

# 2013

Province of British Columbia

**ABORIGINAL POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND  
TRAINING POLICY FRAMEWORK & ACTION PLAN:  
2020 VISION FOR THE FUTURE  
REPORT OUT FOR 2013**

## About this report

This report is the first produced by the Ministry of Advanced Education and the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners on our progress in achieving the goals, objectives and outcomes identified in the *Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework & Action Plan*.

### Background

British Columbia faces a decade of economic change, with acute skills shortages anticipated in key sectors of the economy. The Aboriginal<sup>1</sup> population of British Columbia is young, dynamic and growing, and has tremendous potential to fill the jobs of the future. Investing in their education and training will help address labour market challenges, position Aboriginal peoples to take advantage of economic opportunities, and enhance their participation in the social, cultural and economic life of their communities. The benefits of post-secondary education accrue to individuals, communities and society, and are associated with better labour market outcomes, better health outcomes, better outcomes for children, lower crime rates, and higher levels of civic participation.<sup>2</sup>

Launched in 2012, the *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* was developed by a working group of British Columbia's Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Partners, including the First Nations Education Steering Committee, the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association, the Métis Nation BC, the First Nations Public Service, British Columbia Colleges, British Columbia Association of Institutes and Universities, the Research Universities' Council of British Columbia, and federal and provincial ministries.

*"It's the very first time in 30 years now that I've been involved in education that I've seen a document that actually has strategies to move forward and to empower Aboriginal students and communities. When we empower Aboriginal students and communities, we empower all of B.C. and all of Canada."*

**-Deanne Nyce, President and CEO  
Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a Institute, 2012**

The *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* is intended to help Aboriginal learners succeed in an integrated, relevant, and effective post-secondary education system. It encompasses all post-secondary education and training programs, including adult basic education, vocational, career, business, trades, undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

<sup>1</sup> "Aboriginal" and "First Nations, Métis and Inuit" are used interchangeably in the *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* and are both used to be inclusive of all Aboriginal peoples in the province, whether or not they have status or have a connection to a particular community; recognizing that many peoples prefer the terms that are specific and traditional to their communities. Aboriginal learners are defined in this document as students with Aboriginal ancestry who self-identified in the B.C. K-12 education system or who self-identify as Aboriginal at a B.C. public post-secondary institution.

<sup>2</sup> Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation. 2009. "The Value of a Degree: Education, Employment and Earnings in Canada," in *The Price of Knowledge: Access and Student Finance in Canada*.

The *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* is one of several government initiatives underway to provide Aboriginal people with the necessary education and training to participate in the economy. The Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training supports new investments in programs and services for Aboriginal learners through the *Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Agreement*, while the Industry Training Authority is taking steps to increase the representation of Aboriginal peoples in the trades through a wide range of actions.

## Report structure

This report covers our progress to date in meeting the targets set out for 2013, 2016 and 2020. The content refers to the 2012/13 academic year unless stated otherwise. Some initiatives may be captured more than once if they impact more than one action or result. The report concentrates on activities implemented by the Partners under the *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan*, but also highlights other initiatives undertaken by public post-secondary institutions to contribute to Aboriginal learners' success as part of our ongoing commitment to share promising practices.

*"After this first year, we can see the potential transformation opportunities under this groundbreaking document. There is still a long way to go, but working together as partners we will be able to achieve real change for Aboriginal students and communities, and the post-secondary system in BC as a whole."*

## Looking forward

Ensuring we continue to meet our goals will require further planning and action, including coordinated efforts from the provincial and federal governments; Aboriginal communities, institutes and organizations; and public post-secondary institutions. Over the coming months, the Partners will develop an implementation plan that will outline the necessary steps to meet our deliverables between now and 2020 and contribute to the long-term success of Aboriginal learners.

***-Tyrone McNeil, President of First Nations Education Steering Committee, 2013.***

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## Table of contents

<b>Vision for 2020, continuing commitments and guiding principles</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Long-term outcomes of the policy framework</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Goal 1: systemic change</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Goal 2: support community-based delivery of programs</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Goal 3: reduce financial barriers</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Goal 4: seamless transition</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Goal 5: continuous improvement</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Summary of progress on framework results</b>	<b>38</b>

## Vision for 2020

The long-term vision for the *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* is that Aboriginal learners succeed in an integrated, relevant, and effective British Columbia post-secondary education system that enhances their participation in the social, cultural and economic life of their communities, the province, and global society.

## Continuing commitments

The *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* recognizes the commitments made by the Government of British Columbia, First Nations, and the Métis Nation BC, including:

- A *New Relationship* between the provincial government and First Nations that is government-to-government and is based on respect, recognition and accommodation of Aboriginal title and rights.
- The *Transformative Change Accord* signed in November 2005 by the Government of British Columbia, British Columbia First Nations and the Government of Canada, “to achieve the goals of closing the social and economic gap between First Nations and other British Columbians over the next 10 years ... and of establishing a new relationship based upon mutual respect and recognition.”
- The *Métis Nation Relationship Accord* signed in May 2006 by the Government of British Columbia and Métis Nation British Columbia, to work towards closing the gap on the quality of life between Métis people and other British Columbians.

The *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* is also consistent with the commitments made by Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners in 2005. The Partners—consisting of the First Nations Summit, the Assembly of First Nations, Métis Nation British Columbia, the United Native Nations Society, the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association, the Ministry of Advanced Education, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, BC Colleges, British Columbia Association of Institutes and Universities, and the Research Universities’ Council of British Columbia —committed to improve levels of participation and success for Aboriginal learners in post-secondary education and training in British Columbia in the 2005 *Memorandum of Understanding on Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training*.

Finally, the *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* builds on the *Tripartite Education Framework Agreement* signed in 2012 between the Government of Canada, Government of British Columbia and First Nations, which establishes a new and more flexible funding model for First Nations schools, providing students with access to quality education programs that will allow them to transfer seamlessly to provincial public schools.

## Guiding principles

The *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* is guided by the following principles:

1. Recognition and support for the right of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples to self-determination and the role of post-secondary education in facilitating and supporting self-determination.
2. An acknowledgement of and respect for the diverse histories, languages, cultures, values, ways of knowing, and knowledge systems of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, the importance of place and land-based rights to First Nations, and recognition that the post-secondary system has a role in sharing this understanding with all British Columbians.
3. An affirmation that First Nations, Métis and Inuit languages and cultures are critical components of quality educational programming and are essential to support the success of Aboriginal learners.
4. Recognition that First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples are in the best position to inform the development of and decision-making around post-secondary education programs, policies and services for First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, working collaboratively within existing governance structures.
5. A commitment to develop respectful and ethical educational and research protocols and guidelines for addressing First Nations, Métis and Inuit knowledge systems, language, and culture.
6. A commitment to informed leadership and governance, shared responsibility, respectful relationships, and accountability for measurable outcomes in relation to Aboriginal learner success and systemic change within public post-secondary institutions.
7. Recognition of the unique, vital and complementary roles of Aboriginal-controlled post-secondary institutes and public post-secondary institutions in serving the needs of Aboriginal learners.
8. Support for successful transitions for Aboriginal learners throughout the lifelong learning continuum, and between public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal-controlled post-secondary institutes.
9. Support for innovative and flexible approaches to meet the needs of the diversity of Aboriginal learners in British Columbia's post-secondary education system.
10. Recognition that the work needed to achieve systemic change is significant and will take time, thus long term investments are required to ensure programs, policies and services that meet the needs of Aboriginal learners are systemic, strategic and sustainable.

## 2020 vision for the future

### **Social, Cultural and Economic Well-being**

***Aboriginal learners succeed in an integrated, relevant, and effective British Columbia post-secondary education system that enhances their participation in the social, cultural and economic life of their communities, the province, and global society***

**GOAL 1**  
Systemic change means the public post-secondary education system is relevant, responsive, respectful and receptive to Aboriginal learners and communities

**GOAL 2**  
Community-based delivery of programs is supported through partnerships between public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal institutes and communities

**GOAL 3**  
Financial barriers to accessing and completing post-secondary education and training are reduced for Aboriginal learners

**GOAL 4**  
Aboriginal learners transition seamlessly from K-12 to post-secondary education

**GOAL 5**  
Continuous improvement is based on research, data-tracking and sharing of leading practices

***Culturally Relevant Programs, Information and Services developed in collaboration with Aboriginal Communities and Organizations***

## Long-term outcomes of the policy framework

The *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* commits to achieving certain goals, objectives and actions to improve post-secondary and employment outcomes for Aboriginal learners.<sup>3</sup> It identifies two overarching outcomes—increase the number of credentials awarded to Aboriginal learners by 75 percent and the percentage of Aboriginal youth making the transition from K-12 to post-secondary education to 90 percent—both of which are to be achieved by the year 2020.

We are seeing progress, as more Aboriginal learners are being awarded credentials.<sup>4</sup> In 2011/12, 3,010 Aboriginal learners were awarded credentials. The proportion of credentials awarded from developmental programs is higher for Aboriginal learners (8%) than non-Aboriginal learners (2%). Developmental programs grant credentials below post-secondary level, including high school graduation diplomas.



At the same time, the number of Aboriginal learners awarded credentials at the bachelor's degree level increased by 25 percent between 2010/11 and 2011/12. Over the same period, the non-Aboriginal cohort saw a 4 percent increase in bachelor's degrees awarded.

While these improvements should be celebrated, it is important to note that they are the result of work that was initiated prior to the launch of the *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* in 2012. Furthermore, with the Aboriginal population growing at a significantly higher rate than the non-Aboriginal population, an increase in the overall number of credentials awarded is to be expected.

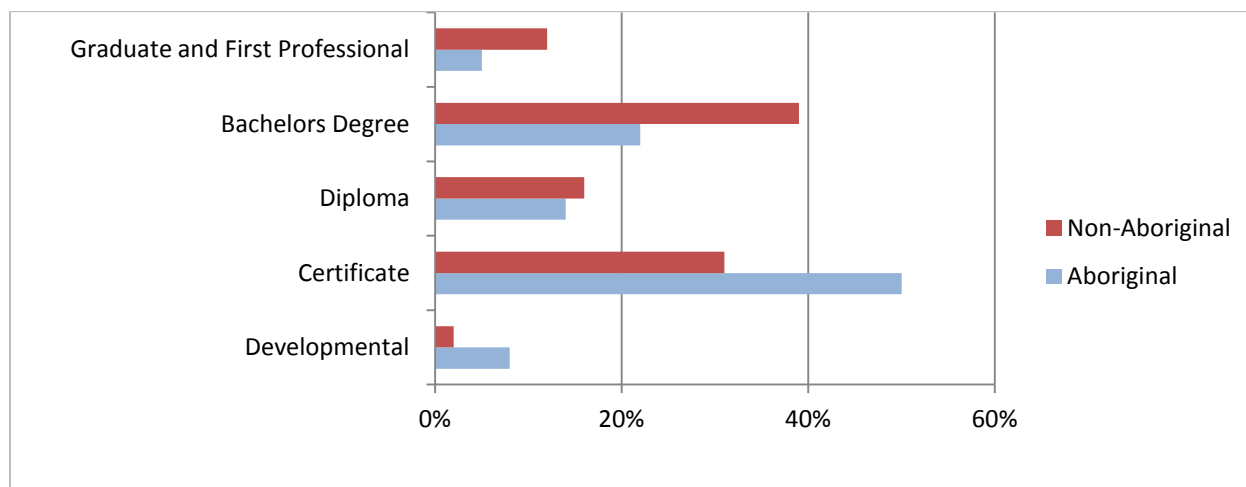
We are also seeing progress in the number of Aboriginal students making the transition from K-12 to the post-secondary education system within five years of graduating high school. These transitions include degree, diploma, certificate, developmental and short-certificate programs (e.g. FoodSafe, WHMIS etc). In 2011/12, 67 percent of Aboriginal learners made this transition, up from 65 percent in 2006/07.

<sup>3</sup> Aboriginal learners are students with Aboriginal ancestry who self-identified in the B.C. K-12 education system or who self-identify as Aboriginal at a B.C. public post-secondary institution.

<sup>4</sup> Credential data do not include apprenticeship, short certificate, and other programs that do not offer a credential in any of the listed credential types.

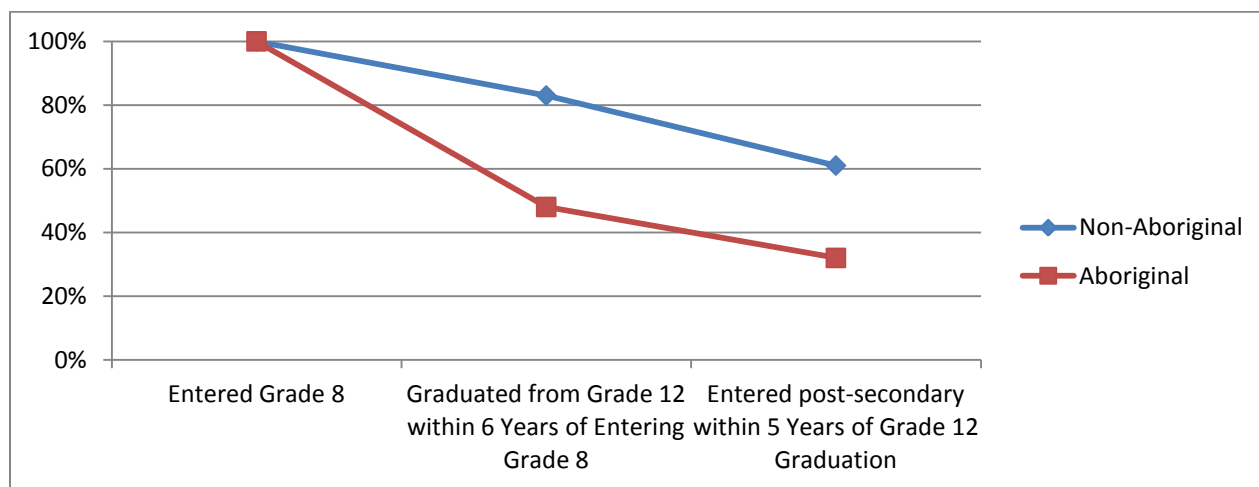


Figure 1: Credentials Awarded to Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Students in Public Post-Secondary in British Columbia, 2011/12<sup>5</sup>



Although these percentages represent improvements, much work remains to improve outcomes for Aboriginal learners, especially in ensuring more Aboriginal learners are retained in the K-12 system after grade 8. Only 32 percent of Aboriginal students who entered grade 8 went on to complete grade 12 and then transition to post-secondary education within five years of graduation (see Figure 2). By comparison, 61 percent of non-Aboriginal learners who entered grade 8 went on to complete grade 12 and then transition to post-secondary within five years of graduation.<sup>6</sup> Unlike data for credentials, data for transitions does include short term certificates.

Figure 2: Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Student Transitions



Source: BC Ministry of Advanced Education. 2013. *Student Transition Project Fast Facts*.

<sup>5</sup> Data about Aboriginal learners is collected through students with Aboriginal ancestry who self-identified in the B.C. K-12 education system or who self-identify as Aboriginal at a B.C. public post-secondary institution. Data do not include apprenticeship, short certificate, and other programs that do not offer a credential in any of the listed credential types.

<sup>6</sup> BC Ministry of Advanced Education. 2013. *Student Transition Project Fast Facts*. The document is available here: [http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student\\_transitions/documents/stp-fast-facts\\_2013-03-27](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/documents/stp-fast-facts_2013-03-27).

The percentage of Aboriginal learners who graduate from high school and immediately transition to the post-secondary system also continues to lag behind non-Aboriginal learners. In 2011/12 only 41 percent of Aboriginal learners who graduated from high school immediately made the transition, compared to 54 percent of non-Aboriginal learners. The five-year cumulative transition rate for Aboriginal learners at 67 per cent is still far below the long-term outcome of 90 per cent set out in the *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan*.

Many Aboriginal learners who graduate from high school and transition to post-secondary education—whether immediately or within the five-year cumulative period—are enrolling in developmental programs. In 2011/12, 17 percent of Aboriginal learners who transitioned to post-secondary education within five years of graduating from high school enrolled in developmental programs, compared to 7 percent of non-Aboriginal learners. At the same time, 20 percent of Aboriginal learners are enrolled in bachelor’s degree programs, compared to 37 percent of non-Aboriginal learners.<sup>7</sup>

Data on transitions from K-12 to post-secondary includes a small percentage of Aboriginal learners enrolling in short certificate and other programs (e.g. FoodSafe, WHMIS, etc.), many of which can be completed online and within hours. The enrolment rates in these programs tend to be the same or lower for Aboriginal learners than for non-Aboriginal learners. In 2011/12, 3 per cent of Aboriginal learners who graduated from high school immediately transitioned to short certificate and other programs, a rate identical to non-Aboriginal learners. Moreover, 3 percent of Aboriginal learners who transitioned to post-secondary education within five years of graduating from high school enrolled in short certificate and other programs, compared to 6 per cent of non-Aboriginal learners. The Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners are committed to working together to continue to improve the information we have on Aboriginal student progress and outcomes.

Result by 2020	Status
Increase the number of credentials awarded to Aboriginal learners by 75 percent (from 2,634 <sup>8</sup> in 2010/11 to 4,609 in 2020/21) <sup>9</sup>	Number of credentials awarded to Aboriginal learners was 3,010 in 2011/12.
Increase percentage of Aboriginal youth making the transition from K-12 to post-secondary education to 90 percent. <sup>10</sup>	Percentage of Aboriginal youth transitioning from K-12 to post-secondary education was 67 percent in 2011/12.

<sup>7</sup> Despite being over-represented in developmental programs and underrepresented in bachelor’s degree programs, Aboriginal high school graduates are almost twice as likely as non-Aboriginal students to transition into trades programs. In 2011/12, 11% of Aboriginal high school graduates transitioned into trades programs compared to only 6% of non-Aboriginal graduates.

<sup>8</sup> The 2,634 number is the total from the Ministry of Advanced Education Service Plan. The Service Plan total is the number of credentials as known at the point of Service Plan reporting for a current year. Often this number will be lower than shown in subsequent data releases for the same time period, as students sometimes delay filing their paperwork to graduate.

<sup>9</sup> Includes the following credentials awarded by post-secondary institutions: doctorate, master’s degrees, first professional degrees, graduate diplomas, graduate certificates, post-degree diplomas, post-degree certificates, bachelor’s degrees, diplomas, associate degrees, certificates and advanced certificates. Data do not include apprenticeship, short certificate, and other programs that do not offer a credential in any of the listed credential types.

<sup>10</sup> Target from *Skills for Growth*; measured by the five-year cumulative delayed-entry transition rate after high school graduation.

## Goal 1: systemic change

### Objective 1.1 Aboriginal voice is an integral part of the public post-secondary education system

During the last 10 years, there has been an increase in Aboriginal representation in governance, faculty and administration of public post-secondary institutions in British Columbia.

Having a stronger Aboriginal voice at such levels can assist public institutions in developing more culturally relevant and responsive policies, programs and services for Aboriginal learners, while also enriching post-secondary education by recognizing, and respecting Aboriginal knowledge.<sup>11</sup>

#### Actions

The *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* commits to a range of actions to increase Aboriginal voice in the public post-secondary education system, including to:



1. Work with public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities and organizations to increase Aboriginal voice in institutional governance and leadership by:
  - Working with Aboriginal partners to build awareness in communities of public post-secondary institution board opportunities;
  - Appointing Aboriginal people to public post-secondary institution boards;
  - Working with Aboriginal post-secondary partners to develop leading practices for Aboriginal Advisory Councils.
2. Provide financial support to Aboriginal graduate students through the Irving K. Barber British Columbia Scholarship Society.
3. Continue to support the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Coordinators to meet to share leading practices regarding supports for Aboriginal learners.

**Progress to date**, During the last year there has been an increase in Aboriginal voice in institutional leadership and governance at British Columbia's public post-secondary institutions, as a result of increased efforts by the Board Resourcing and Development Office. As of the end of December 2013, almost 90 per cent of institutions (22 of 25) report Aboriginal appointees on their Boards of Governors.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, either directly or indirectly linked to the *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan*, all institutions have incorporated Aboriginal expertise in teaching, research, program development and student support services.

<sup>11</sup> Council of Ministers of Education Canada. 2010. *A Literature Review of Factors that Support Successful Transitions by Aboriginal People from K-12 to Post-Secondary Education*.

<sup>12</sup> Baseline of February 2012 was 11 institutions with Aboriginal representation on boards of governors.

As part of ongoing efforts to increase Aboriginal voice, Aboriginal graduate students have been provided with financial support through the Irving K. Barber British Columbia Scholarship Society. In June 2012, as part of the *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan*, the Ministry of Advanced Education (AVED) provided \$1 million to support Aboriginal students enrolled in masters or doctoral degree programs. In 2013, scholarships were awarded to 45 Aboriginal graduate students.

AVED continues to support the Aboriginal post-secondary coordinators to meet to share leading practices regarding supports for Aboriginal learners. The BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Coordinators meet regularly by teleconference to discuss a wide range of topics, including leading practices. AVED provides funding to support BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Coordinators' semi-annual meetings, where promising practices are shared.

Public post-secondary institutions have taken steps on their own and in the spirit of the *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* to

increase Aboriginal voice. For example, the University of British Columbia (UBC) has made a concerted effort to hire Indigenous faculty, and now has more than 20 Indigenous scholars in tenure and tenure-track positions. Simon Fraser University (SFU) has instituted its own graduate scholarship program to encourage students to move into research-intensive programs that could lead to faculty positions.

**PROMISING PRACTICE: SYSTEMIC CHANGE THROUGH HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY**

*In order to have employment equity and include employee groups who have been disadvantaged, the College of New Caledonia (CNC) successfully applied to the British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal for a special program to recognize Aboriginal ancestry as a bona fide employment qualification. This special program now allows positions at CNC to specify Aboriginal ancestry as a qualification. To date, nearly 50 positions have been designated and posted as preferred or restricted to applicants of Aboriginal ancestry.*

Result by 2013	Status
<b>Aboriginal representation on public post-secondary boards is increased (baseline is 11 of 25 institutions as of February 2012).</b>	Number of institutions with Aboriginal representation on boards of governors has increased to 22 (88%).

Result by 2016
<b>At least 90% of public post-secondary institutions have Aboriginal representation on boards of governors.</b>
<b>The number of Aboriginal learners enrolled in graduate programs is increased.<sup>13</sup></b>
<b>Aboriginal people are more broadly represented in faculty and administration.</b>

<sup>13</sup> In 2011/12, 895 Aboriginal learners enrolled in graduate and first professional programs.

## Success story: college preparatory program provides learner with support and guidance

*Eddy is from Cowichan Tribes on Vancouver Island, and when he was six years old was sent to the residential school on nearby Kuper Island. "I was there for two years. It was hard on me. They didn't let us speak our own language. They didn't let us sing our songs from our community."*

*Like many other Aboriginal peoples in the residential school system, Eddy suffered abuse. He eventually left his community as a teenager to move to Vancouver, later returning as an adult to find many cases of drug and alcohol abuse and high suicide rates among his people.*

*Deciding he wanted to help his people address these issues, Eddy enrolled in Camosun College's Indigenous Human Services Career Access Program (IHSCAP) - a college preparatory program that the Ministry helps fund through the Aboriginal Service Plan Program.*

*Within IHSCAP, Eddy began to receive guidance from Elders in the community. "When I walked through communities I used to be really ashamed of who I was as a First Nations person and I tried to separate myself from my own community."*

*But through the support he has received through the program—including his instructors, IHSCAP adviser, and the elders who are a core part of the program—Eddy has started to feel immense pride in his culture.*

*"You don't know how powerful that is to sit there and hear words from Elders and successful graduates – Indigenous people. You identify with them. That's so important."*

*Eddy has completed IHSCAP, is currently enrolled in the Indigenous Family Support Program at Camosun College, and plans to work with people impacted by drug and alcohol addiction, especially other residential school survivors and their descendants.*

**Objective 1.2 Public post-secondary institutions work in partnership and collaboration with Aboriginal communities, organizations and institutes to create the systemic change needed for public post-secondary institutions to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples' success**

Systemic change is needed to ensure that today's public post-secondary system is reflective of the diversity of British Columbia's population and, in particular, Canada's First Peoples. Systemic change goes beyond building new systems and operational work roles and responsibilities. It requires change in organizational culture, values and beliefs, with the goal of making Aboriginal programs and services part of the "fabric" of the institution.

In order to create systemic change, public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities need to work in partnership, in relationships based on mutual respect, to identify opportunities and to ensure that First Nations, Métis and Inuit knowledge systems, language and culture are respected in research and curriculum change processes.

**Actions**

The *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* commits to a range of actions to ensure public post-secondary institutions work in partnership and collaboration with Aboriginal communities, organizations and institutes, including to:

1. Phase in the implementation of Aboriginal Service Plans in all public post-secondary institutions, ensuring that the Aboriginal Service Plans are developed, maintained and monitored on an ongoing basis in partnership and collaboration with Aboriginal communities, organizations and institutes in order to:
  - Increase access and success, including programming delivered in Aboriginal communities;
  - Increase the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary programming and services; and
  - Strengthen partnerships and collaboration.
2. Ensure that capital projects at public post-secondary institution campuses consider the need for culturally welcoming places for Aboriginal learners and that Aboriginal learners and communities are involved in the design and use of these places.
3. Work with Aboriginal post-secondary partners to develop and share leading practices regarding the use of Aboriginal Gathering Places.
4. Support student housing projects at public post-secondary institutions with an emphasis on serving Aboriginal learners and their families.
5. Work with Aboriginal post-secondary partners to develop and share leading practices regarding student housing for Aboriginal learners and families.

**Progress to date**

AVED has continued Aboriginal Service Plans in 11 public post-secondary institutions, where they are developed, maintained and monitored in partnership with Aboriginal communities, organizations and institutes. Over \$4.2 million was invested in the program in 2012/13, funding a wide range of activities including elder-in-residence programs, cultural events, the development of Aboriginal curriculum and courses, as well as support services for students. As highlighted in the *Evaluation of the 2007 Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy*,<sup>14</sup> there is evidence that the Aboriginal Service Plans have increased access, retention, transition, and completion opportunities, while increasing the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary institutions and programs for Aboriginal learners, and strengthening partnerships and collaboration in Aboriginal post-secondary education.

**PROMISING PRACTICE:  
POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS AND  
RECONCILIATION EVENTS**

*During September 2013, when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) held events in Vancouver, several universities and colleges across B.C. held their own reconciliation events. Some even cancelled classes so students could attend the TRC events in Vancouver.*

The Aboriginal Service Plan initiative is currently being reviewed in order to develop recommendations to strengthen the proposal review process, ensure program goals are being met, ensure that reporting is effective, and suggest ways for expanding it to other institutions. A final report with recommendations is expected in early 2014.

AVED has also taken steps to ensure that capital projects at public post-secondary institutions incorporate culturally welcoming places for Aboriginal learners and communities, and that Aboriginal learners are involved in the design and use of these places. As part of the *2007 Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy*, AVED made funding available for Aboriginal Gathering Places at public post-secondary institutions. To date, Aboriginal Gathering Places have been funded and completed at 24 of the 25 public post-secondary institutions, with Capilano University, University of the Fraser Valley, Royal Roads University and Selkirk College all opening new Aboriginal Gathering Places in 2012 and 2013.

Many public post-secondary institutions are undertaking work consistent with the *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* to build partnerships and collaborate with Aboriginal peoples, including developing culturally welcoming spaces for Aboriginal learners throughout their campuses. For instance, the UBC Faculty of Law building includes an Aboriginal student lounge and a First Nations classroom, as well as a Musqueam welcome figure adjacent to the building.

Lack of affordable family housing can affect Aboriginal learners' access and retention in post-secondary education, and many public post-secondary institutions offer priority housing for Aboriginal learners, including the University of Victoria, UBC, and the Justice Institute of British Columbia. These housing policies pre-date the *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan*.

Lack of affordable family housing can affect Aboriginal learners' access and retention in post-secondary education, and many public post-secondary institutions offer priority housing for Aboriginal learners, including the University of Victoria, UBC, and the Justice Institute of British Columbia. These housing policies pre-date the *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan*.

<sup>14</sup> *Evaluation of BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy: Final Report*. 2011. Human Capital Strategies. The evaluation is available at: [http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/aboriginal/docs/educator-resources/APSES\\_evaluation\\_report.pdf](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/aboriginal/docs/educator-resources/APSES_evaluation_report.pdf)

AVED and the public post-secondary institutions have also continued to work together to develop and share leading practices regarding student housing for Aboriginal learners and families. For example, the University of Victoria policy for dedicated Aboriginal Housing spaces has been shared widely through the BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Coordinators and the Indigenous Leadership Roundtable. UBC has shared its own housing practices at Aboriginal post-secondary coordinators' meetings and also through the Strengthening Connections initiative - which is led by recruiters and advisors from several post-secondary institutions and provides Aboriginal peoples with information on pursuing a post-secondary education.

Result by 2013	Status
<b>Aboriginal Service Plans continue in 11 public post-secondary institutions where they were piloted and are developed, maintained and monitored on an ongoing basis in partnership with Aboriginal communities, organizations and institutes.</b>	Aboriginal Service Plans have been continued in 11 public post-secondary institutions.
<b>Culturally welcoming spaces reduce a sense of isolation and alienation.</b>	Aboriginal Gathering Places funded and now completed at 24 of the 25 public post-secondary institutions.

### Result by 2016

**Aboriginal Service Plans are implemented in a greater number of public post-secondary institutions and developed in partnership and collaboration with Aboriginal communities, organizations and institutes.**

**All public post-secondary institution campuses have culturally welcoming spaces for Aboriginal learners.**

**Protocols and guidelines for researching and sharing Aboriginal history, culture and knowledge are developed and shared.**

**Housing spaces available to Aboriginal learners attending post-secondary institutions increase.**



## Success story: gathering place provides support and guidance

*Rainbow Acoby is from the Lytton First Nation along the Fraser River, and is in her third year of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program at Thompson Rivers University (TRU).*

*She has received support at TRU's Gathering Place, where Aboriginal students are provided with information on university life and given opportunities to study and socialize.*

*"The Gathering Place has supported me with food, workshops, printing, computer access, and elders, but more importantly it has provided me with valuable social interactions."*

*"I come to The Gathering Place every chance I get, between classes, before classes, and after classes. I come for coffee, I come for an apple, and I come for soup on Soup Days."*

*Through the Gathering Place, Rainbow has received support and guidance from elders.*

*"There is always an elder at the house. They give me hope and awareness of who I am and who I am going to become. I love their presence and the way they provide me with holistic support."*

*The Gathering place also served as a source of inspiration.*

*"It was a place for me to witness others like me, to see others who are following their dreams, and to see dreams come true. I see students that are now Alumni. I see the Alumni making a difference in the community. It gives me hope that I too will succeed and become a working member of society. I can see myself making a difference in people's lives."*

## Goal 2: support community-based delivery of programs

### Objective 2.1 British Columbia public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal institutes and communities partner in the delivery of community-based programs for Aboriginal learners

Aboriginal people living in rural and remote communities are frequently unable to access post-secondary education programs and services due to a lack of infrastructure and accessibility. Community-based, culturally accessible programming can help to overcome some of these barriers and enhance education outcomes for Aboriginal learners.



One effective delivery method for increasing access and providing more choice, flexibility and mobility for Aboriginal learners is distance and online learning. Many Aboriginal learners accessing programs in communities are older and have family and work responsibilities. Distance and online learning education programs provide students with the opportunity to study from their home communities, including rural and remote areas. Blended delivery models that allow for use of technology supplemented with face-to-face delivery can be effective in meeting the needs of Aboriginal learners.

There is also a need to ensure that Aboriginal communities are able to participate in economic opportunities as they arise, and community-based delivery of training, in partnership with Aboriginal communities and institutes, can play an important role in making this possible.

#### Actions

The *Policy Framework & Action Plan* commits to a range of actions to ensure public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal institutes and communities partner in the delivery of community-based programs, including to:

1. Provide funding for partnerships between public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal institutes and communities to deliver programs in Aboriginal communities that meet community needs and position Aboriginal communities to take advantage of economic opportunities.
2. Support Aboriginal learners to access distance and online education opportunities in their communities.
3. Promote reciprocal partnerships<sup>15</sup> between public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal institutes and communities by sharing the Post-Secondary Education Partnership Agreement Toolkit developed by the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association, the University of Victoria, and the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology with both public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal institutes.

<sup>15</sup> Reciprocal partnerships are respectful and mutually beneficial to both parties.

### **Progress to date**

Funding was provided for partnerships between public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal institutes and communities to deliver programming in communities. In August 2012, AVED launched the Aboriginal Community-Based Delivery Partnerships Program. Funding over two years includes \$14 million in AVED and *Canada - British Columbia Labour Market Agreement* funding, along with a commitment of \$4 million through Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's Active Measures Program. More than 50 partnerships are delivering programs for Aboriginal learners in 39 communities throughout British Columbia in a diverse range of specializations, from skills training for employment in the oil and natural gas sectors to training that leads to certification as a teacher of indigenous languages. In 2012/13, funding was provided to deliver training to more than 500 Aboriginal learners, and funding in 2013/14 will deliver training to an additional 500 learners. Many of these projects are in rural and remote communities.

During 2012/13 and 2013/14, a total of \$5.9 million was provided through B.C.'s Aboriginal Training for Employment Program (ATEP), which is also funded through the *Canada - British Columbia Labour Market Agreement*. Aboriginal organizations and service providers have delivered more than 30 job-related training programs in essential skills and introductory trades training, along with mentoring, coaching and support for students.



Several public post-secondary institutions have also launched their own initiatives to support Aboriginal learners' access to distance and online education. For example, Vancouver Community College has partnered with the Squamish Nation to offer an online adult basic education and essential skills program called *ArrowMight* that was specifically developed for Aboriginal learners. The program allows Aboriginal learners to study in their own community with the assistance of a learning facilitator. Thompson Rivers University has signed agreements with a number of First Nations to deliver distance and online education in their communities.

In order to encourage and strengthen partnerships, AVED has shared the [Post-Secondary Education Partnership Agreement Toolkit](#) - which was developed in 2011 by IAHLA, UVic and the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) to assist Aboriginal and public post-secondary institutions to create respectful and mutually beneficial partnership agreements. AVED has posted the Toolkit on the Ministry website and included a link in the Call for Proposals for the Aboriginal Community-Based Delivery Partnerships Program.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The toolkit is available at: <http://iahla.ca/wp-content/uploads/IAHLA-Toolkit-Dec-2011.pdf>

Result by 2013	Status
<b>Initiatives to improve partnerships are implemented.</b>	The Aboriginal Community-Based Delivery Partnerships Program was launched in August 2012. The program design involves a partnership between a public post-secondary institution and an Aboriginal community. More than 50 projects have been approved and funded in 39 Aboriginal communities across British Columbia.
Result by 2016	
<b>Aboriginal learners in rural and remote communities accessing post-secondary education and training programs increase.</b>	

**Objective 2.2** Aboriginal institutes have a unique and critical role in British Columbia's post-secondary system to increase Aboriginal learner participation and completion in post-secondary education

Aboriginal institutes offer Aboriginal adult learners development in academic, personal, leadership, cultural, wisdom and vocational skills and play a key role in the revitalization of language and culture in Aboriginal communities. They are often located in remote, coastal and Northern communities, throughout the province's Interior, Vancouver Island as well as in urban centres. Aboriginal institutes are directed by community-driven, Aboriginal-controlled governance structures. They have also developed relationships with other Aboriginal organizations and with the broader post-secondary community, often helping students complete programs that increase their post-secondary preparedness.

Some institutes offer certificates, diplomas and degrees in partnership with public post-secondary institutions. Aboriginal institutes also promote cultural learning. Moreover, elder support and cultural guidance are often embedded in the learning experience to an extent not found in mainstream institutions.<sup>17</sup>

Aboriginal institutes wish to collaborate with public institutions to develop respectful and mutually beneficial partnerships that will enhance Aboriginal learner mobility.



**Actions**

The *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* commits to a range of actions to ensure Aboriginal institutes have a unique and critical role in British Columbia's post-secondary system, including to:

1. Exempt on-reserve First Nations institutes from the Private Career Training Institutions Act.
2. Work with Aboriginal institutes and public post-secondary institutions to support effective models that ensure the recognition of program quality and transfer and articulation of courses and programs.
3. Work with the Federal Government to explore mechanisms to mutually support Aboriginal institutes.

**Progress to date**

In order to exempt First Nations institutes from the *Private Career Training Institutions Act*— the

<sup>17</sup> "Aboriginal Controlled Post-Secondary Institutes in British Columbia: Issues, Costs and Benefits." Juniper Consulting, (November 2010), p. 18-19

legislation that covers the registration and accreditation of private career training institutions operating in British Columbia —FNESC and IAHLA are taking steps to review the legal structure of the Aboriginal-controlled institutes.

AVED, IAHLA and the public post-secondary institutions have also worked together to support models that ensure the recognition of program quality and transfer and articulation of courses and programs. Last year, AVED facilitated a meeting between IAHLA and the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer—a body established by the provincial government to facilitate transfer, articulation, and admission arrangements among post-secondary institutions. IAHLA institutes are now specifically mentioned in the Council’s profile of BC’s post-secondary system.

Furthermore, AVED is working with FNESC and IAHLA to consider how a revised Quality Assurance Framework for the post-secondary system could support the recognition of Aboriginal institutes, with further consultation and research underway.

At the institutional level and consistent with the goals of the *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan*, Okanagan College has signed four memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and affiliation agreements with Aboriginal institutes to foster collaboration, joint programming and student transition. The *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* recognizes the unique and critical role of Aboriginal institutes in British Columbia’s public post-secondary system and acknowledges the need for the Province to work with the Federal Government to explore mechanisms to mutually support them. Most Aboriginal institutes do not receive core funding and instead rely on project-based funding, either through partnerships with public institutions or through the Government of Canada’s Indian Studies Support Program (ISSP).

For over two decades, the ISSP was implemented in B.C. through a partnership between a committee made up of regional representatives nominated by First Nations and the British Columbia Region of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. In March 2013, the Federal Government centralized the administration of the program in Ottawa, disbanding the British Columbia ISSP Committee. There is concern that this change will result in less support for Aboriginal institutes, which are already under-resourced.

AVED has worked with the Federal Government to develop the Aboriginal Community-Based Delivery Partnerships Program, which provides funding for partnerships between public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities, including Aboriginal institutes.



Result by 2013	Status
<b>On reserve First Nations institutes are exempted from the <i>Private Career Training Institutions Act</i>.</b>	FNESC and IAHLA are taking steps to review the legal structure of the Aboriginal-controlled institutes.

Result by 2016
<b>Aboriginal learners are able to transfer seamlessly from Aboriginal institutes to public post-secondary institutions when they enroll in courses and programs that build on courses they have taken in Aboriginal institutes.</b>
<b>Transferable courses from Aboriginal institutes to public post-secondary institutions increase in number.</b>

### **Objective 2.3** Aboriginal adult education programs enable Aboriginal learners to transition to post-secondary education and employment

Although a greater number of Aboriginal learners are graduating from high school than in the past, currently only 57 percent of Aboriginal learners graduate from high school within six years of entering Grade 8.<sup>18</sup> This contributes to Aboriginal learners being over-represented in developmental (adult basic education) and non-credit programs in British Columbia's public post-secondary system. Many Aboriginal learners in developmental programs are in literacy level courses and leave before completion.<sup>19</sup> Community-based delivery of programs and courses can play an important role in the success of these learners. Their previous negative experiences in formal education and the inter-generational impact of residential schools make it necessary to provide learning opportunities in an environment that is supportive of all their needs.

Literacy levels are much lower among First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples compared to non-Aboriginal people. As such, there is a pressing need to target holistic literacy resources and programs to Aboriginal learners in order to improve access and transitions to higher education. Adult literacy is also linked to improved education outcomes for children and youth.



#### **Actions**

The *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* commits to a range of actions to ensure adult education programs enable learners to transition to post-secondary education and employment, including to:

1. Continue to target Community Adult Literacy Program funding to Aboriginal learners.
2. Work with Aboriginal post-secondary partners to complete an environmental scan of Aboriginal adult education programs, policies and services, and prepare a discussion paper that examines issues and opportunities.
3. Work with Aboriginal post-secondary partners to support Aboriginal adult education program development and leading practices in assessment and benchmarking.

<sup>18</sup> BC Ministry of Education. 2013. *How Are We Doing? Aboriginal Performance Data for 2011/12*.

<sup>19</sup> BC Ministry of Advanced Education. 2006. *Report of the 2005 Adult Basic Education Outcomes Survey*.



***Progress to date***

AVED continues to support Aboriginal learners in the 82 Community Adult Literacy Programs (CALPs) across the province. In 2012/13 and 2013/14, 30 Aboriginal CALP providers received \$787,000 in funding to support adult learners to increase their literacy awareness and improve their literacy and numeracy proficiencies.

Result by 2013	Status
<b>Community Adult Literacy Program continues to support Aboriginal learners.</b>	Community Adult Literacy Program continues to support Aboriginal learners. \$787,000 in funding was provided over 2012/13 and 2013/14 to 30 Aboriginal CALP providers.
<b>Environmental scan of Aboriginal adult education programs, policies and services is completed.</b>	To be completed.

**Result by 2016**

**Issues and opportunities paper on Aboriginal adult education is completed.**

**Aboriginal adult education assessment leading practices, tools and benchmarks are developed and utilized by partners.**

**Aboriginal adult learners in literacy programs show skill gains as evidenced through culturally relevant assessment and benchmarks.**

## Goal 3: reduce financial barriers

### Objective 3.1 Financial supports to access and complete post-secondary education and training are available to Aboriginal learners who need them

Aboriginal people who do not intend to go on to post-secondary education indicate that financial barriers are the main deterrent to pursuing post-secondary studies.<sup>20</sup> Like other first generation post-secondary learners, there is evidence to suggest that Aboriginal learners are more debt averse than other students.

Funding for First Nations students under the Post-Secondary Student Support Program, a federal program that provides a critical source of financial support for First Nations students, has been capped at a 2 percent annual increase since 1996.

Since 1996, the cost of tuition has increased, and the number of eligible students has grown due to higher secondary school graduation rates, federal law and judicial decisions, and rapid population growth. There continues to be a significant unmet demand for post-secondary student support funding, which cannot be accommodated with the current federal budget allocation.

*Aboriginal people will be key to meeting British Columbia's labour market needs. Removing financial barriers to post-secondary education is essential.*

#### Actions

The *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* commits to a range of actions to ensure Aboriginal learners have the financial supports to access and complete post-secondary education and training, including to:

1. Review student financial assistance policy with goal of providing more effective support to Aboriginal learners.
2. Establish an Aboriginal Emergency Assistance Fund to provide emergency relief funds to Aboriginal learners attending British Columbia public post-secondary institutions.
3. Continue to build and support the British Columbia Aboriginal Student Award, which was established as an endowment by AVED and is administered by the Irving K. Barber British Columbia Scholarship Society, and develop actions to encourage additional investment by industry.
4. Promote and raise awareness of financial support programs for Aboriginal post-secondary learners.
5. Continue to make the case that the federal government must improve post-secondary education funding for Aboriginal learners.

<sup>20</sup> Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation. 2005. *Changing Course: Improving Aboriginal Access to Post-Secondary Education in Canada*.

**Progress to date**

AVED has launched a review of British Columbia's student financial assistance policy, with a view to making recommendations for improvement to ensure it is meeting the needs of today's students. The needs of Aboriginal students will be considered as part of the review. Preliminary research and analysis was undertaken in Spring and Summer 2013. AVED will engage with stakeholders and Aboriginal post-secondary partners as this project moves forward.

AVED also established an Emergency Assistance Fund for Aboriginal learners, providing \$2 million in one-time funding that was allocated to public post-secondary institutions based on Aboriginal student enrolment. Funding was used to assist students who had urgent or unforeseen financial emergencies that might prevent them from finishing the academic year. During the 2012/13 academic year, 928 students were provided with financial assistance through this fund. AVED is currently evaluating the program.

AVED provided \$2 million to the Irving K. Barber BC Scholarship Society to support Aboriginal Awards for Aboriginal students enrolled in post-secondary programs. In 2013, awards were granted to 196 Aboriginal students in British Columbia, with awards valued between \$1,000 and \$5,500.

**PROMISING PRACTICE: WAIVING  
TUITION FOR CHILDREN IN CARE**

*In September 2013, Vancouver Island University (VIU) introduced a new policy aimed at making post-secondary education more accessible for youth in care by waiving tuition for eligible students who have grown up in the care system. On Vancouver Island there are just over 900 youth in care under a continuing custody order, 64% percent of whom are Aboriginal, a percentage that has grown in recent years. Much work remains to increase the high school graduation and post-secondary participation rate of children in care.*

In addition, AVED provided funding to FNEC to maintain Aboriginal Learning Links, a website that provides information on financial support and other resources for Aboriginal learners. AVED and FNEC also distribute information regarding student financial assistance through social media.

At the institutional level and consistent with the goals of the *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan*, Langara College and UBC have developed an Aboriginal Transfer Agreement to the Faculty of Arts for students who meet a certain GPA. Bursary and entrance awards are attached to the agreement and tied to GPA.

Result by 2013	Status
<b>Emergency Assistance Fund for Aboriginal learners is established.</b>	Aboriginal Emergency Assistance Fund was established with \$2 million in one-time funding. AVED is currently evaluating the program.
<b>Review of student financial assistance policy is completed.</b>	AVED is reviewing student financial assistance policy. Preliminary research and analysis has been undertaken to inform potential policy and program

Result by 2013	Status
	shifts. Stakeholders and Aboriginal post-secondary partners will be engaged as this project moves forward.
<b>The British Columbia Aboriginal Student Award is maintained and augmented as funding is available.</b>	AVED provided \$2 million in additional funding to the Irving K. Barber BC Scholarship Society to augment the BC Aboriginal Student Award program.
<b>Initiatives to promote awareness of financial assistance programs for Aboriginal learners are established.</b>	Student financial assistance policy review is currently underway, and the scope of review includes promoting awareness of financial assistance.

### Result by 2016

**Retention of Aboriginal learners in post-secondary programs is increased.**

## Success story: financial assistance helps to pursue career in nursing

*Melissa Monson is a single mother of two enrolled as a full-time student in the Nursing Program at the College of the Rockies. She is working towards a Bachelor of Science, and has been placed on the Deans' List during previous terms.*

*In 2013, she was one of 145 recipients of the British Columbia Aboriginal Award through the Irving K. Barber BC Scholarship Society.*

*The award allowed her to continue her studies and work towards achieving her goals of working in the community and pursuing further education.*

*"My goals are to work in the field of nursing for a few years, preferably in the Aboriginal community."*

*Afterwards, Melissa is interested in becoming a professor of nursing.*

*"This will allow me to pursue both of my passions: nursing and teaching."*

*She was proud to receive the award and to be recognized for her efforts.*

*"I will continue to strive for success and prove to be a good example to my children and also the Aboriginal community."*

***"I will continue to strive for success and prove to be a good example to my children and also the Aboriginal community."***

## Goal 4: seamless transition

### Objective 4.1 Teachers support Aboriginal learner success in the K-12 system

A number of complex factors influence the retention and success of Aboriginal learners in completing their Grade 12 Dogwood Diploma. The Ministry of Education is the lead provincial government body in this area and is working on systemic initiatives such as supporting the development and implementation of Aboriginal Enhancement Agreements.

Literature indicates that one of the key factors in determining educational outcomes is teacher effectiveness.<sup>21</sup> Aboriginal people are under-represented among the teaching profession resulting in fewer role models for Aboriginal learners and their parents in the public system.

*Success in K-12 leads to success in post-secondary education and training.*

There are many challenges in recruiting and retaining Aboriginal learners into teacher education program. Financial barriers often prevent Aboriginal people from considering teacher education. Bursaries, awards, and other financial incentives attract applicants.<sup>22</sup>

#### Actions

The *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* commits to a range of actions to ensure teachers support Aboriginal learner success in the K-12 system, including to:

1. Increase the number of Aboriginal teachers for the elementary and secondary system through a new Aboriginal Teacher Education Award available to Aboriginal students enrolled in teacher education programs, including First Nations language teacher programs.
2. Work with First Nation and post-secondary partners to increase the number of First Nation language teachers.
3. Work with Aboriginal K-12 Partners and the Association of B.C. Deans of Education to support initiatives that better equip all teachers to meet the needs of Aboriginal learners in the K-12 system.

#### Progress to date

Financial assistance has been made available for Aboriginal learners in teacher education programs through the Irving K. Barber BC Scholarship Society, with funding from AVED to support Aboriginal learners in teacher education programs, including First Nations language teacher programs. In 2013, awards were granted to 24 Aboriginal students. AVED also provided FNESC with \$150,000 to support First Nations language teacher education programs in communities in B.C.

<sup>21</sup> Alberta Education. 2009. Promising practices in First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education.

<sup>22</sup> Archibald, J., Glickman, V., McKinnon, I., Gajdosik, D., Pidgeon, M., and Trache, M. 2005. *Tracking Education Career Path and Employment Status of BC Teachers of Aboriginal Ancestry and the BC Education System: Learning and Career Pathways.*

Work is underway to ensure teachers are better equipped to meet the needs of Aboriginal learners in the K-12 system. AVED continues to work with FNEESC, IAHLA and the Association of B.C. Deans of Education to identify, develop and implement strategies that better support Aboriginal learners in the K-12 system.

Consistent with the *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan*, the Partners are working to ensure teachers support the success of Aboriginal learners in the K-12 system. UBC has specific programs to train Aboriginal teachers and graduate scholars, has developed initiatives in First Nations language teaching in education, and coordinates a yearly conference on language retention and teaching. The University of the Fraser Valley reserves 10 percent of all seats in the teacher education program for Aboriginal students who will teach at the elementary level. UFV plans to eventually expand the policy to Aboriginal students who will teach at the secondary level.



As of September 2012, all teachers graduating from BC teacher education programs must complete three credits in First Nations pedagogy and issues related to the historical context of First Nations, Inuit and Métis learners.

Result by 2013	Status
<b>Financial assistance available for Aboriginal learners in teacher education programs is increased.</b>	AVED provided the Irving K. Barber BC Scholarship Society with \$2 million to support Aboriginal learners in teacher education programs.

Result by 2016
<b>Aboriginal people with teaching credentials increase in number.</b>
<b>First Nations language teachers increase in number.</b>

**Objective 4.2 Aboriginal learners and their families have information and are better supported to make choices for their transition from K-12 to post-secondary and the labour market**

Due to historical, social, geographic and cultural barriers, Aboriginal learners are less likely than non-Aboriginal learners to achieve their Grade 12 Dogwood with the required courses and grades for transition to post-secondary education, particularly at the university level. Early career exploration and linking academic preparedness with labour market and occupational opportunities can assist Aboriginal learners, with support from their families, in making informed choices about K-12 courses, the necessary college and university prerequisites and career opportunities.

It is critical that the K-12 education system—including guidance counsellors, classroom teachers, and administrators—hold Aboriginal students to high expectations and provide them with opportunities to gain the necessary skills and pre-requisites to successfully transition into post-secondary.

Aboriginal learners, like other first generation post-secondary learners, may overestimate the overall costs and underestimate the benefits of post-secondary education. Providing Aboriginal learners with better information early on in K-12 should also have an impact on course selection in K-12 and readiness for post-secondary education.

Specific strategies are needed to increase the post-secondary participation levels of Aboriginal males. Fewer male Aboriginal students are graduating from high school and enrolling in college and university, a trend also observed in the non-Aboriginal population, though to a lesser degree. In 2011/12, the six-year high school graduation rate was 10 percent lower for male Aboriginal students than female Aboriginal students, while the gender difference was only 5 percent for non-Aboriginal students. At the post-secondary level, only 38 percent of Aboriginal students earning credentials were male in 2011/12 (43 percent of non-Aboriginal students earning post-secondary credentials were male).<sup>23</sup>

**PROMISING PRACTICE: MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS SUPPORTING TRANSITIONS**

*The Campus Cousins Program offered by the University of Victoria is a peer mentorship program for Aboriginal students designed to strengthen connections between Aboriginal students on campus and to create opportunities that will help them to succeed.*

*Thompson Rivers University offers the Aboriginal Mentor Program that trains students to assist their first-year peers in transitioning to the university setting through one-on-one and group support, as well as workshops and other events.*

*The BC Institute of Technology offers the Aboriginal Peer 2 Peer Mentorship Program where senior students who assist first year students transition to post-secondary.*

<sup>23</sup> British Columbia Student Transitions Project, 2012.



### Actions

The *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* commits to a range of actions to ensure Aboriginal learners and their families have information and are better supported to make choices for their transition from K-12 to post-secondary and the labour market, including to:

1. Work with the Ministry of Education and Aboriginal K-12 and post-secondary partners, Band Education and school education counsellors to provide K-12 students and their families in public and First Nation schools with career and educational planning tools and resources to enable them to make informed choices that will support their transition to post-secondary education and the labour market.
2. Promote existing leading practices in supporting K-12 to post-secondary transitions.
3. Work with Aboriginal K-12 and post-secondary partners to identify specific strategies to increase the number of Aboriginal males participating in post-secondary education.
4. Explore, share and promote opportunities for mentoring.

### Progress to date

In October 2013, FNEC organized and hosted *Making the Jump: Aboriginal Student Transitions*, with support from AVED, IAHLA and the other Partners. At the one-day forum on K-12 to post-secondary transitions, participants shared their experiences and discussed promising practices. A summary report is being developed. In 2013, the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Partners met with the Aboriginal Education (K-12) Partners and agreed to form a working group to focus on initiatives to support transitions.

AVED provided seed money in 2006 to Strengthening Connections, an initiative under which Aboriginal recruiters and advisors from several public post-secondary institutions provide Aboriginal learners in B.C. with the information they need to successfully pursue a post-secondary education, often by travelling to rural and remote Aboriginal communities. The initiative has grown to represent over half of all public post-secondary institutions in British Columbia.



Public post-secondary institutions have also taken steps consistent with the *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* to improve transitions from K-12 to post-secondary. Vancouver Community College (VCC) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Vancouver School Board to cover tuition costs for new Aboriginal high school graduates. SFU offers several programs that encourage Aboriginal youth to transition to post-secondary, including programs to attract Aboriginal students to science and applied

science programs. Langara College gives presentations to high school students to guide them through the transition from grade 12 to college, while UFV offers a Summer Science Rocks camp for grades 4 to 7, with one of its five-day long sessions run specifically for Aboriginal students. Thompson Rivers University (TRU) organizes an annual Transitions Day for Aboriginal Students where high school students spend a day touring campus and hearing from past and current Aboriginal students on their transition to post-secondary. Finally, the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) offers the Northern Advancement Program, designed to transition Aboriginal learners into their first year of studies.

Result by 2013	Status
<b>New initiatives to support career and academic planning are developed.</b>	Aboriginal Post-Secondary Partners and Aboriginal K-12 Partners will develop initiatives over coming year.
<b>Leading practices in supporting transitions, including mentoring, are shared.</b>	FNESC organized and hosted a K-12 to Post-Secondary Education Forum in October 2013 with support from AVED, IAHLA and other Partners; a report is in progress.

#### Result by 2016

**Aboriginal learners graduating from high school with the necessary prerequisites to transition into post-secondary education increase in number.**

## Goal 5: continuous improvement

### Objective 5.1 Sharing of leading practices creates an environment of informed leadership, effective practices and results in Aboriginal post-secondary education

By facilitating the sharing of leading practices and creating avenues for communication, government can assist in creating an environment of informed leadership, collaboration and reciprocal learning. For instance, the protection and propagation of Indigenous knowledge and cultures is of vital importance to First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and could be supported by developing and sharing leading practices for both curriculum and research.

#### Actions

The *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* commits to a range of actions to ensure leading practices are shared, including to:

1. Work with Aboriginal post-secondary education partners to facilitate the sharing of leading practices, research, information, and events to support Aboriginal learner success via the AVED website, social media, Aboriginal and post-secondary communication networks, and by hosting an annual forum.
2. Work with Aboriginal post-secondary partners to develop and share protocols and guidelines for researching and sharing Aboriginal history, culture and knowledge.

#### Progress to date

AVED has facilitated the sharing of leading practices, research and information via the Ministry website, social media, Aboriginal and post-secondary communication networks. Ministry staff use social media to share information, and AVED also provided funding to FNEC to organize a K-12 to Post-Secondary Forum in October 2013 where promising practices were shared.

Result by 2013	Status
<b>Coordinated strategy ensures that institutions and Aboriginal communities and organizations have the information to make well-informed decisions for program and service development.</b>	The Partners are working together to determine what data should be reported. The Partners have agreed to take an incremental approach and work together to determine what and how to report.

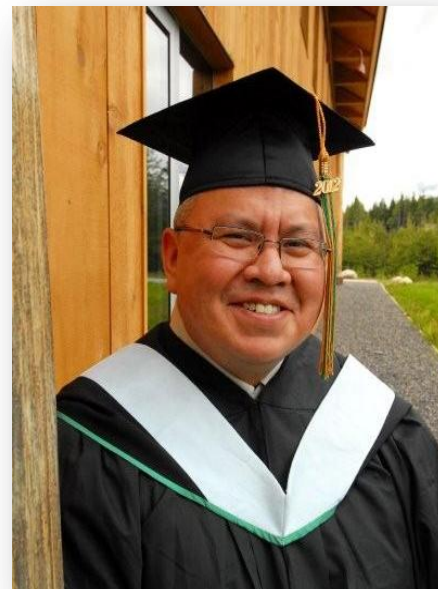
#### Result by 2016

**Public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal-controlled institutes are implementing policies, programs and services based on leading practices.**

**Objective 5.2 Governments, Aboriginal institutes and public post-secondary institutions make evidence-based decisions with respect to Aboriginal post-secondary education**

There is a need to increase understanding of data that describes Aboriginal post-secondary education so that governments, post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal institutes can work together to improve policy decisions and determine the effectiveness of various actions over the short, medium and long-term.

One factor affecting Aboriginal learners' access to post-secondary education is a lack of information about which approaches are most effective in increasing enrolment in and completion of post-secondary education. New initiatives should be tied to research and incorporate Aboriginal and mainstream definitions of success.<sup>24</sup>



**Actions**

The *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan* commits to a range of actions to ensure governments, Aboriginal institutes and public post-secondary institutions make evidence-based decisions with respect to Aboriginal post-secondary education, including to:

1. Work with Aboriginal post-secondary partners to report accurately and regularly on post-secondary education and training progress and outcomes, including the results and outcomes contained in this framework.
2. Develop an "Aboriginal Institutes Identifier" that will allow the use of Personal Education Numbers to identify learners enrolled in programs delivered in partnership with Aboriginal institutes, in order to better understand and respond to learner pathways.
3. Undertake research, in partnership with public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities and institutes, to test leading practices in Aboriginal post-secondary education, beginning with K-12 to post-secondary and post-secondary to labour market transition points.

<sup>24</sup> Council of Minister of Education, Canada, 2010, p. 37

**Progress to date**

AVED has worked with the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Partners to develop this report that provides an update on our progress to date in implementing the outcomes of the *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan*. We intend to present this report on an annual basis to track our progress in meeting the 2016 and 2020 targets.

In order to identify learners enrolled in Aboriginal institutes, AVED has worked with the public post-secondary institutions to develop an “Aboriginal Institute Identifier” in the Post-Secondary Central Data Warehouse. AVED is now exploring next steps.

AVED continues to work with the Partners to determine what data should be reported. The Partners have agreed to take an incremental approach to determine the data is needed and how to collect it in order to make well informed decisions and provide meaningful reporting and accountability on progress.

Result by 2013	Status
<b>Regular reports on progress are implemented.</b>	This is the first regular report on progress in implementing the <i>Aboriginal Policy Framework &amp; Action Plan</i> .
<b>Learners enrolled in programs delivered in partnership with Aboriginal institutes are identified.</b>	An “Aboriginal Institute Identifier” has been developed for the Post-Secondary Central Data Warehouse. AVED is now exploring next steps.

**Result by 2016**

**Data quality is sufficient to make well informed decisions and provide meaningful reporting and accountability on progress.**

**Evidence-based research is available and utilized by governments, Aboriginal communities and institutes and public post-secondary institutions.**

## Progress in implementing policy framework

### Long-term results (2020)

The long term goals of the *Policy Framework & Action Plan* apply to all five goals.

2020 Result	Status
Increase the number of credentials awarded to Aboriginal learners by 75% (from 2,634 in 2010/11 to 4,609 in 2020/21) <sup>25</sup>	<i>Number of credentials awarded to Aboriginal learners was 3,010 in 2011/12.</i> <sup>26</sup>
Increase percentage of Aboriginal youth making the transition from K-12 to post-secondary education to 90 percent. <sup>27</sup>	<i>Percentage of Aboriginal youth transitioning from K-12 to post-secondary education was 67% in 2011/12.</i>

### Short and medium term results (2013 and 2016)

#### Goal 1: Systemic Change

Objective	2013 Result	Status	2016 Result
<b>Objective 1.1</b> <b>Aboriginal voice is an integral part of the public post-secondary education system</b>	Aboriginal representation on public post-secondary boards is increased (baseline is 11 of 25 institutions as of February 2012).	<i>Number of institutions with Aboriginal representation on boards of governors has increased to 22 (88%).</i>	At least 90% of public post-secondary institutions have Aboriginal representation on boards of governors.
			The number of Aboriginal learners enrolled in graduate programs is increased.
			Aboriginal people are more broadly represented in faculty and administration.

<sup>25</sup> Includes following credentials awarded by post-secondary institutions: doctorate, master's degrees, first professional degrees, graduate diplomas, graduate certificates, post-degree diplomas, post-degree certificates, bachelor's degrees, diplomas, associate degrees, certificates and advanced certificates. Does not currently include apprenticeships, as these are awarded by the Industry Training Authority (ITA) rather than post-secondary institutions.

<sup>26</sup> 2011/12 is the latest available data and cannot be attributed to this *Aboriginal Policy Framework & Action Plan*, which was launched in June 2012.

<sup>27</sup> Target from *Skills for Growth*; measured by the five-year cumulative delayed-entry transition rate after high school graduation.

Objective	2013 Result	Status	2016 Result
<b>Objective 1.2 Public post-secondary institutions work in partnership and collaboration with Aboriginal communities, organizations and institutes to create the systemic change needed for public post-secondary institutions to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples' success</b>	Aboriginal Service Plans continue in 11 public post-secondary institutions where they were piloted and are developed, maintained and monitored on an ongoing basis in partnership with Aboriginal communities, organizations and institutes.	<i>Aboriginal Service Plans have been continued in 11 public post-secondary institutions.</i>	Aboriginal Service Plans are implemented in a greater number of public post-secondary institutions and developed in partnership and collaboration with Aboriginal communities, organizations and institutes.
	Culturally welcoming spaces reduce a sense of isolation and alienation.	<i>Aboriginal Gathering Places funded and now completed at 24 of the 25 public post-secondary institutions.</i>	All public post-secondary institution campuses have culturally welcoming spaces for Aboriginal learners.
			Protocols and guidelines for researching and sharing Aboriginal history, culture and knowledge are developed and shared.
			Housing spaces available to Aboriginal learners attending post-secondary institutions increase.

## Goal 2: support community-based delivery of programs

Objective	2013 Result	Status	2016 Result
<b>Objective 2.1</b> British Columbia public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal institutes and communities partner in the delivery of community-based programs for Aboriginal learners	Initiatives to improve partnerships are implemented.	<i>The Aboriginal Community-Based Delivery Partnerships Program was launched in August 2012. The program design involves a partnership between a public post-secondary institution and an Aboriginal community. More than 50 projects have been approved and funded in 39 Aboriginal communities across British Columbia.</i>	Aboriginal learners in rural and remote communities accessing post-secondary education and training programs increase.
<b>Objective 2.2</b> Aboriginal institutes have a unique and critical role in British Columbia's post-secondary system to increase Aboriginal learner participation and completion in post-secondary education	On reserve First Nations institutes are exempted from the Private Career Training Institutions Act.	<i>FNESC and IAHLA are taking steps to review the legal structure of the Aboriginal-controlled institutes.</i>	Aboriginal learners are able to transfer seamlessly from Aboriginal institutes to public post-secondary institutions when they enroll in courses and programs that build on courses they have taken in Aboriginal institutes.  Transferable courses from Aboriginal institutes to public post-secondary institutions increase in number.
<b>Objective 2.3</b> Aboriginal adult education programs enable Aboriginal learners to transition to post-secondary education and employment	Community Adult Literacy Program continues to support Aboriginal learners.	<i>Community Adult Literacy Program continues to support Aboriginal learners. \$787,000 in funding was provided over 2012/13 and 2013/14 to 30 CALP providers.</i>	
	Environmental scan of	<i>To be completed.</i>	Issues and



Objective	2013 Result	Status	2016 Result
	<p>Aboriginal adult education programs, policies and services is completed.</p>		<p>opportunities paper on Aboriginal adult education is completed.</p> <p>Aboriginal adult education assessment leading practices, tools and benchmarks are developed and utilized by partners.</p> <hr/> <p>Aboriginal adult learners in literacy programs show skill gains as evidenced through culturally relevant assessment and benchmarks.</p>

### Goal 3: reduce financial barriers

Objective	2013 Result	Status	2016 Result
<b>Objective 3.1</b> Financial supports to access and complete post-secondary education and training are available to Aboriginal learners who need them	Emergency Assistance Fund for Aboriginal learners is established.	<i>Aboriginal Emergency Assistance Fund was established with \$2 million in one-time funding. AVED is currently evaluating the program.</i>	Retention of Aboriginal learners in post-secondary programs is increased.
	Review of student financial assistance policy is completed.	<i>AVED is reviewing student financial assistance policy. Preliminary research and analysis has been undertaken to inform potential policy and program shifts. Stakeholders and Aboriginal post-secondary partners will be engaged as this project moves forward.</i>	
	The British Columbia Aboriginal Student Award is maintained and augmented as funding is available.	<i>AVED provided \$2 million in additional funding to the Irving K. Barber BC Scholarship Society to augment the BC Aboriginal Student Award program.</i>	
	Initiatives to promote awareness of financial assistance programs for Aboriginal learners are established.	<i>Student financial assistance policy review is currently underway, and scope of review includes promoting awareness of financial assistance.</i>	

## Goal 4: seamless transition

Objective	2013 Result	Status	2016 Result
<b>Objective 4.1</b> Teachers support Aboriginal learner success in the K-12 system	Financial assistance available for Aboriginal learners in teacher education programs is increased.	<i>AVED provided the Irving K. Barber BC Scholarship Society with \$2 million to support Aboriginal learners in teacher education programs.</i>	Aboriginal people with teaching credentials increase in number.
			First Nations language teachers increase in number.
<b>Objective 4.2</b> Aboriginal learners and their families have information and are better supported to make choices for their transition from K-12 to post-secondary and the labour market	New initiatives to support career and academic planning are developed.	<i>Aboriginal Post-Secondary Partners and Aboriginal K-12 Partners will develop initiatives over coming year.</i>	Aboriginal learners graduating from high school with the necessary prerequisites to transition into post-secondary education increase in number.
			Leading practices in supporting transitions, including mentoring, are shared.
		<i>FNESC organized and hosted a K-12 to Post-Secondary Education Forum in October 2013 with support from AVED, IAHLA and other Partners; a report is in progress.</i>	

## Goal 5: continuous improvement

Objective	2013 Result	Status	2016 Result
<b>Objective 5.1</b> Sharing of leading practices creates an environment of informed leadership, effective practices and results in Aboriginal post-secondary education	Coordinated strategy ensures that institutions and Aboriginal communities and organizations have the information to make well-informed decisions for program and service development.	<i>Partners are working together to determine what data should be reported. The Partners have agreed to take an incremental approach and work together to determine what and how to report.</i>	Public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal-controlled institutes are implementing policies, programs and services based on leading practices.
<b>Objective 5.2</b> Governments, Aboriginal institutes and public post-secondary institutions make evidence-based decisions with respect to Aboriginal post-secondary education	Regular reports on progress are implemented.	<i>This is the first regular report on progress in implementing the Aboriginal Policy Framework &amp; Action Plan.</i>	Data quality is sufficient to make well informed decisions and provide meaningful reporting and accountability on progress.
	Learners enrolled in programs delivered in partnership with Aboriginal institutes are identified.	<i>An "Aboriginal Institute Identifier" has been developed for the Post-Secondary Central Data Warehouse, and AVED is now exploring next steps.</i>	Evidence-based research is available and utilized by governments, Aboriginal communities and institutes and public post-secondary institutions.