



CMEC Summit on Aboriginal Education
February 24-25, 2009

Strengthening Aboriginal Success

Summary Report

“These are not *your* children,
these are not *my* children,
they are *our* children.”

- Saskatchewan Elder Ken Goodwill



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Council of
Ministers
of Education,
Canada

Conseil des
ministres
de l'Éducation
(Canada)

CMEC Summit on Aboriginal Education

Strengthening Aboriginal Success:

Moving Toward *Learn Canada 2020*

Summary Report

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With the exception of the information contained in pages 4 and 5, the leaders referenced in this report were leaders at the time of the CMEC Summit on Aboriginal Education, February 24–25, 2009.



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An Elder's Reflection

The following are excerpts from words of reflection that Elder Walter Linklater shared at the Summit on Aboriginal Education.

The Elders are put on Earth to do teachings and teach people, so that we can learn to live with one another in a good way. I want to thank the [summit] committee for inviting me here and for being so kind and supportive in the work that Elders do.

It's always good to include spirituality and prayer in everything that you do. That's the teaching of our people.

Always remember the phrase, "Before your feet hit the ground, you should be in prayer."

We ask our creator... to listen to us... as we're powerless without their spiritual help. We ask them to grant us courage for constructive solutions to complete what was discussed yesterday in smaller groups. That's for the inclusion of First Nations and Métis people in the education system. We're working toward that end, so that education will be holistic; it will be spiritual and in tune with the teachings of our people.

I'm very grateful for the Elders who came before — our teachers, many of them are in the spirit world now — as we take over their responsibilities. The Elders always encouraged us to get the best education possible... Get your bachelor of arts and your master of arts and your Ph.D.... but they used to add... not at the expense of your culture. So that's the message I picked from this conference.

It was a very great honour to receive the star blanket. It is a very sacred gift and I thank you very much.



...education will be holistic; it will be spiritual and in tune with the teachings of our people.

— Walter Linklater, *Elder*



Honourable Diane McGifford

Reflections from the CMEC Chair

Aboriginal education is a central priority for the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). The CMEC Summit on Aboriginal Education created an excellent opportunity for dialogue with the leaders of national and regional Aboriginal organizations.

The summit was well attended, with over 200 participants, including leaders of over 40 national and regional Aboriginal organizations. In addition to provincial and territorial ministers of education, several ministers of Aboriginal affairs were present. The Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians sent a personal message to summit participants.

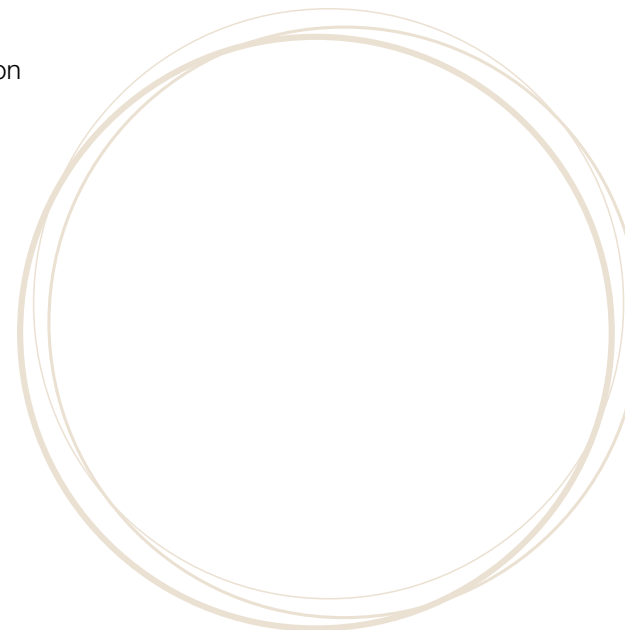
This report documents and summarizes the summit's key findings. It suggests possibilities for future collaboration and joint action. The report anticipates ways by which our education systems might be strengthened to benefit Aboriginal learners.

As the new Chair of CMEC, I want to recognize the Honourable Ken Krawetz, Saskatchewan's Deputy Premier and Minister of Education, and the Honourable Rob Norris, Saskatchewan's Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour, for their contributions to the summit. The work of the Honourable Kelly Lamrock, former Chair of CMEC and former Minister of Education of New Brunswick, was stellar and essential to the summit's success.

The Summit on Aboriginal Education was a landmark event for CMEC. Of course, my colleagues and I remain committed to future collaboration and action.

Diane McGifford

*Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy and
Minister responsible for International Education, Manitoba
Chair of CMEC*





Honourable Kelly Lamrock

Reflections from the Former CMEC Chair

The CMEC Summit on Aboriginal Education was the beginning of a national effort to work together with key partners in Aboriginal education to find solutions to issues that contribute to the gap in academic achievement between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Canadians and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

I am pleased to report that the summit was well attended by all invited and the atmosphere of the meeting was one of anticipation and respect, as CMEC endeavoured to listen, learn, and respond to the concerns and ideas expressed by Aboriginal education partners.

In review, there were five objectives of the CMEC Summit on Aboriginal Education; the agenda and all ensuing activities at the summit were designed to assist in the attainment of those objectives. Several themes translated into possible next steps for action. The overview of the summit provided in this document speaks to these themes and to CMEC's ongoing commitment to work with its partner stakeholders in moving forward.

It has been my privilege to assist in efforts to initiate a partnership among all education stakeholders. I am confident that we will continue to work together on actions that can lead to improvements in Aboriginal educational achievement, to benefit the lives of Aboriginal peoples and of all Canadians.

Kelly Lamrock

*Former Minister of Education, New Brunswick
Former Chair of CMEC*



Honourable Ken Krawetz



Honourable Rob Norris

Saskatchewan Ministers' Message

It was an honour to host the CMEC Summit on Aboriginal Education in Saskatchewan. Leaders from across the country were able to share their wisdom and experience and discuss opportunities to ensure brighter educational futures for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students.

As leaders, it is our collective responsibility to continually look at creative new ways to eliminate the achievement gaps between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners and non-Aboriginal learners.

The summit provided an opportunity for a national dialogue. We are encouraged by the success of the summit and see it as a beginning, a first step. The Summit on Aboriginal Education was a positive, solutions-based process. It provided the opportunity to focus on the common goals that unite us, such as strengthening student achievement, improving graduation rates, and ensuring smooth career transitions.

We need to continue the momentum in strengthening partnerships and moving the Aboriginal-education agenda forward. Now is the time to help inform a new direction nationally, regionally, and at grassroots levels.

We look forward to continuing to work collectively with our CMEC colleagues and with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit leaders to ensure that all our students and future entrepreneurs, role models, and community leaders have every opportunity to succeed.

Ken Krawetz

*Deputy Premier and
Minister of Education*

Rob Norris

*Minister of Advanced
Education, Employment
and Labour*

CMEC's Vision: Strengthening Aboriginal¹ Success

We, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), are committed to working together to achieve success for all learners, so that the lifelong process of realizing potential is within the reach of all Canadians.

In 2008, CMEC developed *Learn Canada 2020*, a declaration aimed at improving education systems, learning opportunities, and overall education outcomes across Canada. Through *Learn Canada 2020*, “ministers of education recognize the direct link between a well-educated population and a socially progressive, sustainable society.”

Learn Canada 2020 also identified ministers' objective to eliminate the gaps in academic achievement and graduation rates between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students across Canada. Based on the belief that all Canadians have the reasonable expectation of benefitting from education, CMEC initiated a gathering to “establish a new relationship among leaders in Aboriginal education that respects jurisdiction and develops consensus on shared opportunities” (CMEC, *Summit on Aboriginal Education Backgrounder*).

CMEC leaders came together for the first-ever national dialogue to discuss priorities for moving forward on eliminating the gaps between the educational achievement of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in Canada.

¹ Aboriginal: This broad term is used to refer to the three groups of indigenous peoples referenced in the Canadian Constitution: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. The term “Aboriginal” is not intended to exclude non-status Indians.

Ministers and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Leaders



Back row (left to right):

Mr. Phil Fontaine, National Chief, Assembly of First Nations; **Mr. Paul Kaludjak**, President, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated; **Hon. Louis Tapardjuk**, Minister of Education (NU); **Hon. Kathleen Wynne**, Minister of Education (ON); **Hon. Gene Zwozdesky**, Minister of Aboriginal Relations (AB); **Hon. Jackson Lafferty**, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment (NT); **Hon. Peter Bjornson**, Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth (MB); **Hon. Judy Streach**, Minister of Education (NS); **Hon. Ken Krawetz**, Minister of Education (SK); **Hon. Diane McGifford**, Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy (MB); **Mr. Pierre Corbeil**, Minister responsible for Aboriginal affairs (QC); **Hon. Brad Duguid**, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs (ON); **Mr. Robert Doucette**, President, Métis Nation of Saskatchewan

Front row (left to right):

Mr. Kevin Daniels, Interim National Chief, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples; **Hon. David Hancock**, Minister of Education (AB); **Hon. Joan Burke**, Minister of Education (NL); **Hon. Kelly Lamrock**, Minister of Education (NB); **Hon. Gerard Greenan**, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development (PE); **Hon. Patrick Rouble**, Minister of Education (YK); **Hon. Rob Norris**, Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour (SK); **Hon. June Draude**, Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations (SK); **Ms. Beverley Jacobs**, President, Native Women's Association of Canada

Absent:

Hon. Doug Horner, Minister of Advanced Education and Technology (AB); **Hon. Shirley Bond**, Minister of Education (BC); **Hon. Murray Coell**, Minister of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development (BC); **Hon. Donald Arseneault**, Minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour (NB); **Hon. John Milloy**, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities (ON); **Ms. Michelle Courchesne**, Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports (QC)



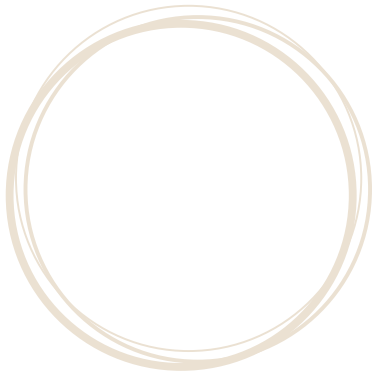
CMEC Summit on Aboriginal Education

Ministers of education and of Aboriginal affairs; First Nations, Métis, and Inuit leaders; and federal government officials came together in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, on February 24 and 25, 2009, for the CMEC Summit on Aboriginal Education: Strengthening Aboriginal Success. CMEC leaders came together for the first-ever national dialogue to discuss priorities for moving forward on eliminating the gaps between the educational achievement of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in Canada. This report is a record of that event.

The summit agenda included small-group discussions and plenary sessions for over 200 invited participants. This interactive format ensured that everyone's contributions were considered in the spirit of working together.

The objectives of the summit were as follows:

1. to raise the public profile of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education and to promote awareness of the need to eliminate the gaps in education outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners at the elementary-secondary and postsecondary levels;
2. to engage and build support for partnerships, based on dialogue and engagement strategies, with national and regional Aboriginal organizations;
3. to identify potential areas for action to meet the goals of *Learn Canada 2020*;
4. to engage with the federal government on Aboriginal education and to discuss opportunities to develop strategies to effect policy change; and
5. to build intergovernmental networks for future dialogue, collaboration, and opportunities to work together on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education.



“By gathering here in Saskatchewan and by participating in the CMEC Summit on Aboriginal Education... together... collectively... we are working toward building stronger Aboriginal success and better futures for all our young people; that would make all of our ancestors proud,” said Saskatchewan Deputy Premier and Minister of Education Ken Krawetz.

The summit followed a process that was positive, solutions-based, and action-oriented. It allowed for diversity of opinions and perspectives to be provided by all participants. Summit participants agreed that they all have an important role in and responsibility for improving Aboriginal education.



What We Heard

By drawing on transcripts of speeches, comments, and reports shared at the summit, the following themes were identified as opportunities to work together, strengthened by collective action:

- Strengthening Aboriginal Language and Culture
- Enhancing Equity in Funding
- Increasing Access, Retention, and Graduation (postsecondary education and adult learning)
- Sharing Responsibility and Accountability
- Planning for Transitions: Seamless Systems for Learners
- Reporting and Benchmarking Success: Data
- Providing Programs and Services
- Engaging All Partners in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education

Strengthening Aboriginal Language and Culture

Language is the foundation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures. For learners to achieve success in education, affirmation of their language and cultural identity is essential. The summit identified building blocks for approaches based on language and culture, including: curricula, curriculum resources, cultural content, diverse perspectives, instructional methods, programs, and services.

It is also important for non-Aboriginal learners to appreciate First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples' heritage, present-day cultures, and contributions to Canada.

- The **Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)** asserted that more Aboriginal teachers are needed in classrooms to help improve language and cultural training “from kindergarten to grade 12, and we need to provide better postsecondary education opportunities... A strong, vibrant future of the Canadian north [and for Canada in general] is in the hands of Inuit children and youth” (Paul Kaludjak, President, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, February 24, 2009).



- National Aboriginal organizations (NAOs) advocated for a holistic approach to education. This vision for First Nations learners was described by National Chief Phil Fontaine of the **Assembly of First Nations (AFN)** as “...learners who [will] achieve their full potential, supported by a comprehensive system under First Nations jurisdiction that addresses their intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical needs through quality lifelong learning, grounded in First Nations languages, cultures, traditions, values, and worldviews.” AFN would like to see “all provinces mandate their schools, universities, and colleges to expand their mandatory requirements to include Native Studies courses for all diploma and degree courses in high schools, universities, and colleges” (February 24, 2009).

In support of cultural literacy, former CMEC Chair Kelly Lamrock affirmed that CMEC “must ensure that curriculum remains flexible so that learning remains consistent with Aboriginal culture. It is critical to ensure that curriculum is open and flexible as needed, but that all Canadians, as a condition of citizenship, understand the tremendous relationship between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities and non-Aboriginal communities” (February 25, 2009).

Enhancing Equity in Funding

Across Canada, the interpretation of the “right to education” varies between and within jurisdictions for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. From the perspectives of First Nations and off-reserve status and non-status Indians, education is a treaty right that extends from early childhood to adulthood. For Inuit and Métis peoples, the *Constitution Act (1982)* also recognizes a right to education. The federal government interprets the responsibility for education under the *Indian Act*, narrowing the focus to elementary and secondary schools located on reserve lands. These funding challenges are viewed as barriers to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners’ opportunities for educational achievement.

Summit participants stated that more parity is needed between on-reserve and provincial schools. The physical condition of schools contributes to the overall teaching and learning experience. Infrastructure for on-reserve schools is the responsibility of the federal government. Summit participants expressed the need for the federal government to address their concerns and priorities for change.



In Canada, the federal government invests in elementary and postsecondary education for Aboriginal people through a variety of methods such as grants and other financial support. Although significant, the level of federal government support has been capped since 1996 at an increase of 2 per cent per year. Many summit participants identified shortfalls in federal funding levels for elementary-secondary and postsecondary Aboriginal learners as a factor in unsatisfactory educational achievement.

- **AFN** advised that First Nations elementary and secondary schools have lower funding levels than provincial schools on a per-student basis — approximately \$3,000 less per student. National Chief Phil Fontaine emphasized that postsecondary education is also an important part of lifelong learning. When support for postsecondary education is capped or limited, it does not allow First Nations learners to access further education. “This cap does not keep pace with inflation or population growth, which is at 6.2 per cent in First Nations communities” (February 24, 2009).
- Kevin Daniels, Interim National Chief of the **Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP)**, also spoke of the need for postsecondary funding “to be available for all Aboriginal peoples regardless of their status or place of residence. All registered Indians who qualify for postsecondary education should have funding made available to them” (February 24, 2009).
- The **Métis National Council (MNC)** stressed that education funding should be extended to all Métis learners to increase their access to postsecondary education. Métis Nation of Saskatchewan President Robert Doucette also indicated that more funding is needed for Métis educational institutions to increase access and remove barriers for Métis learners (February 24, 2009).

In his concluding remarks, former CMEC Chair Kelly Lamrock, responding to the issue of federal funding for postsecondary Aboriginal education, asserted that “we [CMEC] know that this is not an issue where one level of government can say it is up to another level to find solutions. We need to bring the federal government into the discussion” (February 25, 2009).



Saskatchewan Premier, **the Honourable Brad Wall**, and **Phil Fontaine**, National Chief, Assembly of First Nations



Kevin Daniels, Interim National Chief, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, with dancers at school visit





Increasing Access, Retention, and Graduation (postsecondary education and adult learning)

Summit participants described the connection between postsecondary education for Aboriginal peoples and the enrichment of communities and vibrant economies. For First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, lower educational attainment and completion rates are partially explained by multiple barriers that limit access to, and persistence in, completing postsecondary education. The Honourable Rob Norris, Saskatchewan's Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour, asserted that "it is time to work together to enhance access to postsecondary education and take action" (CMEC communiqué, February 25, 2009).

Summit participants suggested that innovative programming for student retention and support is required to help learners overcome challenges. Governments were urged to increase the flexibility of programs, including start-up opportunities, course length, location, and physical attendance requirements, in order to improve access and retention. The importance of taking into consideration the needs of students with disabilities was also mentioned.

Another factor limiting the success of Aboriginal learners is the "stages of life" approach to education. As indicated at the summit, many Aboriginal people complete their education later in life. This being the case, summit participants encouraged all partners to facilitate flexible access to education wherever possible.

- **Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC)** President Beverley Jacobs noted that "Aboriginal peoples, and Aboriginal girls and women in particular, may not experience the stages of life at the same age, and in the same order, as the general Canadian population. This is especially critical to those attending postsecondary and postgraduate education and training" (February 24, 2009).
- **AFN** reminded summit participants that the interests and expertise shared among Aboriginal-controlled and/or -managed postsecondary institutions across Canada offer opportunities for networking to strengthen Aboriginal education.



Sharing Responsibility and Accountability

Many references to clarifying responsibility and accountability were made at the summit. In general, most participants felt that all orders of government needed to move beyond the jurisdictional debate about who was responsible and accountable. It was accepted that learners benefit most when *all* levels of government commit to having a role to play. This idea does not detract from the distinct responsibilities of each level of government; rather, it focuses on what can be accomplished collectively. What became apparent at the summit was a need for all parties to work together and to build consensus on ways to eliminate the educational-achievement gaps experienced by Aboriginal learners in Canada.

- **MNC** indicated that “jurisdictional issues continue to be the number one obstacle to developing and implementing successful education policies and programs for the Métis. The Métis Nation believes that Métis governments/institutions have jurisdiction and responsibility to address the social and economic needs of our people, including current learning and education initiatives” (Métis National Council. *Métis Education Report*. February 25, 2009).
- **AFN** reaffirmed its position that First Nations have jurisdiction over First Nations education. All Canadians must understand the importance of governments’ working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples to address Aboriginal-education issues.
- **CAP** stated that the needs and concerns of Aboriginal people living off-reserve were very complex. People must seek solutions in a morass of jurisdictional forces that have resulted in fragmented policies and a patchwork of supports and services (February 24, 2009).



Robert Doucette, President,
Métis Nation of Saskatchewan



Planning for Transitions: Seamless Systems for Learners

Throughout the lifelong learning journey, there are many transitions between and beyond education systems, including pre-kindergarten to elementary school, on-reserve and off-reserve schools, elementary to secondary, and secondary to postsecondary and the workforce. Depending on how learners are supported during these transitions, these experiences can contribute to, or take away from, learners' educational achievement and success. Many participants at the summit acknowledged that transitions can be particularly difficult for Aboriginal learners. Aboriginal-education partners need to understand transition challenges and provide support to facilitate smooth transitions.



Beverley Jacobs, President,
Native Women's Association of Canada

Reporting and Benchmarking Success: Data

Data is critical to understanding the educational-achievement gaps of Aboriginal people. Currently, the approaches taken by provincial, territorial, and federal governments to capture and use data are not coordinated. This lack of coordination makes it difficult to assess what works and what doesn't for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners. Summit participants suggested that consistent approaches for collecting, analyzing, and sharing information are essential for making informed decisions. In addition, beyond educational achievement, it was suggested that "quality of life" also be measured because it indicates a holistic view of success that is appreciated by First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

- **NWAC** noted that "transformative change will result through the development of measures that address the important linkages between all aspects that contribute to the socioeconomic well-being of Aboriginal women and girls" (February 24, 2009).
- Many NAOs affirmed the importance of strengthening infrastructure and technical capacity for Aboriginal peoples, organizations, and institutions, in order to collect and assess data as a way to move forward collaboratively.

During the summit, CMEC confirmed that its current Aboriginal Education Action Plan has identified work on data as a priority.



Providing Programs and Services

Summit participants shared ideas about a variety of programs and services. Appendix I (Summary of education programs and services to help eliminate the gap in academic achievement between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners) provides a summary of the ideas.

An important contributor to success for Aboriginal learners is to ensure that their educators understand and appreciate the value of culture and history for Aboriginal learners.

Beyond educational supports and services, participants expressed that improving overall social conditions for Aboriginal learners is an important factor in improving learning outcomes, and that improving learning outcomes will lead to improved social conditions. Specifically, all representatives of the national Aboriginal organizations and many representatives of the regional Aboriginal organizations indicated that adverse social conditions, such as poverty, must be addressed as a prerequisite to improved student outcomes.

- **NWAC** affirmed that “success in education and training is dependent on, not merely influenced by, the conditions experienced by the individual related to their housing, their health, and their ability to meet their basic physical and social needs. Any measures implemented to improve education outcomes must address the linkages between these outcomes and the basic human needs of the individual” (President Beverley Jacobs, February 24, 2009).
- **NWAC** emphasized that any characterization of lifelong learning for Aboriginal peoples inherently contains educational and social aspects. For this reason, it is necessary to address socioeconomic factors, including gender, in the planning, development, and implementation of any measures related to education and training (February 24, 2009).



- Likewise, **CAP** urged that “special attention must be paid to breaking the poverty cycle and social exclusion of our children. Education is a key part of any poverty-reduction strategy. Our children are generally less well-equipped — socially, emotionally, and physically — to undertake school programs. Their disadvantaged position and different day-to-day experiences are not taken into account by school curricula. It is no wonder that they are unable to benefit fully from the school system” (Interim National Chief Kevin Daniels, February 24, 2009).

As well, summit participants identified early childhood development (ECD) and early intervention programs as important building blocks for lifelong learning. In order to eliminate the educational-achievement gaps experienced by Aboriginal learners, it is believed that investments in ECD are essential. Focusing on achievement and holistic development in the early years creates an environment to further an individual child’s and family’s progress.

- Recognizing the importance of ECD, **CAP** suggested that “early childhood development is an essential education program needed to ensure that all Aboriginal children, regardless of residence, have the very best start in life” (February 24, 2009).

Engaging All Partners in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education

As a principle, those most affected by a challenge must be included in discussions of strategies to address the challenge. Eliminating the educational-achievement gaps experienced by Aboriginal learners across Canada requires meaningful involvement of Aboriginal peoples in all orders of government. The summit confirmed the willingness of all participants to work together to create a shared and successful future.

In addition, private-sector engagement and interventions, such as promoting apprenticeship training to Aboriginal learners, provide potential opportunities for Aboriginal learners to experience success within learning and working environments.



Paul Kaludjak, President,
Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated



Moving Forward: Working Together

As a historic gathering, the summit achieved many of its objectives. Among them are the following:

- The public profile and awareness of the need to eliminate the educational-achievement gap were raised considerably across Canada.
- National and regional Aboriginal organizations were involved as partners, through dialogue and engagement in the summit.
- Themes and priorities for action to be carried out were identified at the summit.
- The federal government, through Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, was called to action in support of eliminating the educational-achievement gap.
- Intergovernmental networks and relationships were developed to focus on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education in Canada.

Moving forward will effect positive change and outcomes in education for Aboriginal peoples. All participants recognized the importance of the federal government's being part of the discussion on issues and of the solutions.

- To reinforce this point, **AFN** affirmed the importance of partnerships: "This is not just [for] First Nations. This is about Canada and our shared future together" (National Chief Phil Fontaine, February 25, 2009).
- In a similar response endorsing the notion of partnerships, **ITK** announced that its Inuit Education Strategy "goes hand in hand with CMEC's Aboriginal Education Action Plan. ...Productive collaboration among all jurisdictions and ITK will secure long-term success for both initiatives" (Paul Kaludjak, President, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, February 24, 2009).



- **CAP** supported the notion of partnerships, stating, “We look forward to working with federal, provincial, and territorial officials to demonstrate that there can be constructive dialogue on Aboriginal-education policies and practices” (Interim National Chief Kevin Daniels, February 24, 2009).
- **MNC** emphasized that “education is a key item in the Métis Nation Protocol, which was signed by the Government of Canada and the Métis National Council in September 2008” (President Robert Doucette, Métis Nation Saskatchewan, February 24, 2009).

Provinces and territories are continuing their work with regional Métis organizations to further the education outcomes of Métis peoples.

- **NWAC** agreed that partnership is a key factor in successful planning, design, decision making, and implementation, and that the full inclusion of Aboriginal women is an integral and necessary element of a full and successful partnership.

Next Steps: Our Commitment Continues

This historic Summit on Aboriginal Education successfully raised the profile of Aboriginal education in Canada. By bringing together Canada’s leaders in Aboriginal education, it signalled a new era of partnership across Canada and strengthened existing partnerships in provinces and territories.

The summit, however, was only one step on this journey toward educational improvements. Ministers of education committed to forging an ongoing relationship with national Aboriginal leaders and to strengthening their existing relationships with regional representatives.

As members of CMEC, provincial and territorial ministers of education affirmed to Aboriginal leaders and Canadians that many of the themes and key priorities identified at the summit, which are crucially important to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners, would continue to guide the priorities of CMEC.



APPENDIX I

Summary of education programs and services to help eliminate the gap in academic achievement between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners

The following are existing programs and services and/or new ideas that are categorized under each of the four pillars of lifelong learning identified in CMEC's *Learn Canada 2020* declaration (2008).

Early Childhood Learning and Development

- Community-based early-childhood centres for both urban and rural Aboriginal people (e.g., federal Aboriginal Head Start Program)
- Early-years/transition-to-kindergarten assessment programs and intervention services
- High-quality language-learning resources
- All children learn about First Nations cultures and histories

Elementary to High School Systems

- Transition-to-school supports and services
- Mentors
- Instructional methods and resource supports
- Active community and family engagement, perhaps through community-school programs; provision of family needs so students can participate more fully (e.g., meals, transportation, child care)
- Culturally sensitive curricula
- First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit language programs (regionally adapted to meet local needs)
- Citizenship: elementary level — curricula and associated resources adjusted/broadened to reflect treaties and other “Aboriginal”-sensitive materials
- Citizenship: high-school level — public awareness of Aboriginal history, role, and rights (treaties) (e.g., First Nations, Inuit, and Métis history and culture in curriculum relative to European culture [English/French], relative to influence)
- Recognition of Aboriginal traditional knowledge
- Transition-to-school and workplace supports and services

Postsecondary Education

- Transition-to-school supports and services
- Mentors
- Instructional methods and resource supports
- Active community and family engagement, perhaps through community-school programs; provision of family needs so students can participate more fully (e.g., meals, transportation, child care)
- Culturally sensitive curricula
- First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit language programs (regionally adapted to meet local needs)
- Recognition of Aboriginal traditional knowledge
- Recognition of need to eliminate the current federal 2-per-cent cap on postsecondary funding
- Civic studies: at the secondary level, familiarize students with the history of Aboriginal peoples, as well as their historical roles and rights (treaties); specifically, include more First Nations, Métis, and Inuit history and culture in curriculum relative to European culture (French/English), so that the role/influence of Aboriginal peoples is better appreciated
- Equitable funding for all Aboriginal groups (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis)
- Recognition of Métis eligibility (currently not acknowledged in federal programming)
- Equitable funding for postsecondary students (loans/bursaries/scholarships)
- In-school intervention supports
- Transition-to-school and workplace supports and services

Adult Learning and Skills Development

- Equitable and targeted programs
- Private-sector engagement
- Employment placement (affirmative action)



