tick one option. If more than one applies, choose the predominant reason.
						<input type="checkbox"/> Shortlist <input type="checkbox"/> Reject	<input type="checkbox"/> insufficient details on application <input type="checkbox"/> lacks essential experience <input type="checkbox"/> lacks essential qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> lacks essential skill/competence <input type="checkbox"/> meets essential criteria but other stronger candidates are available <input type="checkbox"/> lacks suitable research profile
						<input type="checkbox"/> Shortlist <input type="checkbox"/> Reject	<input type="checkbox"/> insufficient details on application <input type="checkbox"/> lacks essential experience <input type="checkbox"/> lacks essential qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> lacks essential skill/competence <input type="checkbox"/> meets essential criteria but other stronger candidates are available <input type="checkbox"/> lacks suitable research profile
						<input type="checkbox"/> Shortlist <input type="checkbox"/> Reject	<input type="checkbox"/> insufficient details on application <input type="checkbox"/> lacks essential experience <input type="checkbox"/> lacks essential qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> lacks essential skill/competence <input type="checkbox"/> meets essential criteria but other stronger candidates are available <input type="checkbox"/> lacks suitable research profile
						<input type="checkbox"/> Shortlist <input type="checkbox"/> Reject	<input type="checkbox"/> insufficient details on application <input type="checkbox"/> lacks essential experience <input type="checkbox"/> lacks essential qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> lacks essential skill/competence <input type="checkbox"/> meets essential criteria but other stronger candidates are available <input type="checkbox"/> lacks suitable research profile



**APPENDIX FOUR: Sample Teacher Interview Guide**

TEACHER INTERVIEW GUIDE

Date

Candidate

Interviewer

- Open the interview
- Welcome & introduce members
  - How long interview will take
  - Who will be taking notes
  - Questions
  - Interview is behaviourally based – will be asking for specific examples

- Rating - based on 5 point scale:
- 5 – **Excellent:** Demonstrated the criterion to an extremely high degree
  - 4 – **Good:** Demonstrated the criterion to a fairly extensive degree
  - 3 – **Satisfactory:** Demonstrated the criterion to an average or moderate degree
  - 2 – **Less than satisfactory:** Demonstrated the criterion to a limited degree
  - 1 – **Poor:** Demonstrated the criterion to minimal or no degree

**Opening question to break the ice**

*Please tell the committee about your interest in working in our community and school.*

**Probing:**

*What is your experience working with First Nations students?*

**Comments**

**Rating**



Criteria	Criteria Descriptors (check those that apply)	Notes (S/T situation or task, A action, R result)	Rating
<p><b>I. PERSEVERANCE</b></p> <p><b>Question:</b>  <i>Please tell the committee about an activity that you took on that represented a real challenge for you.</i></p> <p><b>Probe:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>What were the major issues to reaching success?</i></li> <li>- <i>What were your goals along the way and how did you know that you had achieved them?</i></li> <li>- <i>Who suggested that you take on this challenge?</i></li> <li>- <i>How did you identify the need to take on this challenge?</i></li> <li>- <i>Tell us a time when you had a challenging student and how you managed that child?</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Candidate demonstrates evidence of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Not easily giving up when faced with adversity and challenge</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Setting and maintaining high standards for self and others</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Willingly spending extra time to make sure work is done well</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identifying needs and taking initiative to complete tasks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Always finding time to work with the student that need support</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledging mistakes and being willing to make changes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Comments (STAR)</b></p> <p>S/T</p> <p>A</p> <p>R</p>	



Criteria	Criteria Descriptors (check those that apply)	Notes (S/T situation or task, A action, R result)	Rating
<p><b>2. INTERPERSONAL SKILLS</b></p> <p><b>Question:</b>  <i>Everybody has had a conflict with someone in the past. Tell us about a conflict that you had with a co-worker or boss.</i></p> <p><b>Probe:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>What did you actively do to understand the other person's position?</i></li> <li>- <i>What steps did you take to reduce the conflict?</i></li> <li>- <i>What was the outcome of the conflict?</i></li> <li>- <i>What is your relationship with that person today?</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Question:</b>  <i>Developing appropriate professional relationships with students is very important to be a successful teacher. Tell us how you have gone about developing such relationships with students.</i></p> <p><b>Probe:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>How have you gone about learning about the students in your school?</i></li> <li>- <i>How does a positive relationship with a teacher create successful student achievement?</i></li> <li>- <i>How do you walk the line between teacher and friend with students?</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Candidate demonstrates evidence of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> An ability to work with diverse groups of people / individuals in a respectful manner</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of strategies to work through conflict with others in a productive and respectful manner</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Self-awareness, self-management and social and situational awareness</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Displaying a sense of humour</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Perceiving and reacting empathetically to the needs of others</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Displaying a positive attitude towards working with others</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Being present, visible and engaged with school and students in the community in the operationalization of community educational goals (professional responsibilities)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrating confidence and humility</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Expressing oneself clearly in writing in an organized and grammatically correct manner</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Effectively presenting information, ideas and principles</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrating commitment and steadfastness to student academic achievement (passion for the work)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Intentionally developing academic relationship with all students</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Understanding how their interpersonal interactions with children may affect achievement</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Seeking out information about students and their needs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Understanding that relationships change depending on their own actions and they have a responsibility to lead the development of positive relationship building</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Creating a context that is responsive to the culture of the learner, thereby allowing the learner to bring who they are to the learning context</li> </ul>	<p><b>Comments (STAR)</b></p> <p>S/T</p> <p>A</p> <p>R</p>	



Criteria	Criteria Descriptors (check those that apply)	Notes (S/T situation or task, A action, R result)	Rating
<p><b>3. DECISION MAKING &amp; JUDGEMENT</b></p> <p><b>Question:</b>  <i>Tell the committee about a challenging teaching situation that you had to come up with a solution for.</i></p> <p><b>Probe:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>How did this challenge potentially impact your students?</i></li> <li>- <i>What were the different strategies that you tried or considered before finding the solution?</i></li> <li>- <i>On reflection, how would you evaluate your decision? Would you do that again?</i></li> <li>- <i>Who directed you to find a solution?</i></li> <li>- <i>How long did you take to make your decision?</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Candidate demonstrates evidence of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Making sound judgments based on a cause and effect analysis approach with students' best interest in mind (professional responsibilities)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Trying different approaches to solve a problem before seeking assistance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Displaying judgment in deciding when a situation requires intervention or assistance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Making decisions in a timely manner</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Making decisions based on data</li> </ul>	<p><b>Comments (STAR)</b></p> <p>S/T</p> <p>A</p> <p>R</p>	



Criteria	Criteria Descriptors (check those that apply)	Notes (S/T situation or task, A action, R result)	Rating
<p><b>4. INSTRUCTION</b></p> <p><b>Question:</b> <i>Think about a lesson you taught, and tell us your approach from planning through to the closing.</i></p> <p><b>Probe:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>How did you incorporate assessment for learning into this instruction?</i></li> <li>- <i>How have you focused on literacy across subject matter to maximize achievement?</i></li> <li>- <i>Tell us a time when you recognized the need to modify the way you were delivering a lesson. What was the trigger? What did you do?</i></li> <li>- <i>Tell us a time when the questions you were using in class led you to modify your teaching.</i></li> <li>- <i>How did you learn about and involve yourself with First Nations culture?</i></li> <li>- <i>What do you do to effectively manage transition times during the day?</i></li> <li>- <i>What steps have you put in place to set up your students for successful behaviour?</i></li> <li>- <i>What do you do if a child continues to misbehave?</i></li> <li>- <i>What steps do you take in your classroom to model appropriate behaviour?</i></li> <li>- <i>How do you celebrate diversity and different family backgrounds in your classroom?</i></li> <li>- <i>What steps have you taken to ensure the understanding of First Nations cultures?</i></li> <li>- <i>Tell us about a time when you found your assessment practice had to be changed?</i></li> <li>- <i>Is there another lesson you would like to tell us about to demonstrate what we are asking</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Candidate demonstrates evidence of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Understanding that an effective educational program supports student learning in all aspects of their development (eg. differentiated learning)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Knowing how to plan for a unit incorporating current learning theories that ensure best practice</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Planning for and demonstrating knowledge of a variety of instructional approaches, accommodating for different learning styles (technology, language)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Connecting and adapting instruction to students' prior knowledge, life experience and interests</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Understanding the subject matter</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Understanding student-centred learning</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Effective planning and designing, including creating logical and sequential lessons that relate to the curriculum.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Planning based on learning outcomes – ensuring students are assessed and provided with support to meet essential learnings</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Using overviews as a working document, making revisions and noting reflections</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining objective and purpose while being flexible (eg. re-teaching, pre-teaching, interventions)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Planning and preparation always links to the end goal</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Connecting and adapting instruction to students' prior knowledge, life experience and interests</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Understanding the concept of Assessment for Learning and demonstrates experience with its use</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Understanding how literacy affects achievement across the curriculum and grade levels and demonstrates proficient use of literacy strategies to affect student achievement across the curriculum</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Being able to differentiate and adapt instruction for a variety of developmental stages and ability levels</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Using appropriate questioning and problem-solving techniques</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Modeling and promoting the appropriate use of technology</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Being able to deliver an effective lesson – The Hook, Learning Objective and Purpose, Instructional Input, Modelling, Checking for Understanding, Guided Practice, Independent Practice, Assessment</li> </ul>	<p><b>Comments (STAR)</b></p> <p>S/T</p> <p>A</p> <p>R</p>	



Criteria	Criteria Descriptors (check those that apply)	Notes (S/T situation or task, A action, R result)	Rating
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**5. PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Question:**

*Teaching like so many other professional practices requires constant self-improvement. Tell us how you approach your professional learning and growth planning.*

**Probe:**

- *How do you evaluate the success of your work?*
- *In what ways do you join a professional community to enhance your own growth?*
- *How have you added to the professional growth of others with whom you work?*
- *How does your self-improvement goal reflect positively on the students with whom you work?*
- *How have you gone about learning about the community with which you work?*
- *What do you do to enhance the school or community in which you have worked?*

**Candidate demonstrates evidence of:**

- Working cooperatively and supportively with colleagues as part of a team effort
- Making positive contributions to the school and/or district by participating in school events or assume a leadership role in some aspect of school life
- Reflecting on teaching practice and devises ways for self-improvement on an ongoing basis
- Understanding the importance of being a positive role model for students
- Commitment to lifelong learning for self and others
- Working with school staff in understanding cultural variations and components of different groups in the community
- Willingly doing work without being asked or prodded
- Maintaining confidentiality

**Comments (STAR)**

S/T

A

R

TOTAL

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# Employee Retention Practices

The information included in this Handbook is NOT presented as, or intended to serve as, legal advice. First Nations are encouraged to seek independent legal advice as required regarding their particular employment circumstances.

Especially in the event that difficulties arise, school representatives are encouraged to obtain further advice to understand how the suggestions apply to their situation.

## PREAMBLE

The evidence is clear: good teachers make a tremendous difference to students' educational outcomes and academic achievement.

Widespread research links high student success rates with quality, experienced teachers.

- When students have as few as two inferior teachers in a row, they almost never catch up academically with their peers. (*International Academy of Education and International Institute for Educational Planning*)

***We know ... attention needs to focus on both recruiting a sufficient number of teachers, as well as retaining high quality teachers.***

For that reason, the First Nations Schools Association and First Nations Education Steering Committee are committed to offering both training sessions and direct, locally-delivered support for teacher recruitment and retention processes – including telephone and email support, or visits to communities to assist with these complex issues. This Guide has been developed to accompany that training and support.

For further details and information, *an Employment Handbook for First Nations Schools* is also available.



SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS

*A Guide for Teacher Recruitment Training and an Employment Handbook for First Nations Schools* are also available for further information about teacher recruitment and hiring practices.

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**IT'S UP TO YOU!**

This manual is based on a key principle: **employee retention is impacted most significantly by the organizational culture you create. You really can make a difference in keeping staff longer and ensuring everyone who stays is committed to doing the best job possible.**

**INTRODUCTION**

The information included in this Guide demonstrates that addressing Teacher Retention requires serious attention to a wide range of issues associated with quality schools.

After thoughtfully discussing the concepts described in this document, it might be beneficial for a collection of school and community representatives to complete the Working Conditions Self-Assessment Instrument provided on the next page, to explore areas of strength and possible changes that might improve employee retention.

Following a review of the relevant issues, it might also be useful to develop an action plan for implementing the changes that are identified – see template on page B-4.

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**Working Conditions Self-Assessment Instrument<sup>1</sup>**


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	FULLY	PARTIALLY	NOT YET	UNSURE
Our school community is aware of the importance of teacher retention				
Our school makes deliberate efforts to encourage teachers to stay				
Our teachers are shielded from distractions and disruptions so they can focus on teaching and learning				
Our teachers are given assignments they are qualified to perform				
Workloads for our teachers are reasonable / manageable				
Our salaries are competitive / appropriate				
New teachers are provided orientations				
New teachers are supported in understanding the school's mission, vision, values, and principles				
Our new staff are welcomed				
School-wide behavioural norms are in place				
We have a school-wide commitment to improving student results				
We have developed shared mechanisms for measuring results / monitoring student achievement				
These mechanisms emphasize continuous improvement				
Our school continuously demonstrates respect for students, staff, families, and the community				
Our school is safe and clean				
We have practices to acknowledge contributions from all school personnel				
Our teachers have reasonable support for professional development				
Our school and community sponsors activities in support of both students and teachers				

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1 Adapted from Boyer and Gillespie, 2004.

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## Teacher Retention Action Plan<sup>2</sup>

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The following template can be used to facilitate discussions about how plans for improving teacher retention can be implemented. The template is meant to help participants consider what steps are priorities, who can help to address the priorities, timelines for the work to be done, and how the success of the efforts will be determined.

RETENTION ACTION ITEM	EXISTING RESOURCES	PEOPLE TO BE INVOLVED	TIMELINE	INDICATOR OF ACHIEVEMENT

## THERE IS A WIDESPREAD TEACHER RETENTION CRISIS

The statistics are sobering.

- It is widely estimated that between 20 and 30 percent of teachers leave the profession within their first three years of teaching. Many teachers leave before the end of their first year.
- More than 45% – some researchers estimate *half* – of teachers leave the profession after five years.
- Some evidence indicates that the most academically competent new teachers are the most likely to leave the profession.
- The teaching workforce is, by and large, aging and moving toward retirement.

### ***What does all of this mean?***

- Thousands of teachers – possibly including the most effective teachers – are leaving the profession because they can't make the job work, and thousands more are retiring.



### **Talking Points**

- ➔ A recurring or persistent exit of teachers from a school is a signal that a teacher retention problem exists.
- ➔ Is high teacher turn-over a concern for our school and community? Have we generally maintained a stable teaching staff, or do our teachers come and go more often than we'd like?

**WHO LOSES WHEN TEACHERS LEAVE TOO OFTEN? *EVERYONE IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY!***

- **Students** lose from unnecessary transitions, gaps in instruction, lack of consistency, and confusion about why teachers are coming and going.
- **Parents** lose when experienced teachers leave and families have to continually adjust and get to know new teachers.
- **Principals** lose because they have to bring new teachers into their school communities, take time for orientations, and spend time helping new teachers to fully understand the school's mission, vision, and unique characteristics.
- **Schools** lose when they have to start again with professional development, and because student, parent and community confidence in the school is reduced.
- **Communities** lose because it is expensive to recruit new teachers and high teacher turn-over can make community members question the school's practices.

**THE COSTS OF THIS PROBLEM ARE SIGNIFICANT**

The most serious long-term consequences of high teacher turnover are loss of teaching quality and consistency and lower levels of student achievement.

The financial costs can also be staggering.

- It has been estimated that each teacher who leaves costs about \$11,000 to replace, not including the indirect costs related to lost investments in professional development and lost curriculum and school-specific knowledge.

That means ... instead of spending resources on building an experienced and high quality education staff, critical funding is used to cover the costs of teachers leaving — hiring substitutes, recruiting and hiring new teachers, providing orientations, etc.

The non-financial costs are also troubling.

- Students and families lose confidence in schools that have high rates of teacher turn-over.
- Unexpected changes in staffing cause vacancies that are unplanned and difficult to address in a timely way.
- This can result in lost learning time and upsetting transitions for students.

**Teacher Retention Challenges Often Are Most Serious for Schools That Are Least Equipped to Manage Them**

Widespread research indicates that schools in areas that have high rates of family poverty are particularly hard-hit by teachers leaving.

- New teachers frequently begin their careers at schools that have historically experienced staffing difficulties, and where resources may be most scarce. This means that students in these schools often have the least experienced teachers.
- Struggling schools that have limited student achievement often have the greatest difficulty retaining a critical mass of veteran teachers. Surveys show that teachers who switch schools tend to move to places where student achievement is higher.

Students can suffer the most in these circumstances.



## Talking Points

- ➔ What costs have we experienced because of teacher turn-over?
- ➔ Has teacher turn-over negatively effected our students? Our families?
- ➔ What do our students, families, and community members think about our teacher retention and employment practices and trends?

## WHY DO TEACHERS LEAVE?

When asked why they leave the profession, teachers' answers can be surprising.

- Evidence suggests that their wage level is often **not** the primary reason.
- In numerous surveys, more teachers report the importance of working conditions in their decision to stay or not stay in the teaching profession generally, and in a specific teaching position.
- Commonly cited reasons for teachers leaving include:
  - Limited support from the school's administration
  - Lack of satisfaction with the workplace environment
  - Inadequate influence within the school / school system
  - Insufficient time / workload concerns
  - Excessive student discipline problems
- New teachers especially are often not fully prepared for the emotional toll that teaching can take. This issue can be particularly problematic if the community in which they are working is unstable or unequipped to support the school staff.
- When new teachers are expected to assume a full schedule of classes, create lesson plans, develop teaching techniques, and learn classroom-management strategies ... they can often become overwhelmed. It is also difficult if new teachers are expected to take on extra-curricular activities that could possibly be handled by local staff.

"Understanding why teachers leave is the first step to getting them to stay."

“Teachers want to know that their school is organized for success and that they will be supported in pursuing that success.”

- If teachers lack adequate resources and collegial support, or if facilities are not conducive to building a school culture, problems can be compounded.
- Some schools have a policy of laying off teachers each spring and hiring them back each fall, or providing only yearly contracts. This can be very unsettling for teachers, causing some to seek other, sometimes more secure, occupations. High quality teachers should be encouraged with long-term contracts and more certainty.

### WHAT CAN BE DONE?

In focusing attention on retaining quality teachers, schools should build upon a wealth of resources, both within the school and in the community, which can support teacher retention efforts.

#### Make Schools Places Where Teachers Feel They Are Making a Difference

Since working conditions are so often the reason for teachers leaving, changing the culture of schools should be a primary target of teacher retention efforts.

For schools to thrive over time, they must retain top teachers ... *and put their skills to use.*

- Schools that have a safe environment for students, staff, parents and community members often have higher retention rates.
- Cultural change should involve the creation of learning communities – schools that are learner-centered, assessment-centered, knowledge-centered, and community-centered.
- Surveys show that schools with weak instructional cultures lose twice as many of their best teachers as do schools with strong cultures.
- Teachers who feel that they have the ability to influence students and make a positive impact on student outcomes more often report that they want to stay in their positions.
- Schools that do a better job of managing, coping with, and responding to student behavioral issues have far better teacher retention.

- Teachers look for schools where they can feel like professionals — sharing ideas and resources with colleagues and receiving respect and guidance, and where the school culture and norms reflect that respect for all.
- Buildings in which teachers have more say — where they feel their voice counts — have distinctly better retention rates.

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**SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IS KEY**

A strong instructional leader is crucial for building a school culture that makes teachers feel respected and encourages them to participate in school improvement efforts as valuable contributors and lifelong learners.

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 **Talking Points**

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- ➔ How is our school culture? Is it a place where people feel they can make a difference?
- 

“Teachers want to be recognized as professionals who have expertise and can make good learning decisions for their students.”



## SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS

Recognizing the need to adequately support education staff, FNEESC and the FNSA offer a number of relevant programs and services for educators employed by First Nations schools.

In-school coaching is available to assist education staff with First Nations language and culture programming, literacy instruction and the use of student assessment techniques.

A Principal Short Course is offered each August to offer professional development for school principals and vice principals.

Teachers and principals are invited to join collective Professional Learning Communities, in order to build and share their skills and experience.

A Professional Growth Process provides mentoring for school principals to assist them in supporting teachers and promoting a school culture of continued growth and high expectations for all.

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### Focus on Strong Induction Programs for New Teachers

One approach to reducing teacher turn-over is viewing the first years of teaching as a phase of learning that builds on their teacher preparation program.

- If they receive no support during their first years in the classroom, many teachers will leave their positions. Other teachers may remain in their jobs, but learn poor practices as they attempt to cope with their struggles alone.
- New teachers who receive no induction are twice as likely to leave teaching after their first year as those who are provided specific supports.
- Teachers who get those ingredients on a steady basis are more satisfied with their jobs and show higher levels of student outcomes.

Teachers who have even just two small initiatives in place (eg. working with a mentor and having regular supportive communication with an administrator) are more likely to stay in the classroom.

- Time, effort, and resources are needed to support novice teachers, but the rewards in terms of teacher retention are substantial.
  - Investing in the short term yields long-term payoffs in terms of higher quality teachers who remain in their schools longer.
  - In fact, not only do good induction and support programs retain teachers, but they also attract teachers. Many new teachers are attracted to settings that offer specific professional development programs that will increase their professional knowledge and skills and support their professional growth as successful educators.
- 

#### WHAT SUPPORTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

- Access to high quality and sustained mentoring / coaching opportunities, with mentors / coaches who have been trained to analyze and evaluate instruction effectively and discuss their findings in a useful way.
  - Opportunities to collaborate regularly with other teachers in the same subject and having time for common planning.
  - Release time so teachers can observe other classrooms.
  - A chance to be part of an external network of teachers.
  - Continual support from school leaders. Both the principal and school governing agency have a key role to play – roles that should be clearly defined, and in a way that emphasizes the principals' responsibilities for instructional leadership.
- 

#### Give Sufficient Consideration and Time To Professional Development

All teachers benefit from school-based, collaborative learning opportunities.

Helping teachers improve their instruction and promote student learning can proactively address the classroom management issues experienced by many teachers – which are often key factors in teachers leaving their jobs.

**“A management style grounded in respect for all in the school environment, along with strong communication and interpersonal skills and effective organizational strategies, encourages all teachers to feel supported and creates individuals’ commitment to the school and to their teaching responsibilities.”**

- New teachers in particular can be so overwhelmed by their workload, they don’t have extra time for their own learning. If they are not granted release time, they may end up going without professional development.
- Professional development opportunities that are available must be clearly communicated, and they must be focused and relevant for teachers.

### **Ensure the School Principal Supports Teacher Retention**

The quality of principal leadership is one of the most significant variables in a teacher’s decision to stay in a teaching position.

Principals not only need to support novice and struggling teachers; they also need to support life long learning for master teachers.

Schools with a low turnover of teachers have principals who demonstrate the following skills and management styles.

- Welcoming conversations with staff about teaching. Positive relationships, an open and transparent school culture, clear communications ... these things establish the vision for people who come to work at the school.
- Overseeing a safe and orderly school environment, with active support for teachers dealing with disciplinary issues. This factor includes establishing clear policies and procedures that promote security and well-being for everyone.
- Consistently demonstrating a respectful administrative approach toward all staff, students, parents, and community members.
- Developing the leadership skills of school staff through effective instructional leadership and ongoing coaching for improvement.
- Providing materials and supplies to all teachers in a consistent, timely and inclusive manner, and managing school facilities to facilitate their effective use and enjoyment by the entire school community.

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Leaders need to make the school a place where people want to be, which can start by examining what has been called the “fun and caring factors” in the school.

- Is there laughter in the school?
  - Are people smiling?
  - Do teachers want to be here?
  - Do teachers feel that they have a school colleague who they also consider a friend?
  - Is the school staff united or are there cliques?
  - Are new staff members welcomed?
  - Does the school have celebrations?
  - Does the school treat mistakes as learning experiences, or opportunities to criticize?
  - Does the school encourage risk-taking?
- 

Additionally ...

- Every school should have a mission statement and a vision based on shared values and beliefs. School principles should involve all staff in realizing that vision.
- Good leaders encourage other people to be leaders and help bring out those qualities.

How?

- If teachers attend a conference or workshop, have them share their new knowledge with the rest of the staff.
- Have experienced teachers work together to solve an instructional problem.
- Provide growth opportunities, such as allowing strong, experienced teachers to remain in the classroom while taking on additional responsibilities, recognition and compensation.

- Help guide professional development opportunities so they are tailored to school and teacher needs, and are not overwhelming for school staff.

And remember ... principals need support, too, so they are able to fulfill their critical roles and responsibilities. It is very difficult to maintain a stable staff without an effective principal.



### **Talking Points**

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- Is our school a place where people feel safe? Comfortable? Happy?
  - Do our staff feel that they have opportunities to take on leadership responsibilities?
  - Does our staff have access to the resources they need to do their jobs?
-

## RECOGNIZE EXEMPLARY TEACHERS

Research shows that formal and informal recognition of teachers' achievements increases their satisfaction and improves retention of all teachers.

Pay isn't everything, but it can matter.

"Pay scales and compensation practices can signal that teachers' skills and attributes are valued and what kinds of contributions are rewarded."

If at all possible ... financial incentives *can* help encourage teachers to stay.

Even without financial rewards, evidence clearly shows that when teachers' contributions are celebrated, they stay longer.

For example ...

- awards ceremonies and community gatherings can help teachers feel valued.
- expressions of appreciation in newsletters and at community meetings encourage teachers to remain in the school and community.
- notes of praise and comments that provide positive reinforcement can make a real difference to teachers' satisfaction levels.



### Talking Points

- ➔ What does our school and community do to recognize our teachers?
- ➔ Are our wages competitive and reasonable?
- ➔ Are there other things we can do to provide non-monetary incentives and rewards?

"Pay scales and compensation practices can signal that teachers' skills and attributes are valued and what kinds of contributions are rewarded."

**WHAT CAN WE DO?**

Meet the  
teacher nights

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Education nights

---

Lunch with the  
principal / teacher

---

Extra-curricular  
involvement

---

Games nights

---

Karaoke night

---

Talent nights

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**RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF PARENTS**

In schools where parental engagement is high, teachers are more satisfied and often more likely to stay in the profession.

Family support is a factor in student achievement and families make great teacher allies. But effective relations must be intentionally constructed.

Involving parents, families and the community in meaningful ways is critical to the success of students and influences a teacher's decision about continuing in a particular school or leaving it to go somewhere else.

School leaders need to look for ways to involve the community.

- Leaders can include parents on the school's interviewing and hiring committee to illustrate parent involvement in important activities.
- School leaders should go beyond simply involving the community to creating *relationships* among the school, families and the community.
- Leaders can seek to make available health, social, mental health, counseling and other family services in the school. Leaders can generate a broad set of activities in which family and community members can participate and contribute their talents to the school.
- Most educators and parents have had no training on how to work with one another, and many fear and avoid one another. Schools can consider training on how to work together and create non-threatening social activities to bring them together.

**SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS**

More details about and suggestions for family and community engagement are included in the publication *Providing Educational Leadership: A Handbook for Principals in First Nations Schools (Revised 2012)* and the publication *Capacity Building Handbook: Leading First Nations Schools in BC*, which was created for First Nations school governing agencies.

A First Nations Parents Club is also organized to promote parental engagement and to celebrate their contributions to their children's education through incentives, recognition, and information sharing.

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 **Talking Points**


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- Are we satisfied with our level of parent and community engagement?
  - If not, what more is needed?
  - What have we done to find out if our families and community are satisfied with their involvement?
- 

### **ENCOURAGE TEACHERS TO FOCUS ON THEIR PERSONAL WELL-BEING**

If teachers are to experience success, they must develop coping mechanisms to deal with the many stresses that accompany the profession.

Workload is often identified as the number one reason why teachers leave. Teachers need adequate planning time and reasonable work expectations.

It can also be helpful to design structures for team planning and collaboration so teachers do not feel isolated – personally and professionally.

School leaders can identify efficiencies that might conserve teachers' time, which can help prevent teachers from leaving due to work-life imbalances.

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 **Talking Points**


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- Do we know how our teachers feel about their work and their personal well-being?
  - If not, should we find out? How will we do that?
- 

“Schools must be as committed to teacher success and well-being as they are to student success and well-being if they want to retain good teachers and provide students with the best learning environment possible.”

#### **WHAT CAN WE DO?**

Staff days

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Staff retreats

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Etc. etc.

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### GO TO THE SOURCE

- If teacher retention is a challenge for your school, ask the school staff why teachers are leaving, what problems might exist, and what can be done.
- Ask teachers who leave why they are making that choice. Be open to honest responses.
- If a teacher leaves the school, follow-up with other school staff to discuss what happened and whether any difficulties could have been avoided.
- The only way to address this issue effectively is with the right information. It is important to identify the root causes and any problems.
- Depending upon what problems exist, a team of people may explore in more detail reasons why teachers are leaving and what can be done, thinking about past experience and what might be possible given each school and community's circumstances.
- It is usually helpful to include key school partners, parents, families, and community stakeholders in discussions and planning.
- Even if a significant problem does not exist, it is useful to be pro-active about teacher retention. If teachers aren't leaving, make sure they continue to stay!
- Celebrate your successes – either in building or sustaining positive teacher retention.

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 **Talking Points**

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- ➔ Have we developed a plan for the retention of teachers?
  - ➔ If teachers leave, do we collectively consider why? Can we ask ourselves: did aspects of the school culture encourage the teachers to leave; was the teacher not a “good fit” for the school, or was the teacher dissatisfied with specific aspects of the school; should anything be changed to avoid similar problems in the future.
-

## **A WORD ABOUT EXIT INTERVIEWS**

The best time for employees to discuss concerns, dissatisfaction, and suggestions is while they are still committed to working in your school, not when they are on the way out the door. It can be useful to provide multiple opportunities to gather and learn from employee feedback, including surveys, staff meetings, and more. But exit interviews also can be key to school improvement since they are an opportunity for honest feedback. In exit interviews you'll find that some items were resolvable with earlier information but others are not. Unfortunately, if you are hearing about improvement ideas or employee concerns at the exit interview, it is too late to take action to improve or help the exiting employee. However, the information can be helpful in improving the working conditions for the staff who remain and for new employees who join the school in the future.

An exit interview could be done by the Nation's administrator / human resources coordinator, or FNEESC Regional Principals are available to assist in completing this task. Schools that do not have an assigned Regional Principal can still access this support.

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## Sample Exit Interview Questions

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Why have you decided to leave our school?

Have you shared your concerns with anyone in the school or community prior to deciding to leave? What was the response?

Was a single event responsible for your decision to leave?

What does another school offer that encouraged you to accept their offer and leave?

What do you value about our school? What did you dislike about the school?

The quality of supervision is important to most people at work. How was your relationship with the principal?

Could the principal do anything to improve his or her leadership style or skills?

What did you like most about your job?

What did you dislike about your job? What would you change?

Do you feel you had the resources and support necessary to accomplish your job? If not, what was missing?

What was your experience of the school culture?

Were your teaching responsibilities communicated accurately during the interview process and orientation?

Did you have clear goals and know what was expected of you?

Did you receive meaningful feedback about your performance and possible areas for improvement?

Did you clearly understand and feel a part of the accomplishment of the school's mission, vision and goals?

Describe your experience of the school's commitment to high expectations for all.

Did you feel that the school cared about and helped you accomplish your personal and professional development and career goals?

What would you recommend to help us create a better workplace?

Do the policies and procedures of the school help to create a well-managed, consistent, and fair workplace in which expectations are clearly defined?

Do the school policies and procedures help to sustain a safe environment for everyone?

Describe the qualities and characteristics of a person who is likely to succeed in this school.

What are the key qualities and skills we should seek in your replacement?

Do you have any recommendations regarding our compensation, benefits and other reward and recognition efforts?

What would make you consider working for this school again in the future? Would you recommend the school as a good place to work?

Can you offer any other comments that will enable us to understand why you are leaving, how we can improve, and what we can do to become a better place to work?

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End the exit interview meeting on a positive note. Commit to using the information provided to improve your workplace. Wish your employee success in his or her new endeavor. End the exit interview graciously.

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## AND A WORD ABOUT PRINCIPAL RETENTION

The most recent evidence is definite: when strong principals are in place, they positively effect ...

- school culture
- teacher satisfaction
- parent, student and community confidence
- instructional quality
- student achievement and teacher retention

Research says that not a single school has ever been found to accomplish significant turn-around without a powerful leader at the helm of the change effort.

- But high rates of principal turn-over are a significant concern.
- It has been estimated that 50% of new principals quit before the end of their third year in the role.
- Additionally, many principals who do remain in the profession often do not stay in challenging schools, and instead move to less demanding settings.
- These issues can make it difficult for schools to initiate and sustain school improvement efforts, especially if adequate plans are not made to retain principals and prepare for inevitable transitions.



### Talking Points

- ➔ Does our community adequately value our principal? Do we really understand the importance of a principal in leading our school to success?
- ➔ How often have we had to hire a new principal in the past? Is this a problem for our community and school, or is this an area of relative success?

## WHY DO PRINCIPALS LEAVE?

Principals leave for many reasons.

In some studies, principals identified four key obstacles:

- Excessive workload and managerial tasks that prevent meaningful attention to instructional leadership
- Stress and too much negative impact on their physical and emotional well-being
- Not enough direct involvement in making and implementing critical decisions, such as truly collaborating with the school governing agency for hiring, firing, and budgeting
- A profound sense of professional isolation

These issues are even more difficult in challenging settings, where there are often more complex issues and pressure to increase performance quickly.



### **Talking Points**

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- ➔ Has our school carefully considered the roles and responsibilities of our principal and our governing agency? Is there a reasonable balance between principal autonomy and accountability to the community and families?
  - ➔ Would it be beneficial to discuss the principal's satisfaction with the working conditions?
-

A 2012 MetLife survey found that where 1 in 3 principals were thinking of leaving the job, principals who experienced professional learning with principal peers were 14 percent more satisfied with their job and 7 percent less likely to anticipate leaving the profession.

### WHAT ENCOURAGES PRINCIPALS TO STAY?

- Invest in ongoing professional development.
- Support your principal's participation in meaningful networking opportunities.
- Encourage your principal to access mentoring and one-to-one support opportunities – such as the Professional Growth Process and the Principal Professional Learning Community. These types of initiatives are important for both new and experienced principals! **All** principals need to feel less isolated.
- Help your principal take advantage of community resources and relationships.
- Develop specific school improvement targets and expectations for the school and staff collaboratively with your principal, and support school-wide capacity building efforts.

## A FINAL WORD

The evidence is clear . . . educator retention is a key aspect of schools' success, and attention to keeping teachers and principals in their positions will have long-term benefits that make related investments well worthwhile. Schools that keep their teachers and principals longer create benefits for students, families, and the community.

And the good news is that practices can be implemented to make a real difference in whether educators decide to leave or stay.

It is also important to remember that some teacher and principal turn-over is inevitable, as staff will occasionally leave for retirement, for family responsibilities, or to access new, exciting opportunities. Ideally, schools and communities will plan for those changes and work positively and collaboratively with their staffs to prepare for unavoidable transitions.

Overall, a positive and comprehensive approach to teacher and principal recruitment, retention and transitions is needed to maintain positive learning environments for all.

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# Criminal Record Checks

The information included in this Handbook is NOT presented as, or intended to serve as, legal advice. First Nations are encouraged to seek independent legal advice as required regarding their particular employment circumstances.

Especially in the event that difficulties arise, school representatives are encouraged to obtain further advice to understand how the suggestions apply to their situation.

## WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS?

It is imperative that all First Nations schools ensure that individuals who work with children directly, or who have unsupervised access to children, have successfully completed a criminal record check.

Normally, written offers of employment for anyone who will be involved with children should include a criminal record check as a condition of employment.

This pamphlet outlines the steps to be taken to address this issue. The information is separated for First Nations schools that have Independent school status and those that do not, as the requirements and procedures are different in each of those cases.



# Information for First Nations Schools That Have Independent School Status

## Background

**For First Nations schools that are subject to the British Columbia *Independent School Act*:**

- Employees are subject to the *Criminal Records Review Act* (CRRRA).
- The CRRRA *requires* that individuals who work with children directly, or have unsupervised access to children, undergo a CRRRA (criminal records) Check. This includes:
  - teachers
  - custodians
  - administrative support
  - non-teaching staff
  - principals
- When an individual is offered employment that involves working with children, the individual must provide a criminal record check authorization to the employer. Offers of employment should be conditional upon the employer receiving a satisfactory criminal record check.
- Employees must undergo a criminal record check at least once every 5 years.
- During a CRRRA Check, the Criminal Records Review Program will carry out a check for offences most relevant to those working with children. Relevant offenses include most violent and sexual offenses, as well as some drug offenses.

## Process for Employee Record Checks – Independent Schools

*Online*

Each school must enroll in the online criminal record check service, eCRC (Form CRR020 found here: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/crime-prevention/criminal-record-check/crr020-enrol.pdf>.)

The Criminal Records Review Program will confirm enrolment of your school in writing and provide a unique link to direct your employees to the online service.

Employees will access the unique link and will have to pay a \$28 processing fee, which may be paid by credit card within the online service when submitting a request for a criminal record check.

Employees then may request to share their results between one or more organizations registered with the Criminal Records Review Program.

## Process for Employee Record Checks – Independent Schools continued ...

### Paper

If the online service electronic identity verification fails for any reason, if the employee has no computer or Internet access, or if the criminal record check or sharing request cannot be completed online, the organization must re-confirm the ID of the applicant in person (see ID verification requirements below) and submit the paper consent form (Form CRR010) by fax or mail to the Criminal Record Review Program: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/crime-prevention/criminal-record-check/crr010-employer-consent.pdf>.

Employees can bring the completed consent form along with one piece of primary identification and one piece of secondary identification as well as their \$28 fee to the employer, who must submit the employee's request for a CRRRA check to the government on their behalf.

Primary identification includes:

- B.C. Driver's License or learner's license (must have your photo)
- BCID
- BC Services Card (must have photo)
- Canadian birth certificate
- Passport
- Canadian Citizenship Card
- Permanent Resident Card
- Canadian Record of Landing/Canadian
- Immigration Identification Record

Secondary identification includes:

- School ID card (student card)
- Bank card (only if applicant's name is on card)
- Credit card (only if applicant's name is on card)
- Foreign birth certificate (a baptismal certificate is not acceptable)
- Canadian or U.S. Driver's License
- Naturalization certificate
- Canadian Forces identification
- Police identification
- Foreign Affairs Canada or consular identification
- Vehicle registration (only if applicant's signature is shown)
- Picture employee ID card
- Canadian Firearms License (PAL)
- Social Insurance Card (new style without signature strip not acceptable)
- BC Care Card
- BC Services Card (with or without photo)
- Native Status Card
- Parole Certificate ID
- Correctional Service Conditional Release Card

In order to pay the \$28 fee, the employee will have to fill out the Application for Pre-Authorized Credit Card Usage Form: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/crime-prevention/criminal-record-check/crr012-creditcard.pdf>. I

If the employee does not have a credit card, they will need to provide a money order or certified cheque. Regular cheques or cash cannot be sent.

After verifying the employee's identification using one piece of primary and one piece of secondary ID, the school should make a copy of the completed consent form for its file and then mail or fax the original form to the Criminal Records Review Program along with the payment form, money order or certified cheque.

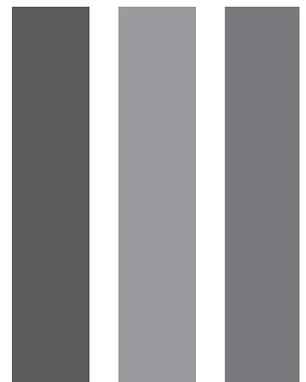
### Fingerprinting

Initial results of the CRRRA check may indicate the existence of a criminal record or outstanding charge for a relevant offence. Verification of the employee's identity or the results may be required, for example, if a combination of their name, gender or birth date is the same or similar to a known offender's name, gender or birth date.

If fingerprint verification of the employee's identity or results is required, the Criminal Records Review Program will mail the employee an information package telling them fingerprints are required and describing what to do and where to go to submit their fingerprints (usually a local police detachment, whether RCMP or municipal police).

The police will charge individuals a fee for submitting fingerprints.

Verification of identity or confirmation of results usually will take 4-8 additional weeks to complete following the date of fingerprints submission.



# Information for First Nations Schools That Do Not Have Independent Status

## Background

For First Nations Schools that are not subject to provincial regulation, there are two kinds of record checks.

- A “Criminal Record Check” verifies whether an individual has a criminal record and provides the applicant information that can be legally disclosed.
- A “Vulnerable Sector Check” is an enhanced criminal record check that provides information about whether a person has a criminal record and any pardons for sexual offences, and also searches local police records.

Criminal Record Checks and Vulnerable Sector Checks are not required for employees of First Nations Schools that are not subject to provincial regulation.

**However, it is *highly advisable* for employees to have a Criminal Record Check, and for employees working closely with children to have a Vulnerable Sector Check.**

Good practice would be for employees to undergo a Criminal Record Check at least once every 5 years.

## Procedures for Getting a Police Information Check (Criminal Record Check or a Vulnerable Sector Check)

### Criminal Record Check

To obtain a Criminal Record Check, employees should be directed to a local police station to fill out an application.

The employee will need to specify their job title and name of the school. They will also need to provide their full name, date of birth, sex, mailing address, phone number, and applicable fees.

### Fingerprinting – Criminal Record Check

Fingerprints may have to be submitted as part of the process once a query based on name and date of birth is conducted. If fingerprints are required, they can be taken at a local police station or with an accredited company such as the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires (ph. 1-877-322-6777).

### Vulnerable Sector Check

Only a police service of local jurisdiction can conduct and issue the results of a Vulnerable Sector Check. This could be RCMP or municipal police. Schools requesting a Vulnerable Sector Check must refer applicants to the police service of local jurisdiction where the individual **resides**. Different police services will have different procedures so it is best to call ahead.

The employee will have to bring two pieces of government issued ID, one with a photo, when they go for a Vulnerable Sector Check. If there is not proof of current address on at least one piece of identification, the employee will have to bring a utility bill or something to indicate their most recent address.

When the employee goes for a Vulnerable Sector Check, they will also be required to provide a letter from the employer. That letter:

- Must be on original organization letterhead
- Must include an original signature
- Must state the organization is requesting that a Vulnerable Sector Check be done (i.e. “we request a Vulnerable Sector Check be done for [insert name] as they will or may be working with children under the age of 18 in the position of [insert type of position being applied for]”).
- Must include a description of how the position deals with vulnerable persons.

The police service will complete a Vulnerable Sector Check based on the name and date of birth of the applicant.

The check will include:

- criminal convictions, outstanding criminal charges and warrants, and other judicial orders
- non-convictions and files where the employee was a suspect in a substantiated offence

Fees will vary depending on the local police service but there is a minimum \$25 base fee.

Once the Vulnerable Sector Check is completed, the police services completing the Vulnerable Sector Check will send the results to the employee or to the requesting employer.

The police service will complete a Vulnerable Sector Check based on the name and date of birth of the applicant.

## Process for Employee Record Checks – Non-Independent First Nations Schools continued ...

### Fingerprinting – Vulnerable Sector Check

If the Vulnerable Sector search is inconclusive, a fingerprint-based search will be required. The employee will have to visit the nearest police service to have their fingerprints taken electronically. If the police service is not equipped to take electronic fingerprints, employees will be referred to accredited private fingerprinting companies or other partners to take fingerprints on their behalf. There will be an additional fee for fingerprinting services.

Results can take up to 4 weeks where there is no fingerprint match. If there is a match to a fingerprint record in the RCMP database, or if the employee's fingerprints need to be processed manually for any reason, the processing time could be up to 120 days or longer.

## Note for Non-Independent First Nations Schools

Please note that any school interested in accessing Reciprocal Tuition from the Province of BC must meet the following requirement:

- The school's teachers and staff have undergone a criminal record check if they:
  - work with children directly; and/or
  - have, or potentially have, unsupervised access to children.

More information about Reciprocal Tuition is available in the *Reciprocal Tuition Handbook for Non-Independent First Nations Schools*. 2016 Edition. Available at [www.fnesc.ca](http://www.fnesc.ca).

## A Final Consideration for All First Nations Schools

First Nations schools and their School Governing Agencies are also encouraged to consider whether criminal record checks should be requested for volunteers who will have unsupervised access to children.

## Concluding Comments

FNESC and the FNSA strongly recommend that all First Nations schools ensure that employee record checks have been effectively addressed. This is a key aspect of schools' efforts to promote safe environments for all students and to promote confidence for parents and the community. FNESC and the FNSA would be pleased to provide additional support if requested.

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