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**MÉTIS**  
NATIONAL COUNCIL

# Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education Mid-Term Program Review

Prepared by the Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education  
Technical Working Group



## Métis Nation PSE Mid-Term Review and Budget 2025 Increase Request

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# Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Strategy Mid-Term Review and Budget 2025 Increase Request

## Background

In November 2018, the Métis National Council (MNC) provided Canada a proposal to frame the development of a new Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education program. The document highlighted disparities in Métis education attainment, noting that in 2016, the Indigenous population of Canada was approximately 4.9% of the total Canadian population and the self-identified Métis population was about one-third of total self-identified Indigenous population. In 2016, just 13.6% of Métis aged 25-64 years old reported having attained a bachelor's degree or higher. At that time, the gap in post-secondary accomplishments between Métis and non-Indigenous Canadians was increasing from 14% to 16% between 2011 and 2016.<sup>1</sup>

In 2016, Métis consistently reported lower median income levels and poorer socio-economic outcomes compared to the non-Indigenous population; this is directly attributed to poorer education opportunities and outcomes and other social determinants. The Métis Nation proposal called for investments of \$2.4B distributed over 10 years in three priority areas:

- Direct financial support for Métis PSE students (80%);
- Strengthening Métis Nation education governance capacity (10%), and;
- Increasing Métis Nation education services to meet existing unmet needs and projected future needs of Métis student and families for PSE supports (10%).

The reality is that Métis Nation Governing Members have been incredibly successful in the deployment of their respective PSE programs over the past five years; in fact, each GM not only met but also exceeded their pre-determined goals. However, the growing rate of the Métis youth population, when compared with current investment levels and inflation, leaves more and more Métis youth behind each year.<sup>2</sup>

### What is the Issue?

**THE MÉTIS NATION PSE SUB-ACCORD INCLUDES INVESTMENT COMMITMENTS OF \$362M OVER 10 YEARS AND \$40M ONGOING. THIS ALLOCATION, WHILE WELCOME, FELL SHORT OF THE ORIGINAL BUDGET 2019 REQUEST FOR \$2.4B OVER 10 YEARS, REPRESENTING JUST 15% OF THE ORIGINAL MÉTIS NATION BUDGET 'ASK', LEADING TO SIGNIFICANT OVERSUBSCRIPTION AND REDUCED ABILITY TO MEET STUDENT NEEDS.**

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. 2016. *2016 Census*.

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada. 2021. *Age structure of Métis population more closely resembles non-Indigenous population than other Indigenous groups*.

## Principles of the 2018 Métis Nation PSE Proposal

In the absence of support for culturally relevant holistic supports, the MNO created the PSE Navigator role to aid in the transition to PSE by working to help locate and connect with mainstream supports and services available at colleges or universities as well as limited MNO services.

(Métis Nation of Ontario)

The Métis Nation PSE proposal also included 10 principles, ranging from a **long-term funding commitment to fairness and equity** and **Nation-to-Nation Relationship**, and a **distinctions-based approach**. As part of the approach to creating a wrap-around environment, the Métis Nation PSE Proposal is Métis student-focused, family-centred and acknowledges and responds to determinants of post-

secondary participation and success, while providing for reciprocal responsibilities between the Métis Nation and federal government.

### Specific Objectives

The Métis Nation PSE proposal sought to:

- Significantly increase the participation and success of Métis learners in university/degree level PSE over 10 years (as evidenced by increases in enrolments and graduations);
- Maintain the level of Métis participation and success (enrolments and graduation rates) in non-degree PSE programs (certificate, diploma, trades); and
- Although the initial MNC PSE proposal was to reduce the 16% gap between Métis Nation and non-Indigenous university attainment by at least half, based on the funding investment announced by Canada over 10 years, the objective shifted to fund “approximately 733 Métis PSE students per year, at an average of \$12,000 in funding support per year of study.”<sup>3</sup>

“Studying architecture at the University of Calgary has been one of the most difficult and rewarding journeys [...] I wouldn’t be where I am today without your support!”

Steven Lamothe, University of Calgary, School of Architecture

(Otipemisiwak Métis Government / Rupertsland Institute)

## Canada-Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education Sub-Accord

Following the submission of MNC’s PSE proposal in 2018, the Canada-Métis Nation Post-Secondary Sub-Accord was signed on June 10, 2019, and aims to close the post-secondary gaps between Métis Nation citizens and non-Indigenous Canadians within the frame of a flexible, predictable and sustainable transfer mechanism. The Sub-Accord also calls for an accountability framework consistent with a Nation-to-Nation, government-to-government relationship.

Appropriately, the Sub-Accord includes a call for periodic review of the program. This document constitutes the first opportunity to review the funding provisions set forth in the document at what is now

<sup>3</sup> Métis National Council Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Update, May 24, 2019

the mid-term of the Métis Nation PSE Strategy’s 10-year federal investment and at a time when the shortfalls in funding have become abundantly clear despite GMs meeting and exceeding their set goals.

MNC Governing Members (GM) signed Contribution Agreements late in the 2019-20 fiscal year. These agreements included three funding program streams, as indicated in the table below.

**Table 1: Métis Nation PSE Program Funding Streams**

PSE Funding Streams	
Student Financial Support – 80%	Direct funding to students in pursuit of post-secondary education
Programs and Services –10%	Funding for activities that are determined based on local needs assessments with the aim of promoting students’ pursuit of post-secondary education and the attainment of a credential and/or activities that support Métis Nation students
Governance Capacity – 10%	Funding for the human, information, and physical infrastructure necessary to meet local and regional needs. This includes data collection, analysis, and partnership development

**Implementing the Canada-Métis Nation PSE Sub-Accord**

One of the key components of the Sub-Accord was the creation of the Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education Program, also known as the Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education Strategy; this was a historic step in closing the post-secondary education attainment gap between Métis Nation citizens and non-Indigenous Canadians.

The Métis Nation PSE Program represents the first effort by MNC GMs to design and deliver a program with this scope and range. The Program implementation phase took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, at a time when in-person learning had stopped, and support measures were required to ensure that Métis Nation students had the tools to succeed in a challenging learning environment. Undaunted by these challenges, MNC GMs developed a wide variety of programs and services designed to address the needs of students and their families across and within Métis Nation jurisdictions in the Homeland.

The Sub-Accord includes 12 key performance indicators, see table 2 below, which are directly linked to the three funding streams outlined in this document, and that provide a flexible framework for the development and implementation of post-secondary programs and services environment. These indicators also connect to what has been laid out in the Métis Nation PSE Strategy’s Terms and Conditions.

**Table 2: Métis Nation PSE Performance Indicators**

Program Stream	Performance Indicators
<b>DIRECT CLIENT FUNDING</b>	
Student Financial Support – 80%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of students funded for post-secondary education</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of eligible students who applied and received funding for post-secondary education</li> <li>• Percentage of students who continue to be funded beyond the first year of their program of study</li> <li>• Percentage of funded Métis Nation students with a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree</li> <li>• Number of funded Métis Nation students who graduate with a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree</li> </ul>
Student Services – 10% (Wrap-Around Services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of students who access support services provided by Métis Nation jurisdictions</li> <li>• Number of education professionals accessing Métis cultural resources, training and other programming</li> <li>• Number of Métis Nation students accessing Métis Nation resources, training and other programming provided by Métis Nation jurisdictions</li> <li>• Percentage difference between Métis and non-Indigenous adults (25-64) with a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree</li> </ul>
Governance Capacity – 10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of Métis Nation jurisdictions that have increased post-secondary education capacity in one or more key areas of need</li> <li>• Number of MOUs and/or partnership agreements</li> <li>• Percentage of Métis Nation jurisdictions with policy/guidelines regarding professional standards to support culturally competent teaching and education practices</li> </ul>

Over the coming months, the MNC, its Governing Members and Indigenous Services Canada will start a process of assessment and co-development of refined program indicators. The current set is based on quantitative information and does not provide a clear picture of the historic accomplishments of the Métis Nation in post-secondary education nor does it reflect the changing demographics of graduate level post-secondary attainment in Canada and inherent gaps in Métis participation at this advanced level of study.

Future indicators will need to include narratives to highlight program benefits that are not quantifiable. MNC expects that a new indicator set will likely seek to clarify whether students are fully funded or partially funded. Conceptual definitions need to clarify how to define support services as well as ensure this definition is applied equally across the Métis Nation. They must also encompass consideration for Métis Nation learners with exceptionalities with respect to full-time status.

Likewise, measuring the “percentage increase of Métis Nation jurisdictions that have increased post-secondary education capacity in one or more key areas of need” requires a wholesome reconsideration.

**Student Funding Needs**

The Métis Nation PSE Program Terms and Conditions (T&Cs) capped the maximum payable to full-time students at \$53,000 per year for undergraduate studies and post-graduate funding to \$90,000 per year. Part-time students were included in the T&Cs and were eligible to receive support for tuition, books, and other assistance on a pro-rated basis.

Based on the proposed maximum funding levels, Canada calculated that 733 students could be funded in the first year of the Métis Nation PSE implementation process (2019-2020). Within the Métis Nation, the

results breakdown for program results mirrors the MNC funding distribution model and are indicated below, including the 10-year projections.

**Table 3: Student Funding Levels and 10-Year Projection based on TB Payables T&Cs**

Métis Nation Targets Based on MNC Funding Distribution Formula						
	MNBC	OMG	MN-S	MNO	MMF	Total
Fiscal 2019-2020	91.625	183.25	183.25	91.625	183.25	733
Total PSE Program Duration	915.75	1831.5	1831.5	1831.5	915.75	7,326

From the start, Governing Members determined that suggested funding levels would result in denial of access to many qualified Métis Nation students. Rather than limiting the number of students supported by the PSE program GMs chose “not to leave anyone behind” and were forced to:

- Lower the maximum payables to students; and,
- Implement a horizontal management approach and transfer qualifying students from the PSE program to the Indigenous Employment Skills & Training Program (ISETP).

The maximum funding levels allowed under the PSE program’s Terms and Conditions have **never been awarded** to any Métis student in the Homeland.

This is why the MNC and its Governing Members propose that the evaluation of the PSE Program must include the number of clients transferred from the PSE to the ISETP program and those who successfully graduated from their PSE studies.

Funds are allocated using a static plus needs-based basis – all students receive a base Education Benefit and are further allocated additional needs-based allocations to reduce barriers.  
**(Métis Nation – Saskatchewan / Gabriel Dumont Institute)**

In most cases, the level of PSE *per capita* funding to students is related to the number of applicants and the availability of funding from a static funding model. Static investments levels significantly below those proposed by the Métis Nation in 2018 have placed added stress on students, who see their funding purchasing power decline amid program oversubscription and inflation.

Since 2019, the annual rate of inflation has been 3.44% and the increase in the Cost of Living has created additional program barriers as well as exacerbated student stress. The CPI (2002 = 100.0) percent change between 2019 and 2024 is 18.42%; it was 136.3 in 2019 and 161.4 in 2024. Given the intent of Governing Members not to leave anyone behind, Métis Nation students are not only receiving reduced funding, but the funding they receive continues to decline because of inflation.

With varying degrees of funding levels, MNC Governing Members have been forced to implement a similar PSE student funding approach: a lower per capita allocation to increase program reach. According to Rupertsland Institute, training funding for clients is approved on a case-by-case basis based on actual expenses. Clients are eligible for:

- Up to \$9,000 in tuition and fees for year 1 of full-time study
- Up to \$10,000 in tuition and fees for year 2 of full-time study
- Up to \$11,000 in tuition and fees for year 3 of full-time study

- Up to \$15,000 in tuition and fees for year 4 of full-time study with a hold-back of \$1,000 until receipt of documentation to demonstrate successful completion of the program of study
- Up to \$12,000 total for any programs of study above a bachelor’s degree with a holdback of \$1,000 until receipt of documentation to demonstrate successful completion of the program of study
- Up to \$750 per course to a maximum of 30 credits for part-time studies in degree programs
- Childcare support on a case-by-case basis for student enrolled in three (3) or more courses per semester to a maximum of three (3) dependents ages twelve (12) and under of \$15 per training day up to \$75 per week, per child.<sup>4</sup>

The Métis Nation of British Columbia informs that all programs are subject to a \$20,000 annual funding limit that includes support for the cost of training, as well as applicable and appropriate wrap-around support.<sup>5</sup>

The Métis Nation of Ontario Award amounts are determined as follows:

- By the amount of available funding and the number of eligible candidates applying, with the aim of supporting the maximum number of students
- By the type of program that an applicant is enrolled in (e.g. Doctoral and Master’s programs, Bachelor Degree/Certificates, or Diploma programs)
- By whether the applicant has dependents or identifies as a person with a disability, with additional funds awarded in these cases
- By the course load of each student; course loads are determined as a percentage of the maximum course load allowed by your school, and not by whether your school considers you a full-time student. For example, if the maximum course load at your school, and for your program, is 5 courses per semester (100%) and you enroll in 4 classes per semester you will be assessed as having an 80% course load

Figure 1: Source, Métis Nation of Ontario Tabulations

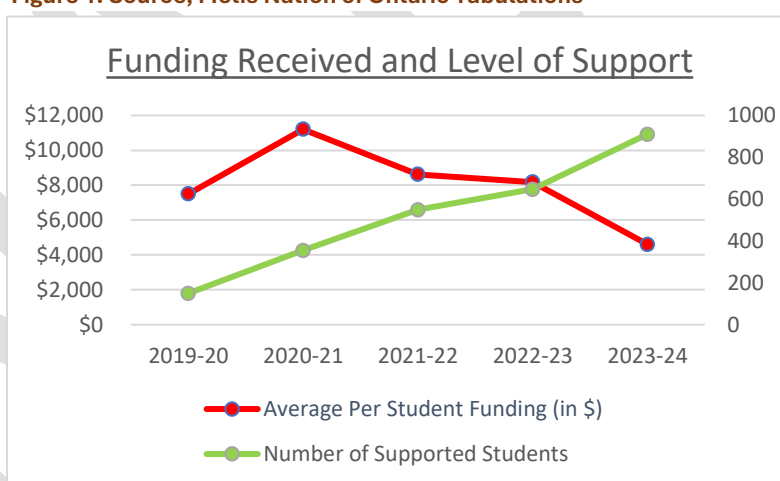


Table 4: Métis Nation of Ontario Average Student Payments

Métis Nation of Ontario: Supported and Average Funding Per Capita			
	Number of Supported Students	Average Funding Per Student	% of Overall PSE Costs Covered (based on provincial averages)
<b>2019-20</b>	150	\$7500	Undergraduate: 75% -- Graduate: 71.43%
<b>2020-21</b>	355	\$11203	Undergraduate: 106.70% -- Graduate: 101.85%
<b>2021-22</b>	549	\$8621	Undergraduate: 80.20% -- Graduate: 76.29%

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.rupertsland.org/post-secondary-funding/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.mnbc.ca/STEPS>

<b>2022-23</b>	648	\$8180	Undergraduate: 68.17% -- Graduate: 61.97%
<b>2023-24</b>	910	\$4614	Undergraduate: 40.47% -- Graduate: 36.76%
<b>Total:</b>	2612	<b>Avg: \$7402.13</b>	<b>Total Variance</b> Undergraduate: -34.53% -- Graduate: -34.66%



**Data shows that 12,025 students accessed Métis Nation resources, training and other programming provided by the Métis Nation jurisdiction between 2019 and 2023.**

Indigenous Services Canada Tabulations, 2024



Some MNC GMs have decided to keep waitlists, while others set students payables according to the number of applications. In other instances, GMs keep the application portal open until they exhaust resources, and they do not keep waitlists. In one case earlier this year, a funding portal was only open for a couple of hours before funding was fully committed. These realities clearly demonstrate that the strategy has been effective in encouraging Métis Nation students to apply for much needed support but that the furnished supports are drastically insufficient to meet student needs. Additional support would seamlessly be integrated into existing program processes and would immediately counter the oversubscription crisis that GMs are currently facing.

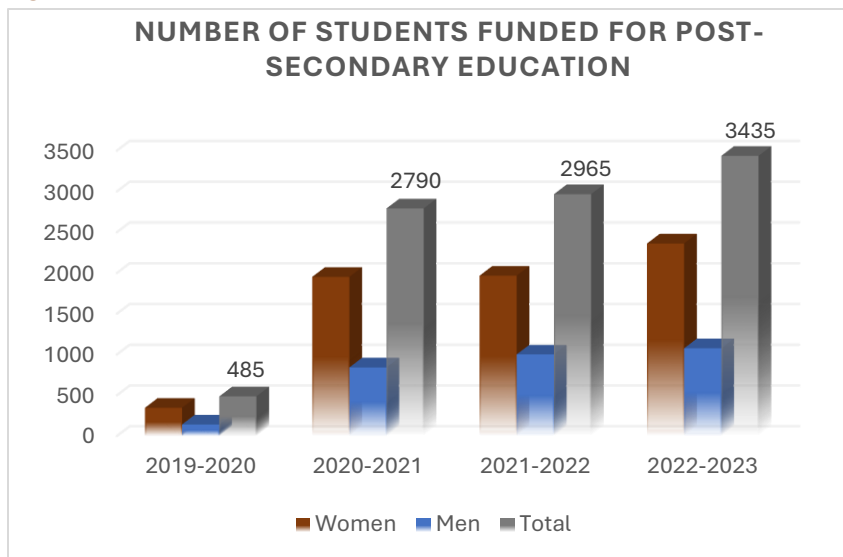
### **Program Oversubscription**

Census 2021 reported **624,220** self-identified Métis in the Métis Homeland. This number represents 32% of the overall Indigenous population in Canada and a 6.3% increase from Census 2016. Census 2021 reports that the Indigenous population in Canada continues to grow faster than the non-Indigenous population and remains a younger population.

There is no doubt that the Métis Nation PSE program is oversubscribed. It was initially estimated that 7,236 students could be funded in a 10-year period. The Métis Nation policy to make the PSE program available to a maximum number of students means that, at the program’s midterm, 9,675 students have been funded by MNC GMs<sup>6</sup>. This total does not include student funding totals for non-MNC Governing Members.

<sup>6</sup> Source: Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education Report (459043)

**Figure 2: Funded PSE Students 2019-2023**



The data indicates that following the first implementation year, MNC GMs are facing a student funding crisis as the number of applicants continues to increase and the percentage of eligible students who applied and received PSE funding is steadily declining. In the year 2020-2021, GMs funded 96.8% (women) and 94.5% (men) and 88.8% (all reported genders) in the year 2022-2023.

Inclusion has always been a fundamental tenet for the Métis Nation, and the PSE program is not

an exception. Data shows that starting in the 2021-2022 year, when gender diversity data was first collected, the percentage of funding to 2SLGBTQIA+ students increased from 18% and to 87.5% in the 2022-2023 reporting year.

### Results of the Métis Nation PSE Strategy

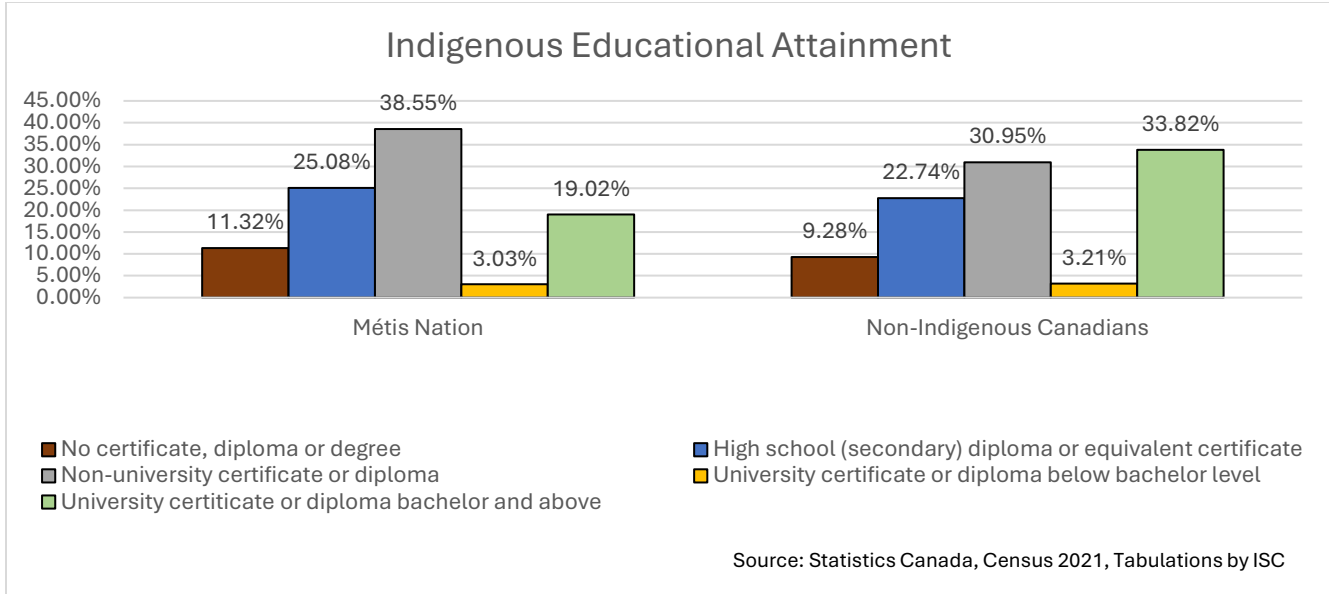
Measurement frameworks and associated sets of performance indicators are necessary to monitor and chart program progress. A formalized approach to tracking strategy impacts and outcomes allows for the identification of successes and leading practices and ensures the effective use of resources by all Parties to the Sub-Accord in addressing Métis Nation education priorities. The Métis Nation PSE Strategy’s results “include an increase in post-secondary education enrolment and improved graduation rates for Métis Nation students.”<sup>7</sup> As it was proposed by the Métis Nation in 2018, the “Strategy’s aim is to reduce the reported 1996 Census 16% gap between Métis versus non-Indigenous university attainment by at least half.”<sup>8</sup>

**4 out of 5** respondents reported improved knowledge of post-secondary education opportunities, how to prepare for post-secondary education, and where to get help with funding.  
**Métis Nation of Ontario**

According to Indigenous Services Canada<sup>9</sup> (ISC), about 68% of the non-Indigenous population age 25-64 have a post-secondary education credential, compared to 45% for First Nations (on and off reserve), 34% of Inuit (inside and outside Inuit Nunangat) and approximately 61% for the Métis Nation.

<sup>7</sup> Treasury Board, Final Terms and Conditions, 2019  
<sup>8</sup> Proposed Approach to the Métis Nation PSE Strategy, MNC  
<sup>9</sup> Census 2021 tabulations by ISC as reported in May 2024

**Figure 3: Indigenous Education Attainment**



As reported by ISC at the midterm of the Métis Nation PSE Strategy, the Métis Nation reported 2,552 clients who graduated with a PSE certificate, diploma or degree between 2019 and 2023. The real number of Métis Nation students funded under the Métis Nation PSE Strategy with a PSE certificate, diploma or degree should be much higher, as Governing Members transferred students from the PSE program to ISETP to alleviate fiscal constraints resulting from the oversubscription of the PSE Strategy. Although this strategy served to meet some support challenges in the short term, if this situation is adopted as common practice moving into the future, the consequence would be that citizens pursuing only ISETP-eligible programming may be left without critical supports.

A review of Census 2021 data for Métis ages 25-64 indicates the gap between Métis Nation and non-Indigenous Canadians has shrunk considerably since Census 2016; it is now seven percentage points (68% compared to the previously reported 61%). By itself, this comparison demonstrates the success of the Métis Nation PSE Strategy and the need for Canada to maintain and improve current PSE investments. A different way to understand the gap in educational attachment is to consider the cohort ages 15-64. The PSE Strategy seeks to improve access to PSE and includes program flexibility to support a transition from secondary education to post-secondary education. Indicators such as the “no certificate, diploma or degree” highlights the need to review data indicators for the ages 15-64.

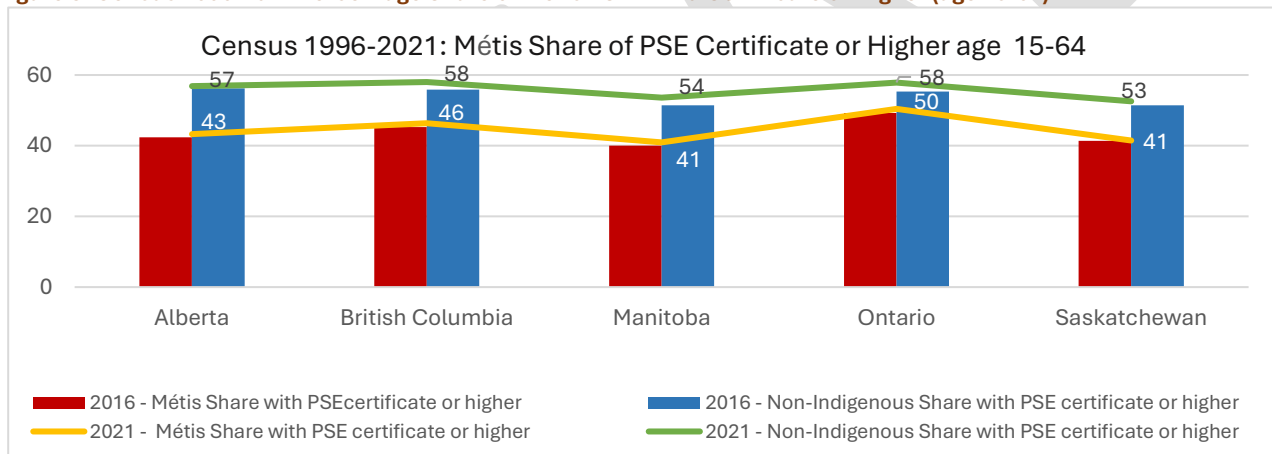
Table 4 provides a comparative view of the share of the Métis population that have a PSE certificate or higher. The data shows that the gap between Métis and non-Indigenous Canadians has slowed down but continues to be in the range of 7% to 14% points for Census 2021. The gap difference as reported by ISC, and as shown below, can be partly explained by a reduction in the high school dropout rate, and opportunities offered by the PSE program to young Métis Nation students who would otherwise not consider a post-secondary education.

**Table 5: Census 2016-2021 Share of PSE Certificate or Higher (Age 15-64)<sup>10</sup>**

Comparative Census 2016-2021 Analysis in the Métis Share of PSE Certificate or Higher Age 15-64							
	2016			2021			2016-2021 % Change in Gap
	Métis PSE certificate or higher	Non-Métis PSE certificate or higher	Gap Percentage	Métis PSE certificate or higher	Non-Métis PSE certificate or higher	Gap Percentage	
Alberta	42	56	-14	43	57	-14	-2
British Columbia	45	56	-11	46	58	-12	10
Manitoba	40	51	-11	41	24	-13	11
Ontario	49	55	-6	50	58	-7	22
Saskatchewan	41	51	-10	41	53	-11	11

Figure 3 shows the actual gap between Métis Nation students and non-Indigenous Canadians in the age group 15-64.

**Figure 3: Census 1996-2021 Percentage Share of Métis PSE with a Certificate or Higher (age 15-64)**



## PSE Student Supports

Currently Métis Nation Governing Members provide varying levels and types of financial assistance to Métis Nation students. To the extent that funding is available, financial support is provided to Métis Nation students by Governing Members through mechanisms such as the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan and the Gabriel Dumont Scholarship Foundation, the Métis Education Foundation endowments program established by MNA (Otipemisiwak Métis Government) and Rupertsland Institute, and the Métis Nation of Ontario’s Trust Fund, which provides bursaries annually to Métis Nation students in colleges and universities across Ontario.

<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada, Census 1996-2021, Tabulations by Big River Analytics and MNC

Since the implementation of the Métis Nation PSE Strategy, other avenues have been brought to bear. In Ontario, due to the absence of support for culturally relevant holistic supports, the MNO created the PSE Navigator role to aid in the transition to PSE by working to locate and connect students with mainstream supports and services available at colleges or universities as well as limited MNO services.

In Alberta, Rupertsland Institute created a Métis Student & Alumni Association to serve as a support forum for students transitioning to a PSE program, while providing enhanced summer employment and volunteer activities.

Some Métis endowments have been created opportunistically with various colleges and universities, supported occasionally by “matching funding” arrangements with provinces when these have become available - recognizing that such provincial contributions are not consistent and are vulnerable to political circumstance and budget priorities in any given year.

As well, Métis Nation Governing Members who are ISETP holders have been able to negotiate arrangements where they have been able to effectively leverage a portion of those funds (with permissions) to increase monies available for Métis PSE. This is not a permanent solution to the gaps in PSE strategy, as ISETP-only eligible applicants may not receive these specialized supports given the allocation to PSE students from these programs.

Graduation is a pivotal time in any student’s life. The Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (MN–S) *Kaashkitamaashoohk* (earning it through effort) Graduation Sash Program wants to celebrate academic success by gifting special, commemorative sashes to our citizens graduating in 2024.

## Budget 2025 Increase Request

In 2019, the Government of Canada estimated the maximum values to be payable to a predetermined number of Métis Nation students. However, these values could not be adhered to by MNC GMs as program realities dictated a significantly higher demand for supports than anticipated and adherence to initial models would have only benefited a very limited number of students.

As this document shows, the Métis Nation PSE Strategy has far surpassed initial expectations, and the program is severely oversubscribed. The Métis Nation proposes that Canada increases the Métis Nation PSE program by \$181M (100% increase) over the next five years and that afterwards, investments increase from \$40M to \$60M and include an annual escalator of 4%.<sup>11</sup> MNC and its Governing Members are fully aware that the modest increase outlined in this proposal will not solve the fiscal issues highlighted in this document, but we hope that this review will pave the way for additional funding increases in the next funding cycle.

A funding injection to the Métis Nation PSE Strategy will ensure that current and future generations of Métis Nation students receive, albeit not adequately, funding supports that meet the fiscal requirements of a

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<sup>11</sup> As per the Métis Nation funding formula: 12.5% for MNBC; 25% for OMG; 25% for MN-S; 12.5% for MNO and 25% to MMF

post-secondary education and the Métis Nation is able to meet the needs of a young and growing population.

Further, increasing Governing Members' capacities to adequately attract, compensate and retain qualified professionals is needed to strengthen Métis Nation post-secondary learners' success. Particularly, many Métis Nation students attend institutions that offer pan-Indigenous services that are First Nations-centric and, as a result, do not provide culturally relevant or appropriate Métis Nation student support, leading to alienation and isolation for Métis Nation students. Increasing capacity for wraparound supports, such as access to Métis Elders, will ensure Governing Members can provide greater, more meaningful access to Métis cultural knowledge to Métis Nation students, to ensure their successful transition to and completion of PSE.

As technology changes, grows and transforms both the Canadian and global economies, Canada will require that segments of the population, which until now have remained largely at the margins of the labour market, are supported so that they are better positioned to contribute to increasing economic productivity.

## Appendix A: Impacts of the Métis Nation PSE Strategy

### 1. Métis Nation of Ontario

#### **Kelsey Piché – Masters of Education**



As a student at Brock University, Kelsey faced many daunting challenges; in particular, balancing the demands of her coursework with the financial pressures of tuition and living expenses proved to be very difficult. MNO's Financial Assistance Program took this financial stress off her plate, allowing her to focus on her coursework and to complete her undergraduate thesis. With the help of the Program, she was able to graduate with Honours and first-class standing as well as to pursue her Masters of Education, which she will complete in September 2024.

#### **Morgan Turcotte – Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Studies**



As someone who has always been very passionate about academics and helping others, Morgan knew she wanted to attend university to further her education. Like many others, however, the financial aspects of attending university were an extreme burden on both her and her family. Because of MNO's Financial Assistance Program, she was relieved of many of these financial stressors, which allowed her to focus on success throughout her studies as well as giving back to her community. While in university,

Morgan was a MNO Summer Youth Program Facilitator for four years, a MNO Infinite Reach Facilitator on campus for two years, an Ishkodehwin Peer Mentor with her Indigenous Student Center and sat as Youth Representative on the Peterborough and District Wapiti Métis Council. In June 2023, Morgan completed an Honours Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Studies with a Specialization in Applied Indigenous Knowledge from Trent University.

## 2. Métis Nation – Saskatchewan (Gabriel Dumont Institute)



### **Jasmine Pennington – Health Information Management Diploma**

“I think it is extremely important to have a Métis organization like the Gabriel Dumont Institute to help Métis Nation students. It is organizations like this that help people successfully follow their passions.”

Jasmine worked hard in her studies, but after her first year, she noted she struggled to find financial assistance to complete her course. Her advice to future Métis Nation students? “Find something you are passionate about and to do the best you can. If you’re passionate, you will find a way.”



### **Robert McCarthy – DTI Saskatoon Practical Nursing Program**

Robert McCarthy enrolled in the Gabriel Dumont Institute’s Adult Basic Education and Skills Training branch, Dumont Technical Institute’s (DTI) Practical Nursing Program in Saskatoon in 2013.

Despite some major obstacles being handed to him in his first year of the Practical Nursing Program, Robert’s determination and high expectations ensured his success. He did not initially obtain funding when he entered the program, which resulted in some financial struggles. Robert was the only male student in his class, and his instructor noted, “he had very good marks throughout, and I really appreciate the fact that he provided a great balance to the classroom and remained focused despite the other stressors with which he was dealing.”



### **Paige Straf – Bachelor of Science**

Paige Straf became a Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) Training and Employment client in 2018 during her second last year at the University of Saskatchewan in the College of Agriculture and Bioresources. This year, Paige graduated from the University of Saskatchewan with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture. Her major is Applied Plant Ecology. She is currently an Intern Extension Agrologist with the Ministry of Agriculture.

Paige’s advice to future students is that “if anyone were debating receiving an education, I would always encourage them to pursue it, even if they were not sure what to specialize in. It is hard to know what your passions are when you first leave high school, but diving into post-secondary schooling is a great way to find out! By enrolling in different classes and various clubs, you will find your passions and create a strong network. Many staff members from GDI will support you throughout your journey, not only financially but also emotionally where possible. They are interested in what you are doing!”

### 3. Otipemisiwak Métis Government (Rupert's Land Institute)



#### **Jade Bruce – Microbiology Lab Assistant**

Jade was part of a pilot program that taught students basic first aid and were asked to assist in minor injuries around the school. A career in healthcare was inevitable, although no clear plan was laid out for her at that time. “I tested a handrail at school and grew the bacteria we found from there. We only found staph.” Jade seemed to take glee at discovery of the pervasive bacterial infection.

She applied for the Rupert's Land Institute Métis Training to Employment Post-Secondary funding support and Marlene worked with her to qualify for full funding. With her funding secured, Jade began her Medical Laboratory Assistant courses in the winter 2022, now able to access the higher education that would transform her ambitions into reality. “I’ve always been interested in the culture... It wasn’t until I was 14 when found my mom’s Métis Nation card in the laundry.” Jade continues, “I finally have a well-paying job. Something I can support my household with.”



#### **Cory LeBlanc – Plumbing Apprenticeship**

Through the 2010s, Cory became caught up in a destructive cycle. He lost his house and fell into a life of drug addiction, homelessness, and mental health struggles.

Disability Services helped Cory by referring him to a psychologist. Together with the assessing psychologist and The Alex, a Calgary-based Community Health Centre, they got Cory on a path to employment, education, and self-sufficiency.

For Cory, getting clean, finding a place to live, seeking therapy, steady employment, and long-term ambitions were all part of a well-thought out plan to see his kid again. His self-awareness of the consequences of his previous behaviour and the results of his current hard work and discipline was humbling. To be in his son’s life again was an aspiration that eclipsed all other goals: “He’s my fight.”

## 4. Métis Nation British Columbia



### **Emily Toews – Bachelor of Education**

I was accepted into the Bachelor of Education program and began in September of 2020. It has been a challenge, and a big learning curve learning in an online setting for the first year of the program.

Since I have been sponsored by MNBC, I have had the opportunity to be published in an Indigenous research journal called Knowledge Makers two times. It is a passion of mine to share the knowledge I have acquired through my time at TRU. I am proud to be an academic and very proud to be Métis. Maarsii!



### **Matthew Oilette – Civil Engineering**

The support I received from MNBC helped make it possible to do an undergraduate degree in Civil Engineering at UBCO. I was 26 yrs old when I started and had a wife and kids. There was funding to make it possible and people in the office that worked to help me with the application process. I appreciate it a lot.



### **Cassandra Gordon – Addictions Counselling**

I was a student at Vancouver Community College in 2018 and enrolled in the Addictions Counselling Program. Thanks to funding from MNBC, I was able to devote myself to full-time studies and fast-tracked the three-year program in one year. I completed my Practicum at Vancouver Aboriginal Health society and from that placement developed techniques and understanding on how to utilize coming back to culture as a form of therapy and healing.

My Grandmother was no stranger to the Downtown Eastside. She overcame her addiction and was living proof to me that a person can truly turn their life around. My family's perseverance has brought me to this point in my life and is, in part, why I've been drawn to this field. As the Cultural Programmer for the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, I am responsible for the planning, development, and implementation of cultural, educational, recreational, and social programs at the Drop-In centre. In my role, I am mindful of the daily impacts women are faced with in the DTES such as violence, mental health, homelessness, and addictions