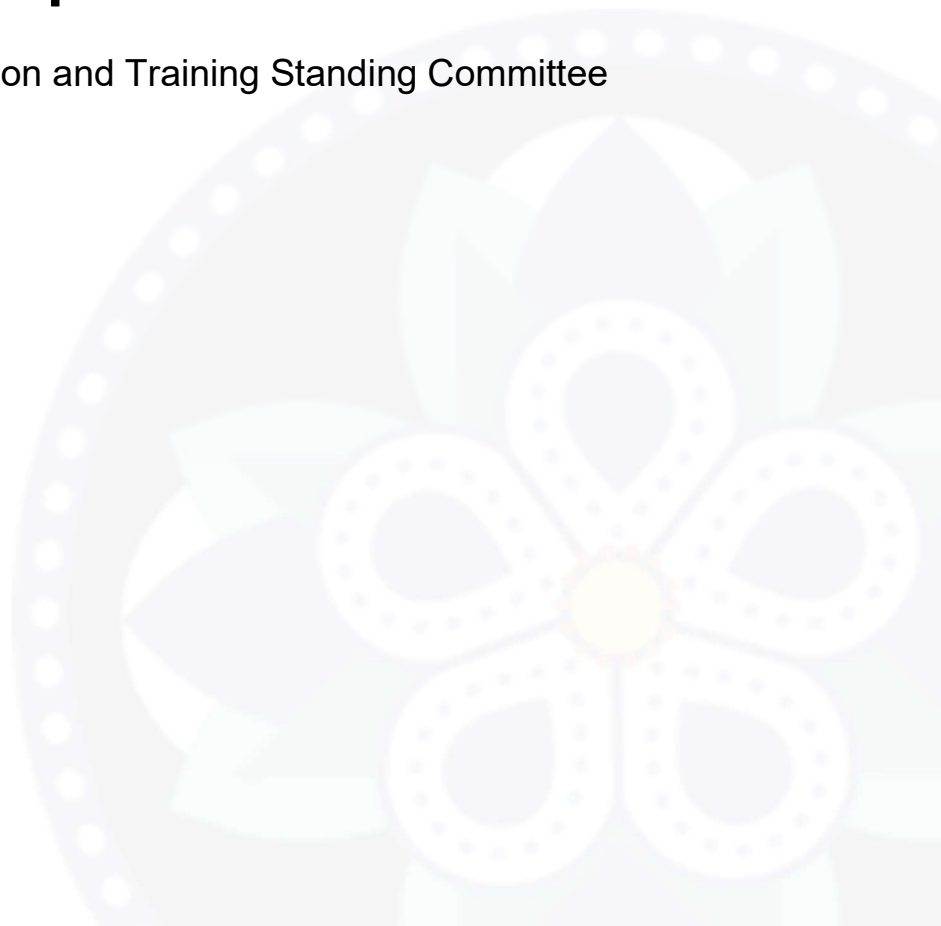




RALLIEMENT NATIONAL DES
MÉTIS
NATIONAL COUNCIL

Métis National Council K-12 Program Proposal

Prepared by the Métis Education and Training Standing Committee
September 2022



Contents

Introduction.....	2
Métis demographics	5
Educational Outcomes	7
Labour Market Outcomes by Education Path	10
Métis Provincial Overview	13
British Columbia - Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC)	14
Alberta - Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA).....	15
Saskatchewan - Métis Nation—Saskatchewan (MNS).....	16
Manitoba - Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF).....	16
Ontario - Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO)	17
From Colonial Impacts to Promising Practices	19
Pedagogical Innovations and Developments.....	21
Provincial Investments in Education	24
Federal Government Support for First Nations K-12 Education	27
Federal Transfer to the Provinces.....	28
Métis Nation K-12 Education Program.....	30
Principles of Métis K-12 Education Policy.....	31
PRINCIPLE 1: Métis Inherent Right to Self-Government	31
PRINCIPLE 2: Métis Control of Métis Education	32
PRINCIPLE 3: Métis K-12 Education Program: Long-term, Predictable Funding	33
PRINCIPLE 4: Support for the creation of Métis K-12 education tripartite tables.....	34
Métis K-12 Education Program: Structural Elements	35
Core Allocation	35
Governance.....	37
Métis Nation Engagement.....	37
Métis K-12 Education Program: Funding Model	38
First Nations Funding	38
Métis Funding.....	39
References	41

Introduction

This paper takes the position that as Section 35 Indigenous peoples, with inalienable Aboriginal rights, the development of Métis self-governing educational programs created and managed by Métis will support the unique learning needs of Métis students and diminish existing educational gaps. Meeting the distinctive educational needs of Métis students is of paramount importance in seeking an equity-driven response to Indigenous education. The Métis people have long fought for recognition of inherent Aboriginal rights as one of Canada's three constitutionally recognized Aboriginal peoples and with recent court cases favourably affirming this overdue recognition, we can turn our attention to education.¹ In a fast-changing world, responsive educational models will ensure that future Métis generations remain vibrant contributors to their communities and Canada.

In the realm of kindergarten to grade 12 (K-12), this situation is made complex by provincial systems that assume assimilation of the Métis people is natural and inevitable and is further exacerbated by declining provincial support across the homeland. Within the Métis homeland, the medley of provincial approaches to K-12 education reflects the power of provincial authorities to implement priorities without consideration for Métis perspectives. Allocated to provincial jurisdiction, Métis students have been subject to diverse provincial approaches where a lack of coordinated efforts have resulted in educational programming that is underdeveloped and alienating. Métis students are subsumed under a First Nations-centric approach where their unique perspectives, knowledge, and traditions are either ignored or minimally mentioned. Reports highlighting the educational conditions of Indigenous peoples point out the failings of a colonially biased education for Indigenous learners, and we see this situation further exacerbated within a Métis context.²

In 1997, the federal government produced "Gathering Strength - Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan" in response to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, where Canada committed to a renewed relationship guided by the principles of "mutual respect, mutual recognition, mutual responsibility and sharing."³ In 2015, a call to renew this relationship was echoed by Prime Minister Trudeau who expressed that, for Canada, there is no relationship more important than with Indigenous Canadians.⁴ Following this expression of partnership development, Canada moved to implement a number of far-reaching initiatives that include the Canada-Métis Nation Accord signifying the unique characteristics of the Métis as an Indigenous people.

Signed in 2017, the Accord is a blueprint for implementation of co-developed initiatives designed to "uphold the special constitutional relationship that the Métis Nation has with the Crown as partners in Confederation and as recognized and affirmed in section 35 of the

¹ Seminal cases such as Powley (2003) and Daniels (2016) paved the way for renewed negotiations between Canada and the Métis Nation, culminating in the Canada- Métis Nation Accord, where K-12 funding was deemed a priority.

² See, among others: the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP, 1996); the National Indian Brotherhood, (1972); the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015); and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, 2007).

³ Canada. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Gathering Strength.

⁴ Statement by the Prime Minister of Canada on National Aboriginal Day 2017: "We are determined to make a real difference in the lives of Indigenous Peoples – by closing socio-economic gaps, supporting greater self-determination, and establishing opportunities to work together on shared priorities" (para. 4).

Constitution Act, 1982.”⁵ In terms of education, the Accord calls the parties to “explore the need for and approaches to establishing linkages and cultural supports for Métis Nation students (K to 12) to improve their educational outcomes.”⁶

Recent provincial attempts to make K-12 education systems more inclusive and responsive to the needs of Indigenous learners have largely failed, as evidenced by the Alberta and Ontario provinces where governments have imposed a new provincial curriculum without any meaningful involvement of Indigenous peoples or their perspectives.⁷ Even where there are promising strides in Indigenous education, the Métis are often left out or inappropriately represented. Ongoing calls by Métis authorities to create provincial partnerships to address these long-standing issues continue to be ignored or unfairly addressed.

Within the current K-12 landscape, provincial authorities assign funding to Métis education at their discretion and the overall approach these jurisdictions have taken regarding partnerships with provincial Métis authorities is remarkably similar: *under-representation* and *underfunding*. In this context, the educational needs of the Métis remain out of the control of Métis people. “By and large, this inconsistency in funding practices is representative of governments that continue to rely on jurisdictional disputes as a means of postponing meaningful involvement of the Métis in education.”⁸ With the Daniels Decision (2016) asserting this approach can no longer be tolerated, this paper asserts a transitional tripartite arrangement as requisite for Métis people to assert jurisdiction over Métis education.

In this paper, we first provide a contextual scan of the circumstances affecting Métis students in the K-12 education system in provinces across the Métis homeland – British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba,⁹ and Ontario. In contextualizing the situation of Métis education across the homeland, we review current provincial education models that, at best, minimally support Métis within the system; we review investments made by provincial and federal jurisdictions, particularly First Nations’ programming; we consider the advances made by Métis education authorities in the homeland and ongoing efforts to produce K-12 resources without a stable budget concomitant with the size of the Métis learners’ population.

This paper also documents contributions by Métis scholars’ intent in moving from colonial education practices to more promising practices for Métis learners. Increasing participation by

⁵ The Canada-Métis Nation Accord also recognized the need to establish a government-to-government relationship, to end the colonial relationship, and improve the socio-economic conditions of Métis.

⁶ The Accord goes on to point that the discussions at the national level will “include an examination of current data on educational outcomes, identification of promising practices, and the level and supports for unique curriculum development to enhance educational outcomes.”

⁷ The province of Ontario appears to unilaterally focus on First Nations and treaties to the exclusion of the Métis. In Alberta, the mandating of Teaching Quality Standard 5 requires the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives across all grades and all subject areas and represents the greatest hope of respectful inclusion. However, provincial authorities continue to impose their own agenda through the curriculum. See for instance, “Promises made, promises broken” for a critique of the new K-6 curriculum for Alberta students: <https://alberta-curriculum-analysis.ca/promises-made-promises-broken-how-the-draft-k-6-curriculum-recolonizes-the-metis-in-alberta-2/>

⁸ The 2013 national study, *Painting a Picture of the Métis homeland*, provided an overview of Métis education, employment, and training across the homeland.

⁹ On July 6, 2021, the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) signed the Manitoba Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Agreement with the Government of Canada recognizing the Manitoba Métis right of self-government and the existing democratically elected government of the Manitoba Métis.

Métis scholars on these initiatives assumes greater relevance as Canada and the Métis Nation move toward consolidating a vision of what Métis education is and how collaborative efforts can contribute to Canada as a whole.

Lessons from the current education paradigm led us to propose a new shift, one where the federal government invests in education of Métis learners from cradle to grave. Within K-12 education, this paper proposes a model that entrenches Métis constitutional rights and control over Métis education—control based on the pillars of transparency and accountability. Finally, the paper provides a funding formula that is comparable with other federal investments in K-12 Indigenous education.

Notably, the Métis K-12 Education Program formula acknowledges that most Métis students attend the public school system. The funding formula also uses the concept of 33%, which is the percentage of First Nations students attending public system education in the provinces within the homeland, to calculate investments in Métis education. Proposed funding under this program is based on the principle that there is no hierarchy of Indigenous rights and, therefore, the base *per capita* calculation is the same as for First Nations students. Investments in provincial expenditures (top-ups) for the First Nation, Métis, Inuit (FNMI) self-identified population is deducted from the final Métis K-12 education program calculation. Thus, the funding formula ensures equivalences between Métis and First Nations' education programs.

Finally, this proposed Métis Nation K-12 Education Program does not call for a retroactive investment. While it will take years for the Métis Nation K-12 education program to be leveled with other Indigenous K-12 education programs, the proposed expenditure will ensure an auspicious start for Métis learners across the Métis homeland.

Métis demographics

The 2021 Census indicates that there are **624,220** Métis living in Canada. This number represents 32% of the overall Indigenous population in Canada and shows a 6.3% increase from 2016. Census 2021 reports that Canada’s Indigenous population continues to grow faster than the non-Indigenous population and remains a younger population. The Métis comprise approximately 33% of the overall Indigenous student population in the homeland; except for Ontario that received \$850,000 last year of provincial funding directed to Métis representative organizations and is fixed at between \$0 to \$150,000/annum. This type of funding arrangement means the K-12 education needs of the Métis remain unmet: limited funds mean a shortage of trained educators and professionals who can meet the needs of Métis students. This limited capacity also means that educators become reactive rather than focused on the long-term development of culturally appropriate and meaningful educational programming.

Census statistics rely on self-identification by Métis. In the 2021 Census, wording changes reflect how representatives of the Métis Nation implemented a citizenship criteria concomitant with the National Métis definition. Statistics Canada recognition of Métis authority over Métis identity is crucial; yet it is equally important to remember that education is a key factor in understanding the complexities of Métis identity and the negative role of colonialism in an enduring and contemporary sense of Métis identity. Métis people are now just finding out that their families hid their Métis ancestry and learning how authorities assumed assimilation.

Still, the Canadian Indigenous population is a fast-growing and young population who are actively seeking education as a way forward. The Métis are no different in this regard.

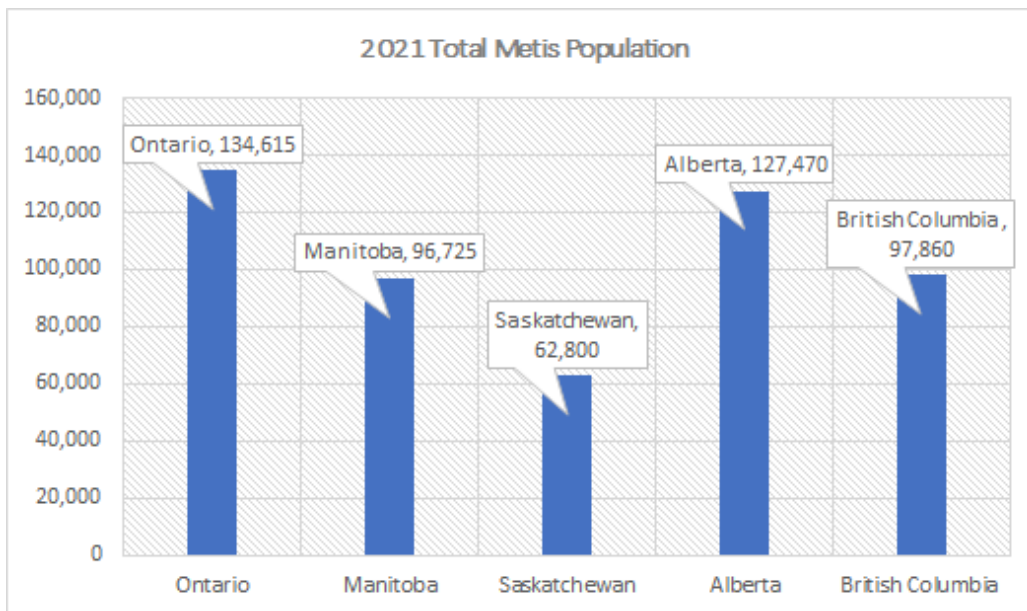


FIGURE 1: TOTAL MÉTIS POPULATION (CENSUS 2021)

Recent successes in the Canadian legal system have led to increasing recognition of Métis as partners in Confederation and, in turn, has resulted in a significant increase in the Métis self-identified population, who no longer feel the need to hide their identity. While the Métis

population growth is tempered by the national Métis definition, this vigorous growth is expected to continue into the next decade (see Table 2 below). The Métis population aged 0-24 in 2020 was 206,000 and this count is expected to increase more than 20,000 to 223,000 for the period ending in 2030. This increase is another reminder that investments from all levels of government are required to ensure national priorities are addressed alongside moves towards Métis self-determination. The Métis population is, and will continue to be, a significant contributor to Canada’s economic growth over the next decades; thus, the improvement of education outcomes for Métis is of shared national importance.

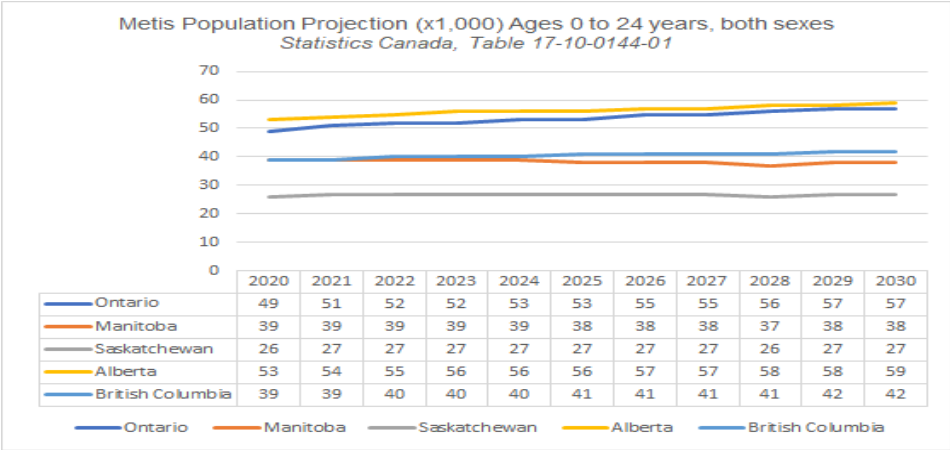


FIGURE 2: MÉTIS POPULATION PROJECTION (AGES 0-24) ¹⁰

As the global economy continues to change, evidence points to a growing economic division between knowledge producing economies and knowledge consuming economies. In this context, we might ask what is the role of education? A high school diploma or equivalent is the standard entrance requirement for post-secondary education. In the case of Métis, those who have earned a high school diploma and are of working age (aged 15-64) lag their non-Indigenous counterparts in terms of educational attainment although the situation varies across the homeland. Métis educational attainment levels are highest in Ontario and British Columbia, and lowest in the three prairie provinces.

For those Métis who are accepted into post-secondary, many opt for college and trade certificates and diplomas rather than university degrees. This situation translates into fewer skilled professionals who can contribute to the knowledge economy. The Métis have a proven record for workplace participation, yet their full potential is curtailed in not earning the basic education required to move into advanced education. The table below indicates the percentage of Métis distribution by highest level of education achieved.¹¹

¹⁰ Statistics Canada: Table: 17-10-0144-01, Projected population by Indigenous identity, age group, sex, area of residence, provinces and territories, and projection scenario, Canada (x 1,000).

¹¹ Census 2021, Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0268-01

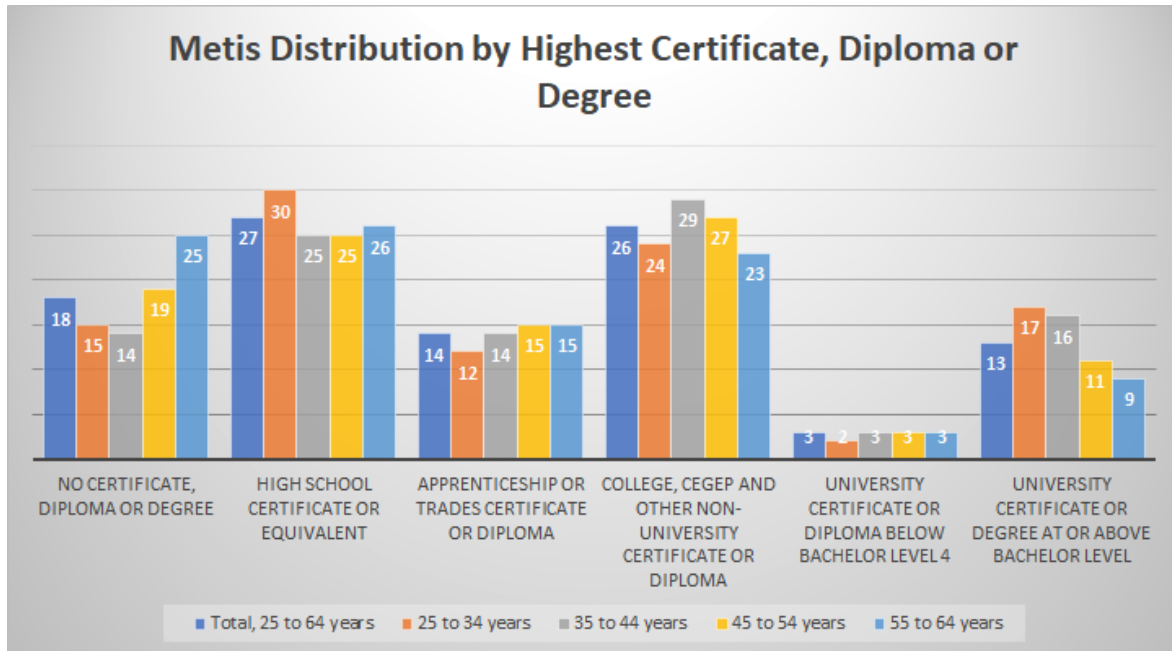


FIGURE 3: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF MÉTIS POPULATION (AGES 25-64 YEARS) ¹²

Educational Outcomes

As noted, one of the obvious failures of the provinces in meeting the educational needs of Métis is the absence of Métis-specific student data. Where information is available, more telling evidence resides in the following: i) attendance rates are lower than non-Indigenous learners; ii) the Métis dropout rate is higher than non-Indigenous Canadians; and iii) the Métis educational attainment gap remains unchanged even after years of targeted investments in Indigenous education. These issues impact life beyond the classroom as we also learn how educational outcomes directly impact lifetime earnings for Métis people. The key to future success starts with coming to school, staying in school, and graduating from high school. This outcome is best supported by learners seeing themselves reflected within the educational setting and feeling safe and respected.

Proportion of School Attendance for the Population Aged 15 to 64 by Indigenous Identity, Canada, and Select Provinces of Métis Homeland, 2016 Census. ¹³

Region	Age Groups (%)		
	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 to 64
Canada			

¹² Statistics Canada Source: Table: 37-10-0099-01 (formerly CANSIM 477-0095)

¹³ "School attendance" refers to whether a person attended, either full-time or part-time, any accredited educational institution or program during all or part of a specified reference period (September 2015 and May 10, 2016). This variable is reported for persons aged 15 years and over in private households. The person may have attended more than one educational institution or have been enrolled in more than one program.

Métis	80	39	9
First Nations	76	31	9
Non-Indigenous	88	55	8
Alberta			
Métis	77	33	9
First Nations	74	26	10
Non-Indigenous	83	47	8
Ontario			
Métis	85	44	8
First Nations	81	37	9
Non-Indigenous	89	57	8
Manitoba			
Métis	79	36	8
First Nations	72	22	8
Non-Indigenous	83	49	9
Saskatchewan			
Métis	77	36	9
First Nations	73	27	9
Non-Indigenous	82	46	7
British Columbia			
Métis	78	35	10
First Nations	77	29	10
Non-Indigenous	85	55	9

TABLE 1: 2016 CENSUS POPULATION. STATISTICS CANADA. CATALOGUE NUMBER 98-400-X2016177.

As indicated by Table 1, the attendance gap of Métis lags non-Indigenous students in every province within the Métis homeland by as much as eight percentage points for the 15-19 age group and the gap increases for successive cohorts, reaching 20 percentage points for the 20-24 age group. Focusing on Alberta, we note that school attendance for individuals aged 15 to 24 is lower than the national average. Further, the proportions of Métis and First Nations individuals aged 15 to 19 that attended school are similar (77% and 74%, respectively), and both are lower than the proportion of non-Indigenous individuals aged 15 to 19 that attended school (83%). Finally, within each region, for individuals aged 15 to 24, the proportion of Métis that attended school is lower than the non-Indigenous population

Table 2 below shows the proportion of high school dropout and completion rates for the population aged 25 to 64 by Indigenous identity and gender, Canada and select provinces of the Métis Homeland, 2016 Census.

Region	Total Population (%)			Indigenous (%)			Métis (%)			First Nation (%)		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Canada												
Dropout Rate	11	13	10	26	29	23	18	21	15	30	34	27
Completion Rate	89	87	90	75	72	78	83	79	84	70	65	74
Alberta												
Dropout Rate	11	12	10	27	30	24	21	24	18	34	37	31
Completion Rate	89	89	90	74	70	75	79	77	82	67	63	70
Ontario												
Dropout Rate	10	12	9	21	24	18	14	17	12	25	28	22
Completion Rate	89	89	90	79	77	81	86	82	89	76	74	79
Manitoba												
Dropout Rate	14	17	12	32	37	28	20	25	16	42	48	37
Completion Rate	85	84	88	68	63	73	81	75	83	58	51	62
Saskatchewan												
Dropout Rate	12	15	10	29	34	25	19	23	15	36	42	31
Completion Rate	88	85	90	71	67	75	82	77	84	65	58	70
British Columbia												
Dropout Rate	10	11	8	23	27	20	16	20	13	27	31	24
Completion Rate	90	89	92	78	73	80	84	80	87	73	69	76

TABLE 2: 2016 CENSUS POPULATION. STATISTICS CANADA. TABLE 37-100099-01 AND TABLE 37-10-0100-01.¹⁴

Table 2 demonstrates the weakness of the current K-12 education paradigm and the failures of the system to support Métis learners. We see that the dropout rate for Alberta Métis is (21%) is

¹⁴ Definition of dropout is "No certificate, diploma or degree". Completion rate is equivalent to the summation of all individuals under "High school certificate or equivalent", "Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma", "College, CEGEP and other non-university certificate or diploma", "University certificate or diploma below bachelor level 4", and "University certificate or degree at or above bachelor level". Not all dropout and completion rates sum to 100% due to Statistics Canada's random rounding to ensure the confidentiality of responses.

ten percentage points higher than that of the total population (11%) and the gap is repeated in each province on the Métis homeland.

Labour Market Outcomes by Education Path

Education is the foundation for those seeking stable employment. Historically, Métis have always had higher labour force participation rates than their Indigenous counterparts; however, their unemployment rates range from two to three times higher than non-Indigenous. Data shows Métis employment rates since 2006 are virtually the same as those for non-Indigenous. Among key findings from the 2017 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) is that employment rates varied with the education level. For Métis with a university degree, the employment rate was 79%, higher than among those with a high-school diploma (64%), or Métis with less than high-school diploma (36%).

The APS also found that “the Métis have made gains in high school and postsecondary completion. In 2016, 46% of Métis aged fifteen and over had completed a postsecondary certificate diploma or degree, up from 40% in 2006. The percentage with less than a high school diploma dropped from 34% in 2006 to 25% in 2016.”¹⁵ These findings are corroborated by the Labour Force Survey. Across the Métis homeland, the Métis labour force participation rate for those aged 15 to 64 years was 69.7% in 2017 and remained stable at 68.3% in 2018 and 68.6% in 2021¹⁶. Compared to a non-Indigenous rate of 68.4% in 2017 and 66.9% in 2021; data also confirms that the Métis unemployment rate gap remains unchanged over the years.

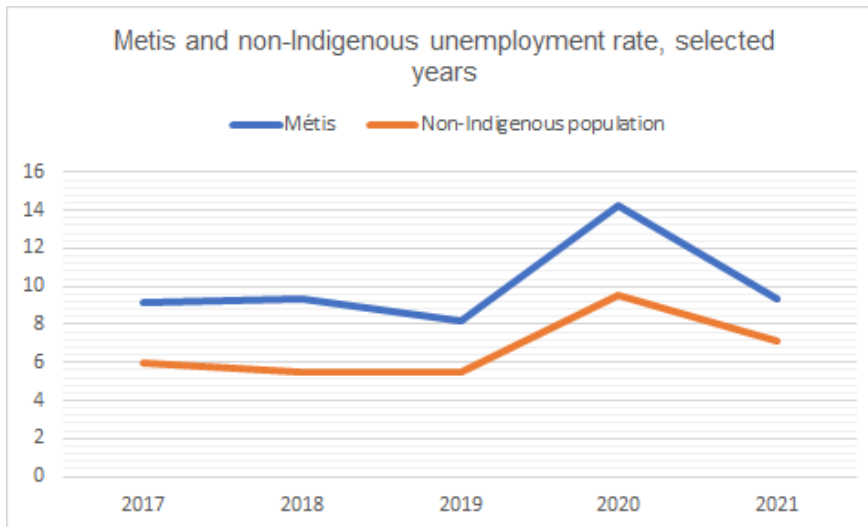


FIGURE 4: MÉTIS AND NON-INDIGENOUS UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (2017-2021)¹⁷

Figure 5 below, illustrates findings from one of the few studies that takes a distinctions-based approach. The table shows the lifetime earnings of Métis in Alberta and Saskatchewan depending on their gender and level of education. In general, males at all levels of education tend to have higher earnings than similarly educated females (this is as true in the non-Indigenous population as it is for the Indigenous communities).¹⁸ Among Indigenous groups, 59% of Métis

¹⁵ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-653-x/89-653-x2018002-eng.htm>

¹⁶ See Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0365-01 Labour force characteristics by region and detailed Indigenous group

¹⁷ Source: Table: 14-10-0365-01 (formerly CANSIM 282-0227)

¹⁸ The comparison for males and females is just as stark as for non-Indigenous in both provinces: averaging the entries of Table 1, males earn \$1,908,973 and females \$1,457,997, which is \$450,976 less than males.

women, aged 25-64, hold some post-secondary qualification and 16% of Métis women hold a bachelor's degree or above. Similarly, the difference in earnings is largest for below-Bachelor's postsecondary graduates, at \$809,545—reflecting both females' greater likelihood of entering pink-collar occupations and males' greater likelihood of entering trades—and the difference is smallest for those in the top educational category.

Lifetime earnings of a Métis Resident in Alberta and Saskatchewan ¹⁹				
	Alberta, 2014		Saskatchewan, 2011	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Drops out of school prior to receiving a high school diploma, and does not subsequently obtain high school equivalency	\$766,932	\$395,523	\$546,671	260,104
Obtains a high school diploma either by graduation or by subsequently completing high school equivalency—with no further formal education	\$1,549,384	\$1,081,538	\$975,225	\$609,609
Completes a postsecondary program leading to a certificate or diploma (e.g., a program at a technical school or college) or an apprenticeship—with no further formal education	\$2,331,381	\$1,521,836	\$1,242,661	\$789,437
Receives a bachelor's degree or higher	\$2,988,194	\$2,833,092	\$1,666,032	\$1,516,473

TABLE 3: LIFETIME EARNINGS OF MÉTIS RESIDENTS IN ALBERTA AND SASKATCHEWAN (2014-2011)

As shown above, female Métis dropouts earn even less than female non-Indigenous dropouts. Their lifetime earnings in Alberta are only \$395,523 and in Saskatchewan this is only \$260,104. Given this amount is spread over an entire lifetime, the total is shockingly low. As pointed out by Howe (2013), “in light of the impact of educational attainment on lifetime earnings, it is critical to keep learners in school and engaged in their learning.”²⁰

Additionally, the relationship between earnings and education can best be described in terms of showing how much is earned in each educational category for each dollar earned by a dropout. For example, a male Métis who finishes high school and then completes university, he earns \$3.90 for each dollar he would have earned as a dropout. In the case of a female Métis, she would receive \$7.16 for every dollar she would have earned as a dropout.²¹ The difference that education makes to earning capacity is best highlighted by the earning differential between dropping out of school prior to completing a high-school diploma and completing high-school or receiving a high-school equivalence. In Saskatchewan for a female Métis, total earnings increase by \$349,505 and for Alberta the earnings increase by \$686,015.

¹⁹ While these two sets of data are not directly compatible as the years differ from one another, they provide information on the dynamics of education and income.

²⁰ Howe, E. (2013). Bridging the Aboriginal Education Gap in Alberta: The Provincial Benefit Exceeds a Quarter of a Trillion Dollars. Rupertsland Centre for Métis Research and Rupertsland Institute. https://www.rupertsland.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Bridging_the_Aboriginal_Education_Gap_in_Alberta.pdf

²¹ A full report for Alberta can be found at: <https://www.rupertsland.org/research/>

It is known that, compared to other Aboriginal peoples, a high proportion of Métis obtain a high school diploma, though the proportion without a high school diploma is still high relative to the non-Indigenous population. Yet, comparatively few Métis obtain a university education; most Métis who do complete post-secondary studies are more likely to earn trades and other post-secondary certificates and diplomas than their non-Indigenous counterparts. How can this pattern be explained? What impact do these educational choices have on labour force activity measures of the Métis identity population, and on earnings of Métis relative to non-Indigenous Canadians, as measured by market income? We ask the reader to consider and compare what each province has invested by way of financial support for Métis education.

Over the years, labour market training and employment programs have been “significantly better supported ... than educational programs, which, being under provincial jurisdiction, are at the discretion of provincial policy priorities.”²² Given the level of success these programs have demonstrated over years of implementation, federal support of Métis education could similarly yield strong outcomes. In other words, with Métis education afforded the same level of support as labour market training initiatives, we predict high returns on this sound investment in our shared future.

²² This study by Poitras Pratt, et al (2013) further noted that the labour market program demonstrated clear improvements in labour market outcomes because of “community members and their representatives taking control”.

Métis Provincial Overview

Census 2021 reveals that the self-identified Métis population ages 5-19²³ is significantly larger than the self-identified Métis student population as reported by provincial education authorities across the Métis homeland. If Métis parents and guardians felt that self-identification in the public school system brought advantages, they would be more willing to self-identify and self-identification rates would be significantly higher than the ones reported. As data reveals, provinces across the Métis homeland appear unwilling or unmotivated to provide relevant data regarding Métis student self-identification. In some cases, information on Indigenous learners is collected then amalgamated; in other cases, school authorities do not put sufficient or any effort in collecting this information.

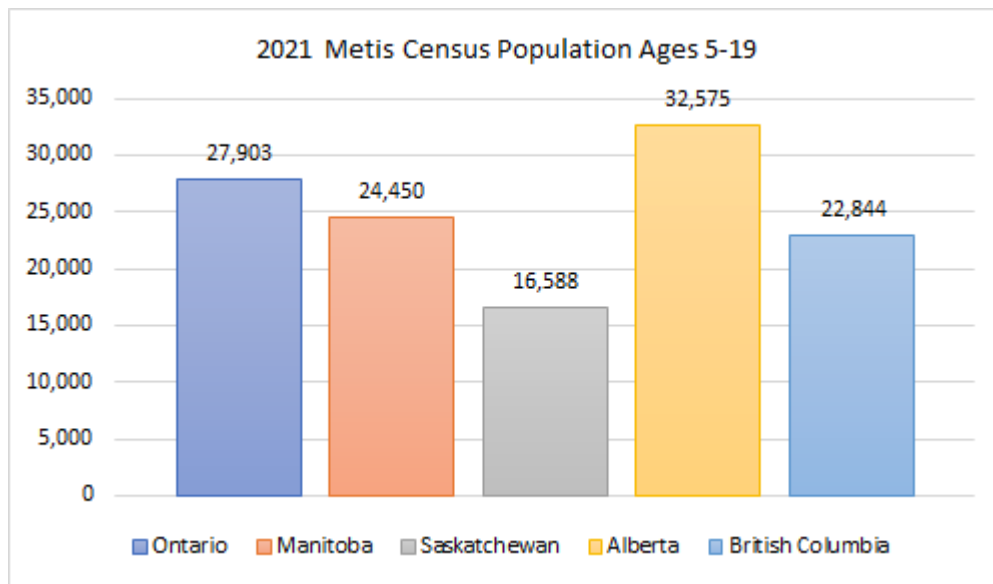


FIGURE 5: STATISTICS CANADA, MÉTIS POPULATION AGES 5-19, TABLE 98-0268-01

Consider the following, in British Columbia, 22,844 (aged 5-19) individuals self-identified as Métis while only a fraction of them were reported by education authorities. In Alberta, 32,575 self-identified as Métis in the same age grouping yet only 17,907 Métis learners are officially recorded in provincial accounts. The reluctance of Métis to self-identify in the public education system is a clear indication that Métis are relegated in the public schooling system. Systemic neglect also explains why provinces can ignore strong curriculum content objections by Métis scholars and Métis Nation governments.

The Métis-specific data contained within Census 2021 sets the stage for appropriate policy and programming discussions. Historically, access to self-identified education data specific to Métis students in each province has proven to be a challenge. Aggregated data, where there is no distinction between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students, is of little use to Métis Nation governments seeking to meet the education needs of their citizens. Where data is shared, we can assume the Métis-specific data is significantly underrepresented due to a number of complicating factors: a) families have hidden their Métis identity from later generations as they feared racial reprisal; b) parents and/or guardians are often reluctant to self-identify their children as

²³ The number of Métis ages 5-19 was calculated by tabulating responses of the 0-14 and 15-24 and assuming an equal distribution.

Indigenous given current Indigenous programming does not adequately represent their cultural, linguistic, and historical values; and c) there has been little benefit to disclosing Métis identity to date therefore little reason to share. These factors surrounding self-identification reinforce the need for inclusive Indigenous education, a place where Métis students feel safe and included in their learning environments. The following provincial accounts underscore the need for Métis control of Métis education.

British Columbia - Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC)

Census 2021 reports the total number of self-identified Métis people in British Columbia at 97,865 representing 33.7% of the provincial Indigenous population. Currently, Métis-specific data on school-aged learners is not available, but the “How Are We Doing” (HAWD) Aboriginal Performance Report (2021) cites the total K-12 student population for 2020-21 to be 568,283, and the total number of self-identified Indigenous learners at 12.1%, or 68,540. With an allocation rate of \$1,565 *per capita*, the 68,540 Indigenous learners enrolled in public schools across BC generated over \$107 million in funding to education boards.

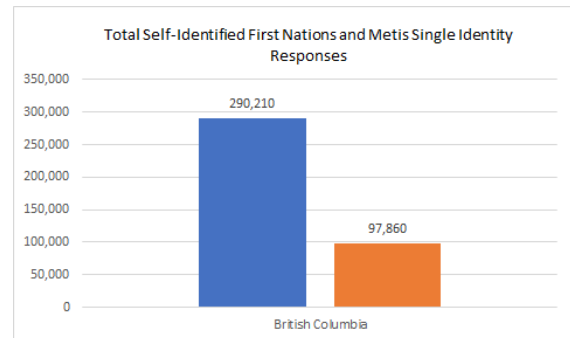


FIGURE 6: STATISTICS CANADA, TABLES 98-100268 AND 98-10-0264-01

For comparison, Census 2021 reported 22,844 self-identified Métis between the ages of 5-19, representing 23.4% of the total Métis population in the province. Using Ministry of Education and Child Care (ECC) 2021 rates, this allocation amounts to approximately \$37.75 million annual contributions on behalf of Métis learners across the province school boards. Notably, in the 2022/23 fiscal year, the Métis Nation of British Columbia received a total of \$50,000 in education funding from the province even though Métis students comprised 23.4% of the Indigenous student population. Presently, there are no accountability measures or funds (beyond the \$50,000 grant) directed to Métis authorities.

As stated, the lack of Métis-specific data creates barriers for Métis learners across all sixty school districts as Métis-specific data is not included in the report that is being recommended for use in strategic planning. A 2021 report, *K12 Covid-19 Learning Recovery Survey*, revealed that “many Métis families are not enrolled in [learning recovery] programs, largely due to not knowing or understanding what is available to them, leaving our verified citizens under-represented and under-resourced in the public education system” (MNBC, 2022, p. 10). In the province of BC, the MNBC’s Ministry of Education provides culturally specific oversight on education policy and resource development and delivers supportive programming when funding and capacity allows.

Specific to BC, the Métis Nation Relationship Accord II, and the BC Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) identify education, culture, and health as priorities for improving the lives of Métis people. However, the rights and needs of Métis students in BC continue to be neglected. For instance, currently any changes to the ‘*How Are We Doing*’ report must be approved by the First Nations Education Steering Committee, as per the BC Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA, 2.3), giving First Nations in BC control over Métis student data.

Alberta - Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA)

According to Census 2021, the total number of self-identified Métis people in the province of Alberta is 127,470, representing 45% of the total self-identified First Nations and Métis population. This number includes the Métis Settlement population—the only land-based Métis population in Canada

In Alberta, the total K-12 student population for the 2019-2020 school year was 729,782 and, as reported by provincial authorities, the total number of self-identified Métis learners for that year was 17,907.²⁴ As surmised from Census 2021 information, the number of self-identified Métis between the ages of 5-19 is 32,575, representing approximately 25.55% of the entire Métis universe.

Accordingly, the number of self-identified Métis students is significantly understated. These numbers highlight the reluctance of Métis parents and guardians to self-identify and underlines the importance of Métis control of education.

An affiliate of the Métis Nation of Alberta, the Rupertsland Institute, receives \$150,000/annum to support Métis education initiatives. The precarious nature of grants-based education funding is best illustrated by the Government of Alberta's decision to cut 100% of this contribution in 2013, while a 10% budget reduction to government operations was announced in 2014.²⁵ According to the Government of Alberta, the allocation rate for self-identified FNMI students in 2021 was \$1,178.²⁶ This allocation amounts to approximately \$38.4 million in contributions to school authorities across the province on behalf of self-identified Métis learners.²⁷ Presently, there are no accountability measures or funds (beyond the \$150,000 grant) given to Métis authorities. With the \$150,000/annum, the education team at Rupertsland has created several K-12 teaching and learning resources²⁸ that support the integration of Métis perspectives.

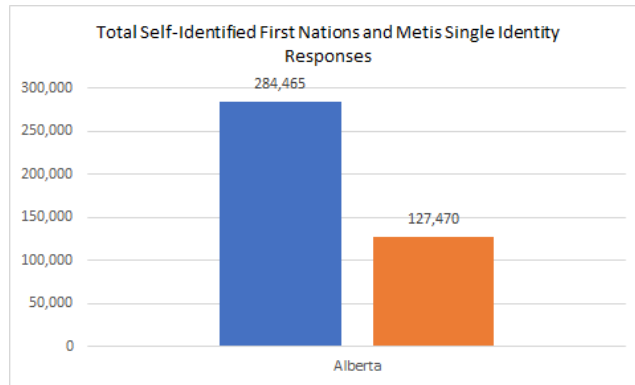


FIGURE 7: STATISTICS CANADA, TABLES 9810-0268-01 AND 98-10-0264-01

²⁴ Analytics Branch, Alberta Education, October 2020

²⁵ This cutback was implemented notwithstanding that the funding was part of the Métis Nation of Alberta/Government of Alberta Framework Agreement.

²⁶ Government of Alberta, First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Funding Allocation for School Authorities: Information for Parents and Guardians. <https://www.gsacrd.ab.ca/download/338870>

²⁷ *ibid*

²⁸ See Rupertsland institute K-12: <https://www.rupertsland.org/teaching-learning/>

Saskatchewan - Métis Nation—Saskatchewan (MNS)

Census 2021, reports that 62,800 people self-identified as Métis in Saskatchewan. This is approximately 33.4% of the 250,690 total self-identified Métis and First Nations population. According to the 2021 census, the Métis population between the ages of 5-19 was 16,588, or 26.4% of the total Métis population.

In 2021-22, Saskatchewan reported a total of 186,084 students enrolled in the public K-12 system.²⁹ An earlier report in 2018 by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education indicates that in 2016-17 the self-identified Indigenous student population was 18.6% of total enrolment, or 34,611. Assuming Métis students in this age cohort remains at 33.4%, we can extrapolate that the number of self-identified Métis, ages 5-19 in the province is approximately 11,767.³⁰

The Métis-led and managed Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) has earned a formidable reputation as an educational force via their teacher training institute (SUNTEP), alongside a host of other educational initiatives. Yet, GDI does not receive any K-12 provincial funding. Instead, GDI allocates a portion of its core budget funding to work on curriculum and educational resource development. Given how much this nationally recognized institute contributes back to the Métis community, the fact that it receives no financial support for K-12 initiatives is concerning.

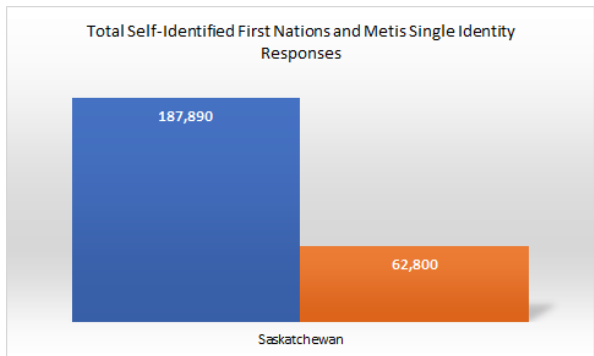


FIGURE 8: STATISTICS CANADA, TABLES 980-10-0268-01 AND 98-10-0264-01

Manitoba - Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF)

We are cognizant that the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) is recognized as an Indigenous self-government; therefore, the information in this section is meant only to illustrate the full complement of K-12 education services implemented across the homeland. According to Census 2021, 96,725 individuals self-identified as Métis in Manitoba equalling 40.7% of the overall First Nations and Métis population. In terms of Métis-specific data on K-12 enrollment in Manitoba, a total of 409 schools reported that 9,137 students self-identified as

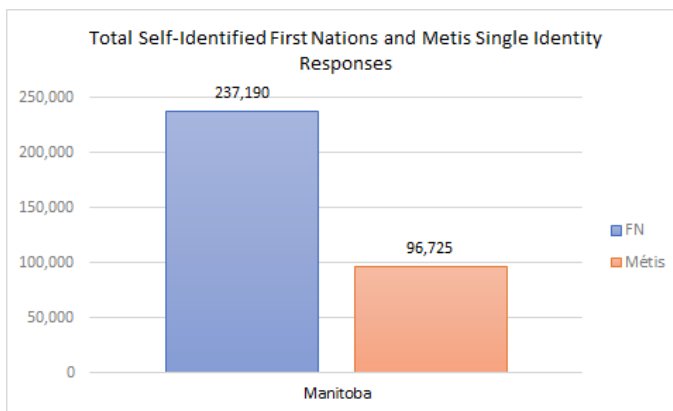


FIGURE 9: STATISTICS CANADA, TABLES 98-10-628-01 AND 98-10-0264-01

²⁹ Saskatchewan. Provincial K-12 Student Enrolment Summary.

³⁰ The Saskatchewan Report goes on to note that “in some provincial schools, the percentage of students who self-identified as First Nations and Métis ranges from 50 percent to almost 100 percent” (pp. 12-13). From Inspiring Success: First Nations and Métis Pre K-12 Education Policy Framework.

Métis/Michif. The remaining thirty-two schools did not collect statistics on Indigenous students, so these numbers are unknown. These statistics also exclude learners enrolled in non-funded schools and virtual schools, Catholic schools commission, Archdiocese of Winnipeg Catholic Schools, First Nations schools, independent schools, and institutional schools. Once again, the data on Métis K-12 learners is piecemeal and inaccurate.

The Provincial Education Department of Manitoba Métis Federation³¹ ensures support is provided to learners K-12 and post-secondary through a series of initiatives. This includes the Louis Riel Institute (LRI) which provides programs and services on behalf of the MMF in partnership with school divisions throughout the province. Through the LRI Adult Learning Centre, a non-traditional high school, learners can achieve a Mature Student High School Diploma meeting the needs of the failed public system for Métis learners. Furthermore, the LRI Métis language collaborative works towards the revitalization of Métis languages. Following the conference “Creating our Own Future” a series of recommendations were created in Manitoba’s largest school division as a collaboration between LRI and the MMF Provincial Education Department where administrators seek to meet the languages needs of Métis students.

Ontario - Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO)

According to Census 2021, Ontario currently has the largest self-identified Métis population in the homeland 134,615, equaling 33.1% of the total First Nations and Métis population. In 2021, the number of self-identified Métis between the ages of 5-19 was 27,903 (20.72%) of the total Métis population.

In terms of provincial support, the province of Ontario allocated \$93,718 million in 2016 to the Indigenous Education Grant Program. As of 2021-22

fiscal year, the provincial investment in Métis K-12 education remains at \$850,000/annum. Given the statistics on Métis learners, this amount represents underfunding to the Métis.

Even with minimal resources, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) has created an Education Support Advocacy Program to provide support for Métis K-12 students and their families. This program specifically supports those who are experiencing issues or challenges in the following areas: attendance, suspensions, social isolation, individual education planning, behavioural planning, specialized placement for children with exceptionalities, mental health or learning disabilities, communications with the school, and in realizing their academic potential. The grant has also helped support youth cultural camps and contributions to K-12 curriculum. In addition to the MNO K-12 Métis Education Kits, the MNO also provides lesson plans and

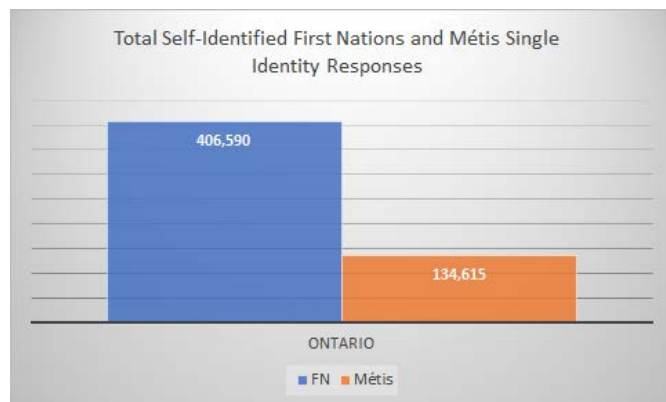


FIGURE 10: STATISTICS CANADA, TABLES 98-10-268-01 AND 98-0264-01

³¹ See more at Manitoba Métis Federation, Provincial Education.

expanded toolkits to assist Métis teachers and provides formal training to Métis citizens who wish to become involved on school boards.

While MNO is invited to review and make recommendations on the K-12 curriculum in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Education, the following passage suggests that there is much work to be done to include a Métis perspective: “We work with Indigenous partners to enhance the Ontario curriculum and support mandatory learning about: residential schools, treaties, the legacy of colonialism, and the rights and responsibilities we all have to each other as *treaty people*.”³² Further to this, Ontario Education declares that “we have also designated the first week of November as Treaties Recognition Week to promote public education and awareness about treaties and treaty relationships.”³³ If we are educated about the unique positioning of the Métis in Canada’s colonial history, it becomes strikingly clear that we are *not all treaty people*.

In summary, what is evident from these brief provincial overviews is that stable core funding is required to create and maintain forward momentum in Métis-led K-12 education. In keeping with the spirit of UNDRIP and the TRC Calls to Action (2015), Métis control of Métis education envisions a future where Métis learners will regain pride in their cultural heritage and, over time, increase their contributions to Canada’s social vibrancy and growing economy through their active participation.

³² Government of Ontario, Ministry of Education, Indigenous education in Ontario: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/indigenous-education-ontario>

³³ Ibid.

From Colonial Impacts to Promising Practices

It is negligent to critically examine contemporary Métis experiences within Canada's K-12 Education Systems without acknowledging the ways in which settler colonialism has shaped its landscape. Settler colonialism presents "a way of thinking about power and migration that allows us to better understand the nature of contemporary Canadian society" (Lowman et al., 2015, p.24). It has created systems and structures that continue to uphold privileges for non-Indigenous peoples at the expense of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. Education systems thus offer a unique vehicle through which to better understand the ongoing impacts of settler colonialism on Métis people, while presenting an ideal environment to design and implement equity-centred strategies that centre Métis-specific needs.

Schools have played a prominent role in perpetuating colonialism. There is a strong historical precedent of Indigenous culture and knowledge systems being harmed by Western approaches to education. From the earliest days of contact, schooling systems have privileged Eurocentric values and perspectives. Much like with the First Nations and the Inuit, the colonial government sought to assimilate Métis people into Canada's settler society was by forcibly removing Métis children from their communities through the Residential and Day School systems. The legacy of Education Systems as sites for settler colonialism continues to influence how Métis people navigate Canada's K-12 and post-secondary education systems, as well as the labour market today.

Métis experiences with the Indian Residential and Day school systems vary greatly community to community. Though left out of the general narrative and compensation programs, many Métis children were enrolled in Indian Residential and Day schools alongside First Nations and Inuit children. Métis students were denied access to their language and culture to forcibly assimilate them, alienating them from their heritage. Because of their complex dualities, Métis children often found themselves targeted by school staff, and even faced lateral violence at the hands of their peers. Concurrently, some Indian Residential and Day Schools flat out refused to accept any Métis children, as they lacked Indian status. At the same time, many public schools refused them because they were Indigenous, denying many children any form of formal education (Chartrand et al., 2006, p.2). Further to this point, many Métis children came from road allowance communities, thus creating barriers in access to municipal services such as school, or hospitals. This outright exclusion, not surprisingly, has led to generations of Métis people being raised with a general distrust of formal education systems, and lower labour market outcomes in absence of generational wealth accumulation. In this way, Canada's Education System has continued to play an important role in the destruction of Métis culture, language, values, social structures, and economic viability.

From the earliest days of contact, schooling systems have privileged Eurocentric values and perspectives. The provision of basic education for young learners continues this assimilative thrust as evidenced by schooling systems who unquestioningly advance colonial perspectives (Battiste, 2013; Poitras Pratt et al., 2018; Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003; Toulouse, 2018; etc.). Within Canadian schools, "western epistemologies continue to dominate and define the boundaries of legitimate knowledge" (Kermoal, 2020, p.110). Western epistemologies are

frequently upheld as the only choice available to educators. Within Canadian schools, Indigenous peoples are largely absent from mainstream curricula or if Indigenous peoples are present, they are discussed in a historical context (Battiste, 2002; Newhouse et al, 2010).

Indigenous people “have been misrepresented and exploited for countless generations as the subjects of academic, ‘scientific’ studies conducted [within Western contexts]” (Absolon & Willett, 2005, p.106). Several national initiatives calling for more inclusive and wholistic approaches representative of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit worldviews in education are underway (Canadian Deans of Education, 2010; Universities Canada, 2015). Yet, Indigenous education is interpreted as First Nations only and remains absent of Métis perspectives. If Métis students are to maintain their unique cultural, linguistic, and philosophical worldviews, it is critical that the Métis community is meaningfully included and supported.

Just as schools have played a role in upholding colonial attitudes, they have an even more important role to play in the decolonizing of Canadian society. True decolonization is a collective process. It requires cooperation, as well as “the withdrawal of consent and resistance to structures of psychic and social domination” (Mohanty, 2003, p.7). If Métis children are to achieve successful educational and developmental outcomes, changes need to occur for Métis learners need to see themselves reflected respectfully and meaningfully in the education system. This cannot be achieved by Métis people alone, nor can it be accomplished through euro-centric or pan-Indigenous programs and supports. Access to dedicated, distinctions-based programming provides Métis children invaluable opportunities to learn traditional ways of knowing and being and ensures ‘cultural continuity’ resulting in improved health and wellness, as well as economical outcomes (Greenwood & Jones, 2018).

The Canada-Métis Nation Accord sets out a promising and collaborative way forward.

With the traditional view that learning is a life-long process mired in a strong sense of self (Campbell, 1972; Canadian Council on Learning, 2007; Larocque, 1973), the lack of adequate cultural and educational supports for Métis learners from early years onward has been detrimental to their success in the foundational years of kindergarten, elementary, and secondary schooling. There is an inconsistent approach by school divisions and educators to ensure curricula is infused with Métis content, perspectives, and ways of knowing. Recognition of the need for Métis-specific curricula is aligned with the RCAP “Gathering Strength” document which calls the two orders of government

To develop or continuing developing innovative curricula that reflects Aboriginal cultures and community realities, for delivery

- a) at all grade levels of elementary and secondary schools;
- b) in schools operating under Aboriginal control; and
- c) in schools under provincial and territorial jurisdiction.

Métis people have valued education in a variety of forms since their emergence as a unique Indigenous nation; this trend continues into present day. In terms of achieving formal education, younger Canadians are more educated than previous generations, yet the education gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations remains unabated at more than twenty

percentage points.³⁴ Studies have pointed to how low high-school completion rates contribute to low levels of post-secondary education and poor labour market outcomes for Aboriginal peoples. These studies have focused on First Nations, especially on-reserve First Nations youth, and little attention has been paid to Métis learners, educational patterns, and their effects on Métis labour market outcomes.

In the spirit of honouring the Canada-Métis Nation Accord and its wish to improve educational outcomes for Métis K-12 learners, the following section illustrates some of the more promising practices within Indigenous education, specific to Métis learners, where possible.

Pedagogical Innovations and Developments

The troubling situation of Métis learners holding distinct worldviews yet learning in public education systems that privilege a colonial perspective and assumptions of successful assimilation have resulted in the under-development of Métis-specific educational research. Some promising practices that support self-determining practices for Métis learners are emerging (Anuik, 2010; Anuik & Bellehumeur-Kearns, 2014; Bird-Wilson, 2011; Canadian Council on Learning, 2007; Dion, 2012; Iseke, 2010; Poitras Pratt, 2020); and these academic contributions are bolstered by the involvement of Métis organizations who are contributing their own publications and reports (Conway, 2009; Hodgson, 2011; Métis Nation of Alberta, 1990; Pelletier, Cottrell, Hardie, 2013; Raham, 2011; Stone Circle, 2011). The growing number of Métis people entering the profession of education, albeit another area difficult to enumerate, is a similarly promising sign that Métis-led pedagogy is on the rise.

In 2007, the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) launched a national initiative to explore lifelong learning within the distinct realms of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people. Understanding the need for a collective voice and vision on this important topic, community members including trained professionals in education were brought together to set out culturally relevant criteria inclusive of each unique worldview.

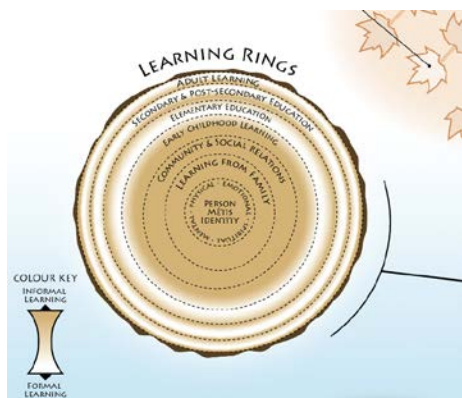


FIGURE 11: CANADIAN COUNCIL OF LIFELONG LEARNING MODELS. MÉTIS (2007)

From the CCL (2007): “The Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model represents the link between Métis lifelong learning and community well-being and can be used as a framework for measuring success in lifelong learning.”³⁵ It is here that we begin to learn how linkages can be made between educational pursuits and the betterment of a community.

The importance of formal alongside informal learning opportunities is evident in the Métis-specific learning model (see Figure 1). This community-generated model of lifelong learning holds lessons and promising practices; yet its potential was curtailed by a sudden funding cut that limited its development and

³⁴ Anderson, Thomas: “Portrait of youth in Canada: Data Report, Chapter 4: Indigenous Youth in Canada. Cat.no 42-28-0001. In 2016, 70% of Indigenous youth aged 20 to 24 had completed high school, this is up from “64.0% for First Nations, 82.7% for Métis and 47% for Inuit” in 2006. Correspondingly, the non-Indigenous youth aged 20-24 high school completion figure was 91%.

³⁵ Canadian Council on Lifelong Learning Models: Métis (2007).

reach. The model nonetheless provides a compelling point to start the work of developing a Métis-led educational framework.

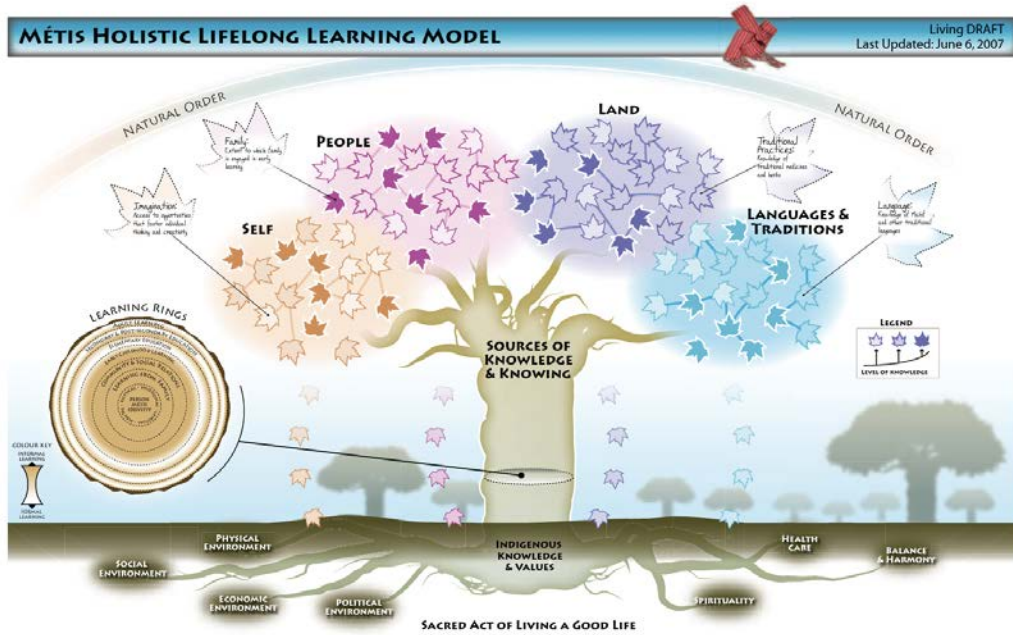


FIGURE 12: CANADIAN COUNCIL OF LIFELONG LEARNING MODELS, MÉTIS (2007)

As another promising practice, the Gabriel Dumont Institute is a strong exemplar of what is possible when Métis people control Métis education. The Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) has earned a compelling reputation as a Métis-created and led educational institution that produces high quality cultural and educational initiatives, including Métis-specific teacher education programs. These innovations are made possible because of the productive partnership they have developed with the Advanced Education Ministry of Saskatchewan. Of note, GDI’s goals were “first and foremost to support Native people in developing a knowledge of and pride in their history and culture. This is necessary to provide the basis on which they can build a positive cultural and personal self-image” (Bird-Wilson, 2011, p. 25). Once again, we are provided with a strong basis for understanding how to initiate Métis-led educational frameworks.

Another promising practice is found in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in the Métis-led St. Michael Community school where the faith-based school relies on a Métis Education Model that includes “ten monthly themes [that] are represented in and around the Red River Cart wheel.”³⁶ Their website explains, “Teachers ... use these themes to make curricular connections, identify resources and support school themes and celebrations.”

At present, new Métis pedagogies are being developed across the homeland without any coordination of best practices. A network of Métis learning centres will ensure that these new pedagogies are transferred to the public system in an orderly manner. Areas for development include land-based learning; Métis storytelling traditions; Métis-specific perspectives in

³⁶ <https://www.gscs.ca/mic/page/1746/about-us>

curriculum; and Increased presence of Métis Elders, teachers, and professional staff in school settings.

Provincial Investments in Education

While it is widely acknowledged that investments in education result in significant economic benefits for all (Howe, 2011, 2014), it seems clear that at times of economic stress provincial governments tend to treat public education as a discretionary investment rather than an essential service. The economic multiplier of education investments is well known. The Conference Board of Canada (2019) found that for every \$1 invested in education, this amount generates \$1.30 in total economic impacts. Significantly, “the inverse holds true for each dollar taken from public education” (p. ii).

Commenting on the Ontario situation, the Board goes on to note that increases in public education could lift the graduation rates to 90% and will result in accrued savings of \$3.5 billion over two decades. Conversely, if graduation rates fall to 82.6%, “Ontario would spend an additional \$18.0 million each year. Over a 20-year period, which could amount to total fiscal costs of \$3.8 billion.”³⁷ So, while it clearly demonstrated that investing in education is beneficial, provincial governments across the Métis homeland continue to treat investments into education as a budget lever to be used in times of economic contraction. This strategy partially explains why, with the sole exception of British Columbia, provinces in the homeland report decreased fiscal investments in public education for the 2018-19 to 2019-20 period.

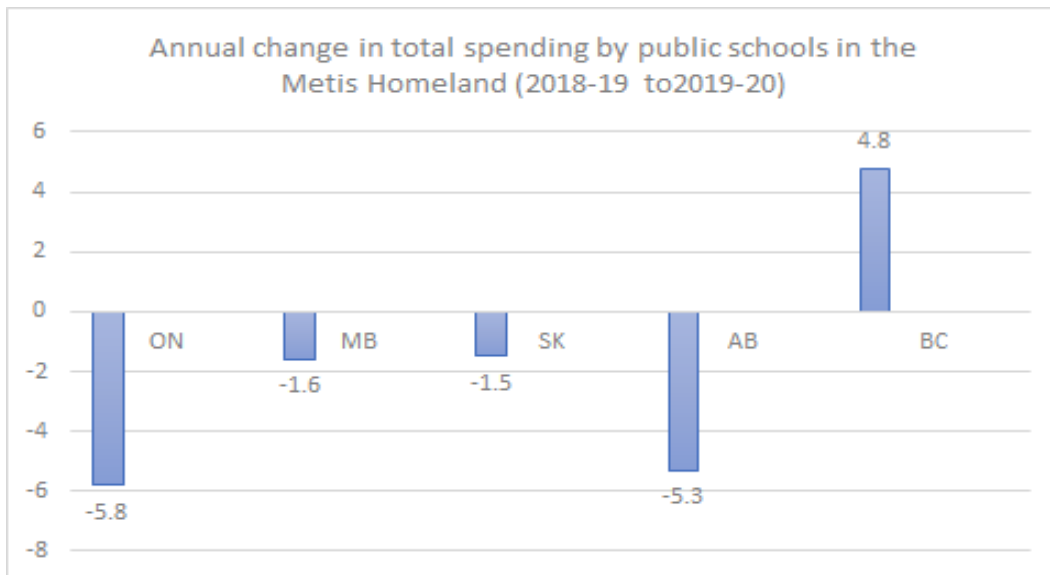


FIGURE 13: STATISTICS CANADA, TABLE 37-10-0065-01

Notably, in Alberta education funding decreased by a full 5.3%, even while the department acknowledged a \$175.2 million increase in transfers from the Government of Canada. “The majority of the increase was from the federal grant provided to help schools reopen safely.”³⁸ It remains a faint hope that after announcing a halfway budget surplus projection exceeding \$13 billion, the Government of Alberta will restart investing in public education and in supporting the K-12 education efforts of provincial Métis education authorities.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Government of Alberta Annual Report, Education 2020-2021

Figure 14³⁹ presents the annual per-student expenditure for pre-elementary, elementary, and secondary students by province. The most recent data is for 2018/2019; thus, we have adjusted per-student expenditure for inflation to estimate the expenditure in 2021 dollars. Total expenditure is a consolidation of federal and provincial expenditures on education, and other sources of revenue. Student enrolment is the sum of enrolment in public and private schools and enrolment in First Nations band-operated schools. We see that, excluding the territories, Alberta has the fourth largest per-student expenditure at \$15,000 (2021 dollars), following Nova Scotia (\$15,119), Saskatchewan (\$15,467), and Manitoba (\$16,230).

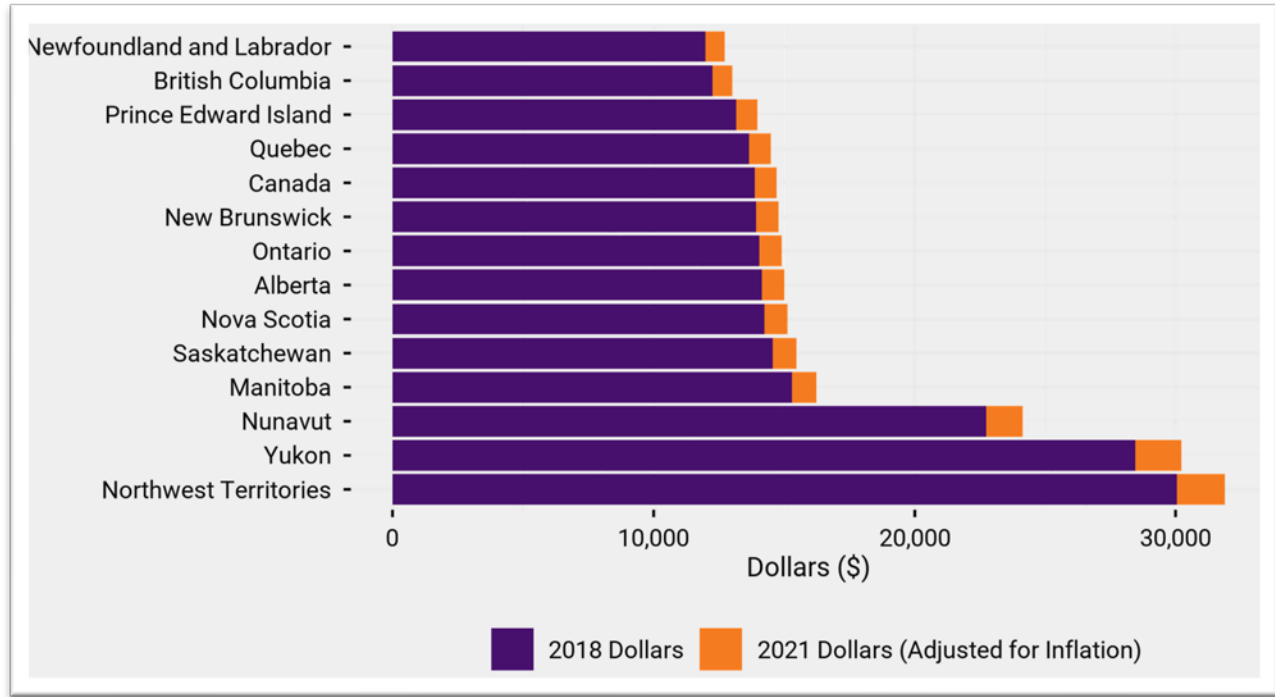


FIGURE 14: ANNUAL PRE-ELEMENTARY, ELEMENTARY, AND SECONDARY EDUCATION EXPENDITURE PER STUDENT BY PROVINCE, 2018-2019

In terms of provincial funding for Métis education, each province allocates funds at their own discretion. There appears to be no set standard or formula for how funds are allocated by each provincial authority, the amounts are arbitrarily pre-determined and/or fluctuate from year to year. The result of this inequitable arrangement is that Métis students receive different supports

³⁹ Financial data for elementary and secondary school levels are based on three Statistics Canada surveys: the Survey of Uniform Financial System – School Boards (this is the largest source of expenditure reporting); the Elementary-Secondary Education Survey (ESES) and the Survey of Federal Government Expenditures in Support of Education (FEDEX). The survey data are consolidated with federal and provincial expenditures on education, and other sources of revenue, to give a more complete picture of government expenditures. Annual expenditure refers to the total combined public and private expenditure on education for Canada, or for a province/territory, in a given fiscal year. Enrolment data for elementary and secondary school levels are the sum of enrolment in public and private schools (ESES), and enrolment in First Nations band-operated schools (Indigenous Services Canada). Expenditure per student is calculated by dividing the total expenditure by educational institutions by the corresponding full-time equivalent (FTE) enrolment. The data are presented in the Education Indicators in Canada: Report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program.

depending on where in Canada they happen to reside. The educational outcomes that result from such an arrangement are equally disparate. Moreso, even with some funds being allocated provincially, there has not been an increase of any kind provided to keep up with demands in education.

The table below shows the Government of Saskatchewan's investment in K-12 education for fiscal years 2020-21 and 2021-22. The educational deficit reported by the provincial government demonstrates the fragile nature of K-12 investments.

Government of Saskatchewan K-12 Education (ED03)				
	2020-21	2021-22	2021-22	2021-22
(\$000s)		Restated		
	Actual	Estimates	Actual	Variance
Achievement and Operational Support	\$25,478	\$25,341	\$25,104	(\$237)
School Operating	\$1,802,762	\$1,833,416	\$1,836,905	\$3,489
K-12 Initiatives	\$42,829	\$44,633	\$41,159	(\$3,474)
School Capital	\$121,586	\$189,968	\$103,812	(\$86,156)
P3 Joint-Use Schools Maintenance and Interest	\$13,386	\$14,389	\$14,052	(\$337)
Subvote Subtotal	\$2,006,041	\$2,107,747	\$2,021,032	(\$86,175)

Ministry of Education 2021-22 Annual Report
TABLE 4: SASKATCHEWAN MINISTRY OF EDUCATION 2021-22 ANNUAL REPORT

The Covid-19 pandemic tacitly demonstrated the precarious condition of Métis students in the K-12 system. As schools closed their doors in 2020 adhering to public health restrictions and instead moved to virtual learning, the learning trajectory of Métis learners were put at risk due to their socio-economic disadvantages. For those students living in remote communities, this situation was exacerbated by the lack of essential communications infrastructure that would allow them access and participation in virtual learning options. A sizable number of students did not have access to their own computers and, even if the family did own a computer, they were forced to share computer time with siblings. This type of learning environment is neither ideal nor tenable as it unfairly disadvantages some learners over others.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ In Alberta, Rupertsland Institute's program to support virtual learning resulted in the distribution of 5,000 Chromebooks to Métis learners. The program also offered support to Métis families who did not have access to the internet and offered tutoring services to support a transition to a virtual learning environment.

Federal Government Support for First Nations K-12 Education

The *First Nations Elementary and Secondary Education Program* recently signed between the federal government and First Nations serves as a template for funding a Métis K-12 education framework. This program is founded on three key principles: 1) inherent right of self-government; 2) respect for treaty rights and treaty-based agreements; and 3) support for First Nations control of First Nations' education.

Federal government funding to First Nations supports approximately 107,000 students between the ages of 4 to 21 “who are enrolled in attending an eligible elementary and secondary program.”⁴¹ The First Nations K-12 education investments for the year 2016-17 and 2017-18 was “more than \$3,6 billion in elementary and secondary education on-reserve”.⁴² The federal investment into First Nations primary and secondary education is approximately \$33,644.86 *per capita*. This investment should serve as a basis for future investments in the proposed Métis K-12 Education Program.

The new funding approach between First Nations and the Government of Canada has developed regional education agreements that respond to the differing needs and priorities. By February 2022, Indigenous Service Canada (ISC) had completed eight regional agreements under the Education Transformation policy. This move to more localized control combined with the First Nations elementary and secondary education funding policy came into effect on April 1, 2019, and:

- replaced outdated proposal-based programs with improved access to predictable core funding (emphasis added)
- provided base funding that is comparable to provincial systems across the country
- provided First Nations kindergarten to grade 12 schools with \$1,500 per student, per year, to support language and culture programming
- provided novel resources that support full-time kindergarten in First Nations schools for children aged 4 and 5
- made special education funding more predictable, with fewer application-based requirements

This arrangement has also resulted in an increase of funding in the federal budget 2021 where policyholders are seeking to better serve the needs of First Nations K-12 students on-reserve with the following investments:

- \$726 million over five years and \$188 million ongoing to enhance funding formulas for elementary and secondary education in critical areas such as:
 - student transportation
 - ensuring funding for First Nations schools remains predictable from year to year

⁴¹ <https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada/news/2019/01/new-funding-and-policy-approach-for-first-nations-kindergarten-to-grade-12-education.html>

⁴² Ibid.

- increasing First Nations control over First Nations education by concluding more regional education agreements
- \$515 million over five years and \$112 million ongoing to support before and after-school programming for First Nations children on reserve, which was announced as part of the Canada-wide childcare strategy
- Investments include \$1,500 per student for First Nations language and culture programming on reserve and full-time kindergarten on-reserve schools for a total of 315 First Nations operated programs offering a kindergarten program for four years old children and 329 programs offering a kindergarten program for children (5 years) in 2019 to 2020.⁴³

The following is the projected spending by ISC implementing a series of new interim formula-based regional funding models so that students attending First Nations schools are supported by predictable base funding that is more directly comparable to what students enrolled in provincial education systems receive. The actual grant and contributions-based funding to support First Nations elementary and secondary educational advancement since 2017 was as follows:

Financial information (dollars)

Type of transfer payment	2017-18 Actual spending*	2018-19 Planned spending	2019-20 Planned spending	2019-20 Total authorities available for use	2019-20 Actual spending (authorities used)	Variance (2019-20 actual minus 2019-20 planned)
Total grants	942	0	150,000	0	0	(150,000)
Total contributions	666,506,112	1,884,256,998	1,707,068,082	2,050,274,576	2,050,274,576	343,206,494
Total other types of transfer payments	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Program	666,507,054	1,884,256,998	1,707,218,082	2,050,274,576	2,050,274,576	343,056,494
Explanation of variances	The difference between 2019-20 Planned Spending and Actual Spending primarily reflects an internal reallocation of resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • from the New Fiscal Relationship grant due to lower than anticipated recipients number for the grant. The unused grant funding is returned to the programs to be made available to First Nations via other funding mechanisms; and • from other programs to meet departmental priorities. 					
<small>* ISC was established on November 30, 2017. Therefore, the 2017-18 actual spending column represents a partial year from November 30, 2017 to March 31, 2018.</small>						

For comparison purposes, the percentage of self-identified Métis compared to First Nations across the homeland is larger in Alberta (46%), followed by Manitoba (41.6%), British Columbia (35%), Ontario and Saskatchewan (34.5% and 34%, respectively).⁴⁴

Federal Transfer to the Provinces

The Canada Social Transfer (CST) is the third largest block transfer to the provinces and territories, and is intended to support: post-secondary education, social assistance, and early learning and childcare. The CST is allocated on an equal per capita cash basis to provide comparable services for all Canadians. In the 2022-23 fiscal year, the per capita allocation was

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Statistics Canada: 98-10-0264-01, Indigenous identity by Registered or Treaty Indian status and residence by Indigenous geography: Canada, provinces, and territories.

\$1,592. The following graph highlights what each of the provinces received in terms of total federal social transfer funds starting in 2019 and through to 2023. The numbers are reflective of each province’s population.

Canada Social Transfer: 2019-2023 (millions of dollars)				
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Ontario	5,642	5,824	6,000	6,181
Manitoba	531	545	560	576
Saskatchewan	384	397	409	423
Alberta	1,692	1,746	1,798	1,851
British Columbia	1,975	2,037	2,108	2,181

Table 5: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/programs/federal-transfers/major-federal-transfers.html>

The graph below illustrates that provincial investments in K-12 education across the homeland vary from province to province and represent disparate funding levels to Métis students at a provincial level. The situation is exacerbated by the extent to which provincial authorities lack accountability measures back to representative Métis authorities in terms of how dedicated FNMI funds are distributed, and to whom.

Métis Nation K-12 Education Program

Until recently, the place of Métis K-12 education within federalism has been a question of debate at the federal and provincial levels. On April 14, 2016, the Supreme Court in *Daniels*⁴⁵ reached a unanimous decision and declared that Métis and non-status Indians are “Indians” as the term is used in s 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867. Prior to this decision, it was argued that funding for Métis students was accomplished through block funding transfers from the federal government to the provinces, and from there, provincial investments for self-identified First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students have been distributed within the public system. In this context of shifting jurisdictional responsibilities, the role and recognition of Métis governments, and representative Métis education authorities, as the legitimate voice of the Métis people has been neglected and marginalized. The previous policy implementation explains why provincial governments within the Métis homeland have consistently underfunded Métis authorities and channeled Métis learners to pan-Indigenous structures where their unique needs are subsumed within a First Nations-centric approach.⁴⁶

The co-development of a Métis Nation K-12 education policy must entrench the government-to-government relationship between the federal government and Métis Nation governments; it must provide for long-term predictable funding that includes an escalating formula for regional funding models for elementary and secondary education. Stable core funding will reduce the administrative and reporting burden that limits what is possible in terms of supporting Métis learners in the K-12 systems across the homeland. The framework for this co-developed proposed Métis K-12 Education Program needs to be comprehensive and cover all necessary supports for primary and secondary students, including distant education, special needs education, and student tutoring needs. The Métis K-12 Education Program must consider that Métis learners must have the tools required to succeed in the K-12 system (computers and internet access in remote and underserved areas) and receive the tutorial support as required. The framework must acknowledge the structural deficit and ensure that Métis students have access to Métis education in Métis-led and controlled entities. This framework must also consider the need for specialized teacher training in Métis-specific pedagogical and curriculum content. Recent initiatives to include Indigenous perspectives within educational systems have resulted in minimal gain but are, in many cases, limited to a sole focus on First Nations and, to a lesser extent, on the Inuit. Teaching training centers, specific to the Métis, within each homeland province are required to attract more Métis people to the teaching profession; yet there is also a pressing need to include mandatory Métis content, and pedagogy, more broadly within provincial curricula.

⁴⁵ *Daniels v Canada (Indian Affairs and Northern Development)*, [2016 SCC 12](#)

⁴⁶Pratt et.al. (2013) argues that Métis exist in a First Nations-centric policy world: “Provincial policies with respect to the Métis remain sectorial, piecemeal and usually pan-Aboriginal. In this context, policies tend to favour First Nations issues and agendas.”

Principles of Métis K-12 Education Policy

PRINCIPLE 1: Métis Inherent Right to Self-Government

The signing of the Canada-Métis Nation Accord in 2017 represents a significant step forward in relations between Canada and the participating Métis governments across the homeland. The Accord commits the parties to advance reconciliation within the framework of imperatives designed to address, among others, colonial policies that limit the constitutional relations between the Crown and Métis as integral partners in Confederation. The signing of the Accord was a recognition of Métis citizens and communities since Canada acknowledges—for the first time—that the Métis communities represented by their governing bodies hold the inherent right to self-government and self-determination.

In 2019, Canada and the Métis Nations of Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, signed the Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreement (“Self-Government Agreement”). The Self-Government Agreement provides a path to convert Métis governments into recognized jurisdictional authorities with autonomous authority over core areas of governance, including education, and represents a path for governing members to be recognized as Indigenous governments within Confederation. After this transition, new Métis Governments will have law-making powers in the areas of citizenship, leadership selection, and internal operations. This education policy affirms that Métis Nation governments are provincial in scope and in entrenching the Métis inherent right to self-government, this policy rejects all calls for extraterritoriality.

Within the context of K-12 education, the parameters of this federal agreement solidify and entrench the right of Métis authorities to define and invest in educational activities that support the unique needs of Métis learners in jurisdictions across the Métis homeland. As determined by the respective Métis governments, the new K-12 policy acknowledges the federal government flexibility to enter into regional education agreements that meet minimal thresholds set by this program, and that recognize the goals and priorities of Métis authorities in their different jurisdictions across the homeland. Métis regional education agreements may vary by jurisdiction but must be co-developed by the federal government and each of the Métis Nation governments. These agreements must, at a minimum

- be comprehensive and cover all federal support for elementary and secondary education, including special education and student support.
- inclusive of all structural program elements under this policy.
- establish clear roles and responsibilities for Métis-led service delivery; and
- co-develop mutual accountability mechanisms.

PRINCIPLE 2: Métis Control of Métis Education

The section reflects the assertions made in the 1972 *Indian Control of Indian Education* wherein First Nations affirmed their right to control their own educational matters. In 1996, the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* asserted the need for Indigenous involvement and curricular contributions that would reflect their distinct perspectives. The Royal Commission (1996) recommended that

Federal, provincial, and territorial governments collaborate with Aboriginal governments, organizations, and educators to develop or continue developing innovative curricula that reflect Aboriginal cultures and community realities, for delivery

- (a) *at all grade levels of elementary and secondary schools;*
- (b) *in schools operating under Aboriginal control; and*
- (c) *in schools under provincial or territorial jurisdiction.*⁴⁷

Similarly, Article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, 2007) affirms jurisdiction of Métis K-12 education by Métis authorities and further recognizes Indigenous Peoples' right to establish and control their own systems of education. Affirming control over Métis education will require a significant shift in the relationships between Métis governments and provincial educational authorities, and recognition by all levels of government that Métis governments are the legitimate voice to articulate the education needs of Métis learners. The following UNDRIP excerpts support Indigenous self-determining moves

Article 14.1: Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning....

Article 15.1: Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories, and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information. (UNDRIP, 2007)

In "Education for Reconciliation," the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) set out specific calls targeting the improvement of education through a variety of means for Aboriginal learners

We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:

- i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for kindergarten to grade twelve students.
- ii. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.
- iii. Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.
- iv. Establish senior-level

⁴⁷ *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, Recommendation 3.5.5

positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.

Likewise, a critical area identified by the Canada-Métis Nation Accord is that of supports for unique K-12 curriculum development as one mechanism for improving educational outcomes. As part of the K-12 Métis education policy affirmation and in consideration of the substantive enrollment of Métis students in the public school system, whenever and wherever educational services are provided to Métis students in institutions recognized by the province as elementary or secondary institutions, education agreements between applicable parties may be set up.⁴⁸

PRINCIPLE 3: Long-term, Predictable Funding

The Métis K-12 Education Program must be based on a formula funding model to support Métis education authorities' goals and priorities through predictable base funding that compares to investments made by Indigenous Service Canada for First Nations students. ISC investments in First Nations education for students living on reserve are made through several programs that are allocated as core, proposal-based, or targeted funding. The Métis structural and infrastructural development in K-12 education lags far behind that of other Indigenous peoples. With rare examples,⁴⁹ Métis education infrastructure is non-existent in the major metropolitan areas within the homeland and Métis educational resources are only made possible by diverting resources from other initiatives.

A reallocation of new First Nations funding that took effect in 2019 reflects the importance that the federal government places on infrastructural investments. Budget 2016 provided close to \$1 billion over five years for First Nations education infrastructure. This expenditure is in addition to approximately \$500 million that had been booked previously. According to the federal government, *“together with previous budget commitments, approximately \$1.47 billion has been committed to support First Nations education infrastructure.”*⁵⁰

The Métis K-12 Education Program must implicitly acknowledge this deficit by ensuring that Métis Nation governments have the fiscal capacity to set up educational spaces where required. Creating a network of Métis learning centres across the Métis homeland will not only ensure that Métis learners see themselves reflected in their institutions, but also that non-Métis learners have access to quality publicly funded educational resources on the Métis created by, with, and for Métis communities.

⁴⁸ A good starting point for development of education agreements is the Métis Nation of British Columbia and The Board of Education of School District No. 61

⁴⁹ The St. Michael School in Saskatoon is one of those examples.

⁵⁰ <https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada/news/2019/01/new-funding-and-policy-approach-for-first-nations-kindergarten-to-grade-12-education.html>

PRINCIPLE 4: Support for the creation of Métis K-12 education tripartite tables

As K-12 education is currently under provincial jurisdiction, establishing and solidifying relations between provincial and Métis governments is important for the smooth implementation of the Métis K-12 policy framework. Under this policy, the federal government is called upon to play an intermediary role to engage Métis and provincial authorities in tripartite education tables. The primary role of these tripartite tables is to serve as transitional discussion forums to provide support for the assumption of Métis jurisdiction over Métis education. Following the establishment and strengthening of relations between the provinces and Métis authorities, discussions should become bilateral in nature. The tripartite tables should include negotiations on topics such as:

- defining what if any regulatory or statutory policies should be developed to recognize that Métis K-12 authorities have an inherent right to self-government;
- creating mechanism to support the development of Métis K-12 institutions within the public school system;
- cooperation and alignment of K-12 Métis education policy, such as improving self-identification of Métis learners, and ensuring these learners are supported by Métis languages, education programs and curriculum;
- consolidation, where needed, and development of paths, so that Métis educational authorities are recognized as legitimate representatives of Métis within school boards, to school superintendents, and other provincial authorities;
- representation of Métis authorities at tables and on policy boards where changes to the provincial curriculum are developed; and,
- providing force of law to Métis educational representative institutions such as the RLI, alongside the Gabriel Dumont Institute in Saskatchewan.

Métis K-12 Education Program: Structural Elements

A 2016 report by the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) indicated that federal spending on primary and secondary education to First Nations was divided between core funding mechanisms and proposal-based funding;⁵¹ the same categories are utilized below.

Core Allocation

The proposed Métis K-12 Education Program's core allocation funding mechanism funds instruction services, partnership activities, community engagement initiatives, teacher recruitment, training and retention, student success, and other programs as determined by representative Métis education authorities. The Métis Nation K-12 Education Program provides for a floor of 80 percent funding to be delivered through core funding mechanism for the first three years, after that, core funding increases to 85 percent of total funding.

a) Program Spending

This allocation includes, but is not limited to:

- salaries and benefits
- instructional and student support services
- education programs and delivery support services
- curriculum, assessment, and resource development
- professional fees
- expenditures related to supplementary targeted programs

In other words, program spending is designed to support all reasonable activities associated with the development of the Métis K-12 Education Program. Further, program spending includes paying for the operating and maintenance of teaching facilities, education counselling, transportation, student services and provincial educational partnerships.

b) Capital Spending

The Métis K-12 Education program's Capital Spending considers that Métis education requires significant expenditures to build the infrastructure required by Métis education to achieve comparable standards with First Nations and provincial systems.

The Capital Facilities and Maintenance Program is intended to assist Métis Nation governments in the planning, construction and/or acquisition, as well as operation and maintenance of community infrastructure and facilities. The objective of the Capital Facilities and Maintenance Program is to provide financial support to Métis Nations to:

- invest in physical assets (or services);
- ensure that assets meet established codes and standards;
- ensure that assets are managed in a cost-effective and efficient manner that protects, maintains and maximizes asset life cycle; and

⁵¹ <https://www.pbo-dpb.ca/en/information-requests--demandes-information/IR0211>

- ensure that the above activities are undertaken in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner.

As the program unfolds, Métis education authorities will be called upon to create a systematic capital budget framework and asset management system, with set asides for development, replacement, and renewal of education infrastructure.

Capital spending should be injected in the second year of this program, following a description by Métis authorities of the goals they seek to achieve and the infrastructural needs that must be met. While considering this budget, it is good to learn from previous experience, the PBO notes that between “2009-10 and 2013-14 First Nations education capital requirements suffered annual shortfalls of between \$94 million and \$221 million during this period.” (p. 9)

The federal government’s response to this criticism was the unfolding of the new, co-developed, First Nations K-12 education program that adds significant fiscal resources to deal with the infrastructural underfunding of First Nations’ education. Over five years, *“together with previous budget commitments, approximately \$1.47 billion has been committed to support First Nations education infrastructure.”*⁵²

Learning of our shared history applies to students throughout Canada which includes an appreciation of First Nations, the Métis, and the Inuit. As noted by Kearns and Anuik (2015), the lack of awareness on Métis history and culture continues because appropriate resources need to be created that produce an understanding of the historical Métis people, specifically in regards to their role in the Federation of Canada and the legacy of Louis Riel (p. 26). The document, *The Journey Together* (2016) highlights that:

Education remains a key component of reconciliation. Through the Initial Teacher Education Program, accredited teacher-education programs offered by Ontario’s faculties of education are required to provide mandatory Indigenous content. The Province is also working with Indigenous partners to enhance the Ontario curriculum to support mandatory learning about residential schools, the legacy of colonialism and the rights and responsibilities we all have to each other as treaty people. (p. 19)

To address the curriculum absence of the Métis within education, institutions must provide space for Métis people to share their unique history and contemporary realities. This space will allow instructors to find a relational position to connect with Métis culture, thus, supporting and celebrating this unique culture of people (Kearns & Anuik, 2015, p. 26/27). It is essential to moving the reconciliation process forward that further research is conducted on embedding a métissage lens in curriculum and institutional policies and practices within the K-12 education system.

Investments in new Métis pedagogical approaches will ensure the public education system recognizes the Métis and reflects their unique place as partners in Confederation. As Métis education develops, it is also our hope that future Métis pedagogical approaches will

⁵² <https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada/news/2019/01/new-funding-and-policy-approach-for-first-nations-kindergarten-to-grade-12-education.html>

have an avenue into the public system by strengthening the links between institutions of higher learning and Métis lead K-12 institutions.

c) Proposal-based Funding

The federal government is currently moving away from proposal-based funding in favour of stable and predictable funding. The outdated proposal funding approach is all but excluded from recent co-developed Indigenous programs, but from time-to-time federal authorities use proposal-based funding as a tool in the federal education funding toolbox. Funding calls support time-limited projects such as internet services; programs that improve reading, comprehension, and math; and programs that support community and parental engagements.

As part of the Métis K-12 Education Program co-developed process, proposal-based funding should not exceed 5% of overall funding. Further, funding available for Indigenous education under this envelope should be distinctions-based and result in a Métis set aside for Métis National Council Governing Members.

Governance

The Métis K-12 Education Program recognizes that Métis authorities need to create governance capacity and structure and develop the tools that will ensure the program meets the needs of Métis learners, communities and parents in jurisdictions across the homeland. Planning, consulting communities across the provinces, involving educational authorities, learners and stakeholders will require that, at least for the first year of the program, the governance funding goes beyond the traditional 15%. The Métis K-12 education program will require resources for Métis governments plan and implement a program that will require a unique building effort.

Métis Nation authorities will develop province-wide K-12 education models that are likely to include, among others:

- creation of provincial Métis education governance models that adhere to Métis-specific knowledge traditions, and include province-wide structures, including regional education authorities, adherence to provincial professional standards and certification, and inclusion of community representatives and Métis elders;
- planning, development and implementation of internal accountability systems such as K-12 registration of Métis learners, data gathering, and other accountability measures as determined by the respective Métis provincial education authorities;
- development of provincial and federal data exchange protocols and recognition of Métis sovereignty over Métis students information; and
- co-development of provincial and federal accountability models.

Métis Nation Engagement

Governance at the national level requires that the Métis National Council has the fiscal capacity to organize meetings, conduct investigations and provide a forum for policy discussion and development at the national level. Métis Nation engagement requires the Métis Secretariat to be a coordinating body for the work that lies ahead.

Métis K-12 Education Program: Funding Model

Earlier we indicated that different approaches by provincial governments within the Métis homeland made it impossible to determine with certainty the number of Métis students in the public system. We also noted that past jurisdictional arguments between the federal and provincial governments led to a situation of Métis K-12 education neglect and lack of recognition for fundamental self-governing principles such as Métis control over Métis education. Within this paradigm, Métis governments experienced underfunding and lack meaningful representation in the provincial system.

First Nations Funding

To set up the funding model for the Métis K-12 education program, we must consider the federal government’s investments in First Nations’ education, and while the socio-demographic reality of First Nations and Métis differ, the economic nature of education investments is the same for both populations. While announcing a new funding and policy approach to First Nations K-12 education, Indigenous Service Canada stated: “In 2016-17 and 2017-18, *the Government of Canada invested more than \$3.6 billion in elementary and secondary education on-reserve.*”⁵³

According to Indigenous Services Canada, the federal government and the First Nations agreed on an interim formula-based regional funding model, in order to ensure; a) a predictable funding model, and b) ensure First Nations education investments are comparable to investments in the public school system. We know that the federal government funds between 107,000 - 110,000⁵⁴ on-reserve First Nations learners. According to federal statistics, about 33%⁵⁵ of this cohort (35,666 to 36,666) attend public schools. The **2022-23** planned spending, including grants, is reported to be \$2,077,484,170 an increase from the \$2,117,403,197 planned for the fiscal 2021-22. Based on the First Nations information, we determine the per capita spending for First Nations’ education in 2022-23 to be \$19,249.00 per student — up from \$15,459⁵⁶ in 2012-13, and contributions to the public system are in the neighbourhood of \$700 million.

FIRST NATIONS K-12 EDUCATION		
	Planned spending 2022-23	Planned spending 2023-24
Total Program Expenditure	\$2,077,484,170	\$2,117,403,197
Number Students (ages 0-21)	110,000	110,000
Per Capita	\$18,886	\$19,249
Students attending public schools (33%)	36,666	36,666
Public School System Contributions (33%)	\$692,482,133	\$705,788,232

⁵³ The government’s announcement goes on to indicate this investment represents an increase of more than 30% for education on-reserve. <https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada/news/2019/01/new-funding-and-policy-approach-for-first-nations-kindergarten-to-grade-12-education.html>

⁵⁴ As noted by the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, Federal Spending on Primary and Secondary Education on First Nations Reserves.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Métis Funding

Funding the Métis K-12 education program starts from the premise that the federal government must invest in Métis education at the same levels it funds First Nations. In the 2023-24 school year, the per capita investment is \$19,249.00. Since most Métis students attend public schools, a place where a distinctions-based approach is requisite to their Indigenous status but remains unrepresented and underfunded (or even unfunded), the total Métis Nation K-12 Education Program funding will be calculated at only 33% of the total Métis population aged 5-19 years. Given the many years that the Métis have gone without any educational support or consideration, the percentage is a reasonable compromise.

New census data shows the school-aged Métis population cohort to be approximately 100,295.⁵⁷

MÉTIS NATION K-12 EDUCATION		
	Proposed spending 2022-23	Proposed spending 2023-24
A) Number Métis ages 0-19	100,295	100,295
B) Based population at 33% of total	33,431	33,431
C) Per Capita (based on FNs investments)	\$18,886	\$19,249
D) Program Expenditure (B*C)	\$ 631,377,866	\$ 643,513,319
E) Provincial FNMI top-up (based on BC rate)	\$1,565	\$1,565
F) Top-up 0-19 Métis population (B*E) deducted from total program expenditure	\$52,319,515	\$52,319,515
G) Total program expenditure (D-F)	\$579,058,351	\$591,193,804

To arrive at a final budget, we considered provincial FNMI expenditures based on the British Columbia rate of \$1,565 and the number of self-identified Métis between the ages of 5-19 at 100,295. As shown in the table above, provincial investments in Métis students as part of their FNMI top up is approximately \$52,319,515.⁵⁸ Total program expenditures for the Métis K-12 education program are determined to be \$579,058,351 and \$591,193,804 for the years reviewed in this document. This investment will allow the Métis Nation to implement a long-range K-12 education program for the Métis people thereby respecting UNDRIP principles, demonstrating equity-driven considerations within Indigenous education, and honouring the promises made in the 1982 *Canadian Constitution*.

⁵⁷ 2021 census tables are available for age groups 0-14 and 15-19, internal calculations were made by dividing these cohorts by the age breakdown and assuming all groups are divided equally. Manitoba data is excluded from this calculation. Statistics Canada: Table: 98-10-0268-01.

⁵⁸ We calculate the total census self-identified population, as opposed to the provincial registries, because the latter are deemed inadequate. While this method results in greater deductions to the Métis K-12 funding formula, it represents a more realistic picture of the Métis population in the public school system.

Métis Nation K-12 Education Program Funding (\$ Millions)										
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33
Core	463,246	472,954	512,564	522,816	533,272	543,937	554,816	565,912	577,231	588,775
Program Spending	324,272	331,068	358,795	365,971	373,290	380,756	388,371	396,139	404,061	412,143
Capital Spending	138,974	141,886	153,769	156,845	159,982	163,181	166,445	169,774	173,169	176,633
Governance	114,943	117,352	89,548	91,339	93,166	95,029	96,930	98,868	100,846	102,863
Métis Nation Engagement	869	887	905	923	941	960	979	999	1,019	1,039
Total	579,058	591,193	603,017	615,077	627,379	639,926	652,725	665,779	679,095	692,677

References

- Alberta Education, Analytics Branch. October 2020. <https://www.alberta.ca/education.aspx>
- Anderson, T. Portrait of youth in Canada: Data Report, Chapter 4: Indigenous Youth in Canada. Cat.no 42-28-0001
- Barkwell, L., Hourie, A., & Swain, E. (2006). The heritage and legacy of the Métis people. In L. J. Barkwell, L. M. Dorion, & A. Hourie (Eds.), *Métis legacy* (Volume II): Michif culture, heritage, and folkways (pp. 2–7). Gabriel Dumont Institute and Pemmican Publications.
- Battiste, M. (2013). *Decolonizing education: Nourishing the learning spirit*. Purich.
- Bird-Wilson, L. (2011). *An institute of our own: A history of the Gabriel Dumont Institute*. Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research.
- British Columbia. (2019). Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, Chapter 44. <https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/19044>
- British Columbia
- (2016). Métis Nation Relationship Accord II, Métis Nation British Columbia-British Columbia. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/Métis_nation_reconciliation_accord_ii_-_nov_16_2016.pdf
 - (2022). Ministry of Education and Child Care. Aboriginal Report 2016/17 - 2020/21 How Are We Doing? <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/reports/ab-hawd/ab-hawd-school-district-public.pdf>
 - (2018). Tripartite Education Agreement: Supporting First Nation Student Success, First Nations Education Steering Committee-British Columbia-Canada, I-2. <http://www.fnesc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/AGREEMENT-BCTEA-2018-FINAL-Signed-with-Schedules-WEB-VERSION-2018-08-1.pdf>
- Campbell, M. (1973). *Halfbreed*. McClelland & Stewart.
- Canada-Métis Nation Accord (2017). <https://pm.gc.ca/en/canada-metis-nation-accord>
- Canada
- (2021). Delivering on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action - Education. <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524495412051/1557511602225>
 - Department of Finance, Major Federal Transfers. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/programs/federal-transfers/major-federal-transfers.html>
 - Gathering Strength. <https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.849517/publication.html>
 - (2021). Indigenous Services Canada. *Details on transfer payment programs (2021-22)*. <https://www.sac.gc.ca/eng/1611597632387/1611597686016>
 - (2018). Indigenous Services Canada. *Kindergarten to grade 12 operating expenditures 2016-2017 overview*. <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1349140116208/1531315346681>

- Indigenous Services Canada. New Funding and Policy Approach for First Nations Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education. <https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada/news/2019/01/new-funding-and-policy-approach-for-first-nations-kindergarten-to-grade-12-education.html>

Canadian Council on Learning Models: Métis (2007).

<https://www.askecdev.ca/authors/canadian-council-learning-ccl>

Canadian Council on Learning. (2009). *The state of Aboriginal learning in Canada: A holistic approach to measuring success*. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

https://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education2/state_of_aboriginal_learning_in_canada-final_report%2C_ccl%2C_2009.pdf

Chartrand, L. N., Logan, T. E., & Daniels, J. D. (2006). *Métis history and experience and residential schools in Canada*. Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

<http://www.ahf.ca/downloads/Métiseweb.pdf>

Government of Alberta.

- First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Funding Allocation for School Authorities: Information for Parents and Guardians. <https://www.gsacrd.ab.ca/download/338870>
- Annual Report, Education 2020-2021. <https://www.alberta.ca/government-and-ministry-annual-reports.aspx#20-21>

Government of Saskatchewan. Ministry of Education, 2021-2022 Annual Report.

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/government-structure/ministries/education>

Greenwood, M., & Jones, E. (2018). Being at the Interface: Early Childhood as a Determinant of Health. In *Determinants of Indigenous Peoples' Health, Second Edition : Beyond the Social* (2nd ed., pp. 111-126). essay, Canadian Scholars.

Howe, E. (2011). Bridging the Aboriginal Education Gap in Saskatchewan. www.gdins.org

Howe, E. (2014). Bridging the Aboriginal Education Gap in Alberta.

<https://www.rupertisland.org/research/>

Kearns, L., & Anuik, J. (2015). Métis Curricular Challenges and Possibilities: A Discussion Initiated by First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy in Ontario. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*. 12(2).

Kermoal, N. (2016). Métis Women's Environmental Knowledge and the Recognition of Métis Rights. *Living on the Land: Indigenous Women's Understanding of Place* (pp. 107-138). Edmonton, AB: Athabasca University Press.

Lowman, E. B., Barker, A. J., & Lowman, E. B. (2015). Fear, Complicity and Productive Discomfort. In *Settler: Identity and colonialism in 21st Century Canada* (pp. 90–107). essay, Fernwood Publishing.

Manitoba Métis Federation, Provincial Education. <https://www.mmf.mb.ca/provincial-education>

Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer. First Nations K-12 Education data. <https://www.pbo-dpb.ca/en/information-requests--demandes-information/IR0211>

Mohanty, C. T. (2003). *Feminism without borders: Decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity*. Durham, NC & London: Duke University Press.

Newhouse, D. R., Voyageur, C. J., & Beavon, D. J. K. (2010). Introduction: Volume 3. In D. R. Newhouse, C. J. Voyageur, & D. J. K. Beavon Eds.), *Hidden in plain sight* (pp. 3–13). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Ontario

- Government of Ontario, Ministry of Education, Indigenous education in Ontario: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/indigenous-education-ontario>
- (2016). *The Journey Together: Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples*. https://files.ontario.ca/trc_report_web_mar17_en_1.pdf

Poitras Pratt, Y. (2020). A family of learners: Métis people in Canada and their educational lifeworlds. In S. Brigham, K. Jubas & R. McGray (Eds.), *Adult education and lifelong learning in Canada*, pp. 15-25. Thompson.

Poitras Pratt, Y. (2020). *Digital storytelling in Indigenous education: A decolonizing journey for a Métis community*. Routledge Press.

Poitras Pratt, Y., Louie, D. W., Hanson, A. J., & Ottmann, J. (2018). "Indigenous Education and Decolonization." In G. Noblit (Ed.), *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.240>

Poitras Pratt, Y., & Lalonde, S. (2019). The Alberta Métis Education Council: Realizing self-determination in education. In S. Carr-Stewart (Ed.), *Knowing the Past, Facing the Future: Indigenous Education in Canada*, pp. 265-287. Purich.

Poitras Pratt, Y., Andersen, C., Contreras, G., Dokis J. Painting a Picture of the Métis Homeland. https://www.rupertsland.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Painting_a_Picture_of_the_Métis_homeland.pdf

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/royal-commission-aboriginal-peoples/Pages/final-report.aspx>

Rupertsland Institute, K-12 Teaching and Learning. <https://www.rupertsland.org/teaching-learning/>

St. Michael Community School. Métis Education Models. <https://www.gscs.ca/mic/page/1746/about-us>

Statistics Canada

- (2016 Census). Educational attainment of Métis population (ages 25-64 years). Table 37-10-0099-01 (formerly CANSIM 477-0095).
- (2016 Census). Census Population. Statistics Canada. Catalogue Number 98-400-X2016177.
- (2016 Census). Census Population. Statistics Canada. Table 37-100099-01 and table 37-10-0100-01.
- (2017 Aboriginal Peoples Survey). Métis and non-Indigenous unemployment rate (2017-2021). <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-653-x/89-653-x2018002-eng.htm>
- Annual Pre-Elementary, Elementary, and Secondary Education Expenditure Per Student by Province, 2018-2019. Table 37-10-0210-01.
- Indigenous identity by Registered or Treaty Indian status and residence by Indigenous geography: Canada, provinces, and territories. Table .98-10-0264-01

- (2021 Census). Labour force characteristics by region and detailed Indigenous group. Table 14-10-0365-01 (formerly CANSIM 282-0227)
- (2021 Census). Annual change in public total spending by public schools from 2018/2019. Table 37-10-0065-01.
- (2021 Census). Métis population ages 5-19, table 98-0268-01.
- (2021 Census). Total Self-identified First Nations and Métis Single Identity. Statistics Canada, Métis population ages 5-19, table 98-0268-01.
- (2021 Census). Membership in a Métis organization or Settlement by Indigenous identity: Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts; and Indigenous identity by Registered or Treaty Indian status and residence by Indigenous geography: Canada, provinces and territories. Tables 98-10-628-01 and 98-10-0264-01.
- (2022). Table 98-10-0268-01. Membership in a Métis organization or Settlement by Indigenous identity: Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts.
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810026801>

Supreme Court of Canada. Daniels v. Canada (Indian Affairs and Northern Development).
<https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/15858/index.do>

Supreme Court of Canada. R. v. Powley, 2003 SCC 43 (CanLII), [2003] 2 SCR 207.
<https://www.canlii.org/en/ca/scc/doc/2003/2003scc43/2003scc43.html>

The Conference Board of Canada. (2019). The Economic Case for Investing in Education.
The National Indian Brotherhood (1972).

https://www.primidi.com/assembly_of_first_nations/history/national_indian_brotherhood

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action.

United Nations General Assembly. (2007). United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 2 October 2007, A/RES/61/295 <https://www.refworld.org/docid/471355a82.html>

- Universities Canada. (2015). 13 Principles on Indigenous Education.
<https://www.univcan.ca/media-room/media-releases/universities-canada-principles-on-indigenous-education/>
- <https://www.sd61.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/91/2022/09/Métis-Edu>