

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

5th Convention on Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples

Fifty Years of Taking Ownership of Indigenous Education: Progress Made and the Way Forward

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In the spirit of discussion and sharing, the 5th edition of the Convention on Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples will focus on First Peoples education policies and the practices of those who welcome and guide Indigenous learners. Those with an interest or working in Indigenous education who wish to present at the Convention are invited to submit a proposal for presentation. The Convention welcomes presentations in a variety of formats: sharing practices, accounts and storytelling, science communications, interactive workshops or panel discussions. For more information or to obtain the submission form, please visit <http://www.fse.ulaval.ca/prscpp2022> or contact us at premiers.peuples@fse.ulaval.ca.

BACKGROUND

The 4th edition of the Convention on Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples in 2019 was built around a general interest in First Peoples learners. The chosen theme at that time—“Further Together!”—dovetailed well with the emerging social movement in the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015). In keeping with that will of mutual support and sharing, the upcoming 2022 Convention calls for thinking and acting as a community on the progress made since the 1972 release of *Indian Control of Indian Education*, the declaration that provided the impetus for First Peoples to take ownership of Indigenous education.

THEME OF THE 2022 CONVENTION

Fifty Years of Taking Ownership of Indigenous Education: Progress Made and the Way Forward

In 1972, in response to decades of control of Indigenous education by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) and religious orders, the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB)—today the Assembly of First Nations (AFN)—issued a declaration of intent to DIAND (today Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada and Indigenous Services Canada). This policy paper, entitled *Indian Control of Indian Education*, called for self-determination in Indigenous education. Considered as one of the catalysts of the movement toward First Peoples taking ownership of Indigenous education, the declaration advocated for the transfer of jurisdictional powers over education to First Nations communities and stressed the need to have Indigenous languages and Indigenous teacher training in Indigenous settings, as well as Indigenous representation in school boards and in post-secondary institutions across Canada. Founded on an Indigenous worldview that values “pride in one's self,” “understanding one's fellowmen [sic],” and “living in harmony with nature” (NIB, 1972, p.1), the declaration also proposed improvements well beyond these school powers to achieve self-determination in Indigenous education.

In 2010, the AFN would revisit this declaration by releasing its *First Nations Control of First Nations Education*. In it the AFN noted that the values and proposals upheld in 1972 were still relevant. While acknowledging the strides made since then in the development and creation of elementary and secondary schools and a handful of post-secondary institutions for and by First Nations, it also cautioned that many of the points made almost four decades earlier remained topical and that the increased administrative responsibilities handed over by DIAND had not been accompanied by an adequate transfer of resources to ensure the development of education systems for and by Indigenous people. The AFN deemed that “[t]hrough the efforts of First Nations educators and leaders, courses and curricula delivered in First Nations-controlled schools and institutes are beginning to reflect the perspectives and foundations of First Nations

traditions and worldviews” (AFN, 2010, p.9). However there was still a long way to go before achieving true self-determination in education. The AFN called in particular for the development of research centres for Indigenous education and an increase in the number of institutions of higher learning as well as the obligation to uphold inherent Aboriginal and Treaty rights to education (ibid., p.3).

In a global environment where the vitality of Indigenous languages remains a matter of critical importance, 2022 kicks off the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, as proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly. At the closing event of International Year of Indigenous Languages in 2019, more than 500 participants from 50 different countries adopted the Los Pinos Declaration, reaffirming Indigenous people’s linguistic rights and the need to preserve, revitalize and promote Indigenous languages. The Declaration also upholds the right to education using these languages at all levels of the education system and beyond in the public sphere, a right entrenched in Articles 13 and 14 of the 2007 *United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* for Indigenous people and those living outside Indigenous communities. The challenges of handing down Indigenous languages to younger generations and the need for schools to give greater importance to Indigenous languages in curricula and in instruction were already noted in *Indian Control Of Indian Education* back in 1972.

The upcoming 2022 Convention on Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples intends to take stock of the implementation to date of the recommendations laid out in *Indian Control Of Indian Education*. This year’s Convention will be focused on critically assessing the changes that have taken place in Indigenous education over the past 50 years, sharing current practices and improvements in attaining full measure of self-determination in Indigenous education from a perspective of decolonization. It will focus on the four key thematic areas singled out for attention and improvement in the 1972 declaration:

- **Responsibility:** administration of educational institutions and delivery of support services for learners in communities and urban centres alike;
- **Programs:** Indigenous languages, curricula in their various aspects, learning contexts and available materials;
- **Teachers:** teacher training and support for staff working with Indigenous learners, availability of Indigenous teachers, Indigenous teaching philosophy, Indigenous languages of instruction;
- **Facilities and Services:** delivery of additional services to Indigenous learners and school staff.

Discussions will cover these four key areas from three perspectives:

- The first will take stock from an historical perspective. What specific actions have been taken by Indigenous communities and other education stakeholders (federal

- and provincial governments, schools and learning service centres, CEGEPS/colleges and universities) over the past 50 years aimed at bolstering self-determination of First Peoples in Indigenous-led education? What were the major successes? What were the hurdles? How was taking control of Indigenous education developed beyond school administration, particularly in culturally-appropriate curricula and educational materials? What progress has been noted in the inclusion of Indigenous realities in teacher training programs? What about Indigenous-led schooling for Indigenous people in urban settings?
- The second perspective will be on the sharing of current initiatives and practices, accounts and storytelling that speak of today's Indigenous education experience, from the standpoint of both formal and informal teaching practices. Some of the topics covered include the range of support provided to Indigenous learners, including public and institutional policies impacting current Indigenous education. How do the various types of contemporary Indigenous education play a part in promoting Indigenous languages and cultures as well as in facilitating support for the educational path of First Peoples learners? This perspective will be useful to better situate where current initiatives and practices stand compared to the objectives set in 1972 and how much the latter reflect today's education issues at stake for First Peoples.
 - The third perspective is more forward-looking and will revolve around debating what the future holds in store. What should the priorities be for the next 50 years? What are the dreams and aspirations of Indigenous youth for their future, and that of their communities or nations? What are the optimal conditions for attaining full ownership of education and educational success as First Peoples themselves define it? How can public policies promote Indigenous self-determination in education? How can Indigenous teaching philosophy take root in schools and beyond? What should be the place for the instruction of Indigenous languages in First Peoples' educational institutions, in the Québec education system and in tomorrow's world? Indeed, we all have a role to play in this communal effort to safeguard the future of Indigenous education and improve the educational and living conditions of First People learners, both in Indigenous communities and in urban settings.

The Scientific Committee welcomes in particular presentations about culturally-appropriate teaching practices, support and partnerships—regardless of whether they are documented through research or lived experiences—from all levels of the education system: early learning and care (early childhood education and daycare), elementary and secondary school, vocational training, adult general education, colleges and universities. The Committee also wishes to approach the issue of Indigenous education by looking beyond the walls of the classroom: proposals about informal education, such as novel and

creative ideas on the handing down of Indigenous knowledge, skills and ways of being are also most welcome.

TYPES OF PRESENTATION

Each presentation will be allotted 45 minutes, including Q&A. How this time is apportioned is left up to the participant.

Many types of presentation are welcome:

- ☐ Sharing practices, accounts and storytelling;
- ☐ Science communications;
- ☐ Interactive workshops;
- ☐ Panels in different presentation formats.

The Committee is ideally looking in a presentation proposal for creative, dynamic and original approaches and innovative ideas, which may also be the topic of a presentation in and of itself. For a greater accessibility, some activities may be delivered in a hybrid mode, with a live feed.

SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

First Nations Elders, educators and education professionals, school administrators, Indigenous leaders, students and researchers involved in Indigenous education as well as Indigenous cultural activities facilitators are all encouraged to submit a proposal for presentation at this year's Convention. The Scientific Committee will evaluate proposals for their quality and thematic relevance.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

If you have an interest or work in Indigenous education and wish to contribute a presentation during the Convention you are invited to submit a 200-word abstract of your proposal indicating the type of presentation (sharing practices, accounts and storytelling; science communication; interactive workshop; panel). Kindly fill out and submit the form available at <http://www.fse.ulaval.ca/prscpp2022> no later than May 13, 2022. If you need any further information, advice or assistance on how to prepare your proposal, please e-mail your request to premiers.peuples@fse.ulaval.ca.

PUBLICATION

Participants presenting will be asked to submit an article to be published in Volume 5 of the *Journal of Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples*. The Journal is used to disseminate pedagogical and teaching approaches, science communications, and

shared practices, accounts and storytelling of those who wish to leave a record of their ideas for the benefit of the greatest number of people.

REFERENCES

Assembly of First Nations. (2010). *First Nations Control of First Nations Education*. <https://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education/fncfne.pdf>

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Canada's residential schools: the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

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The Scientific Committee