



INDIGENOUS EDUCATION:

WILL THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT GET IT RIGHT THIS TIME?

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- MORE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE POTENTIAL FOR POSITIVE CHANGE
- SIGNIFICANT NEW INVESTMENTS IN K-12 AND PSE BUDGETS OVER LAST TWO FISCAL CYCLES
- COMMITMENT TO ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP
- BUT, ... STILL A LONG WAY TO GO...AND A LEGACY OF GETTING IT WRONG

THREE THINGS:

- SOME HISTORY ON FEDERAL INDIGENOUS EDUCATION POLICY
- SHARING SOME LESSONS FROM THE B.C. EXPERIENCE
- THOUGHTS ON THE “WHERE TO FROM HERE?”

SOME PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS

- THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF EDUCATION
- “CLOSING GAPS” IN EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR FIRST NATIONS, METIS AND INUIT STUDENTS REMAINS A PRESSING AND SUBSTANTIAL ISSUE OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE
- PROGRESS ACROSS THE COUNTRY HAS BEEN UNEVEN
- DANGER OF THE “RACE TO THE MIDDLE” AND “ONE SIZE FITS ALL” SOLUTIONS

COMPLEX JURISDICTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

- PROVINCES HAVE “EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION” OVER EDUCATION - SEC. 93 OF THE CONSTITUTION ACT
- SCHOOL BOARDS WITH AUTHORITY UNDER PROVINCIAL ENABLING LEGISLATION
- FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WITH JURISDICTION OVER “INDIANS AND LANDS RESERVED FOR THE INDIANS” - SEC. 91 (27) OF THE CONSTITUTION ACT - EDUCATION OBLIGATIONS IN SOME OF THE NUMBERED TREATIES
- FIRST NATIONS OPERATING BAND SCHOOLS UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE INDIAN ACT OR PURSUANT TO NEGOTIATED AGREEMENTS

LOOKING BACK

- THE LEGACY OF THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS EXPERIENCE
- DIAND'S 1969 "WHITE PAPER" ON EDUCATION
- THE NATIVE INDIAN BROTHERHOOD'S 1972 PAPER ON "INDIAN CONTROL OVER INDIAN EDUCATION" - LATER REVISED AS THE A.F.N.'S "FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OVER FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION"
- YEARS OF "CONTROL" OVER AN UNDERFUNDED SYSTEM

CALLS FOR CHANGE: And Some Lost Opportunities

- 1988 - IN B.C. THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON EDUCATION, “A LEGACY FOR LEARNERS”, WAS A KEY MILESTONE
- 1996 ROYAL COMMISSION ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES - A FAILURE TO RESET THE RELATIONSHIP
- REPORTS OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA (2000 AND 2004)
- “NO HIGHER PRIORITY” - ADDRESSING THE PSE ELEMENT
- 2015 FINAL REPORT OF THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION
- REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL OF B.C. - 2015

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

- A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF ISSUES FACING ABORIGINAL PEOPLES IN CANADA
- VOLUME THREE: “GATHERING STRENGTH” SUBSTANTIALLY DEDICATED TO THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION AT BOTH THE K-12 AND PSE LEVELS
- REPORT HAD NO TRACTION IN OTTAWA

THE RCAP REPORT

- “Aboriginal Parents, Elders, Youth and Leaders came before us to tell us of the vital importance of education in achieving their vision of a prosperous future. Education is seen as the vehicle for both enhancing the life of the individual and reaching collective goals.”
- Education as the “New Buffalo” - Dr. Blair Stonechild

RCAP ON EDUCATION

- CALLED FOR CURRICULAR REFORM TO ADDRESS ABORIGINAL CULTURE, HISTORY AND EXPERIENCE
- IMPORTANCE OF ABORIGINAL TEACHERS - BUT ALSO THE IMPORTANCE OF EXPANDING THE KNOWLEDGE OF ALL TEACHERS
- LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

RCAP ON THE FUNDING CHALLENGE

- NEED FOR MORE EQUITABLE AND APPROPRIATE FUNDING LEVELS GIVEN INCREASED POPULATIONS AND GROWING RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION
- CALLS FOR MEANINGFUL CHANGE WITHIN THE PUBLIC SYSTEM
- RECOGNIZED IMPLICATIONS OF THE 1996 FEDERAL BUDGET

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

- ENDORSED MUCH OF WHAT HAD BEEN SAID BY RCAP 20 YEARS BEFORE
- RECOGNITION THAT FOR FIRST NATIONS, METIS AND INUIT, RACISM EXPERIENCED IN RELIGIOUS OR IN PROVINCIAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS HAS HAD A LASTING MULTI-GENERATIONAL IMPACT
- B.C.'S AUDITOR GENERAL - "THE RACISM OF LOW EXPECTATIONS"
- SENATOR MURRAY SINCLAIR - "EDUCATION GOT US INTO THIS MESS, AND EDUCATION WILL GET US OUT."

THE B.C. CONTEXT

- APPROXIMATELY 232,000 ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN B.C.
- 67% IDENTIFY AS FIRST NATIONS
- 30% AS METIS
- 72,000 IN K-12
- MOST IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS BUT ALSO 128 FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS IN 67 COMMUNITIES.

THE B.C. EXPERIENCE

- EDUCATION WAS A PRIORITY FOR FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP FOR MANY YEARS
- CHIEFS ACTION COMMITTEE, FNEESC AND THE FNSEA
- 1999 MOU, THE “HOW ARE WE DOING?” REPORTS AND ESTABLISHING THE K-12 PARTNERS TABLE
- DATA AS A KEY ELEMENT OF SHAPING THE DIALOGUE

NEGOTIATING A NEW RELATIONSHIP

- JURISDICTION NEGOTIATIONS BEGAN IN 2002 - FEDERAL OFFICIALS PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN GENERATING DIALOGUE
- A COMPLICATED NEGOTIATING CONTEXT - SEVERAL AGREEMENTS WITH AN OVERARCHING UMBRELLA AGREEMENT
- CONTAINED THE B.C. - FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION JURISDICTION AGREEMENT

ELEMENTS OF THE B.C. AGREEMENT

- RECOGNITION OF JURISDICTION AND LAW-MAKING AUTHORITY
- RECIPROCAL TUITION ARRANGEMENTS AND SORTING OUT WHO PAYS FOR NON-STATUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS STUDENTS ATTENDING FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS
- CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
- REPORTING AND CONSULTATION OBLIGATIONS

ELEMENTS OF THE B.C. AGREEMENT

- ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND BULK PURCHASING OPPORTUNITIES
- CREDENTIAL RECOGNITION AND A PROCESS FOR MAKING THE PROVINCIAL GRADUATION CERTIFICATE AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS GRADUATING FROM FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS
- PARENTAL CHOICE AND STUDENT MOBILITY

ELEMENTS OF THE B.C. AGREEMENT

- CONTEMPLATED NEW STRUCTURES
- COMMUNITY EDUCATION AUTHORITIES
THAT COULD BE LOCAL OR REGIONAL
- A FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION AUTHORITY

THE BROADER CONTEXT

- EDUCATION AGREEMENT INITIALED IN DAYS LEADING UP TO THE KELOWNA ACCORD OF 2005
- B.C. HAD ALSO SIGNED A NEW RELATIONSHIP ACCORD AND A TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE ACCORD WITH FIRST NATIONS IN 2005
- METIS RELATIONSHIP ACCORD IN 2006
- KELOWNA ACCORD CONTAINED KEY COMMITMENTS ON EDUCATION

BUT THEN,...

- CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT
- KELOWNA BECAME YET ANOTHER LOST OPPORTUNITY
- EDUCATION JURISDICTION AGREEMENTS BECAME LAW BUT INTRODUCTION OF “OWN SOURCE REVENUE” POLICY FRUSTRATED IMPLEMENTATION

FINDING A WAY FORWARD

- B.C. AND FIRST NATIONS RESOLVED TO “WORK WITHIN THE SPIRIT” OF THE AGREEMENT AND CONTINUED TO MAKE PROGRESS
- CURRICULUM REFORM
- TRIPARTITE EDUCATION FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT OF 2012

SO, HOW IS B.C. DOING?

- FROM 1999 TO MOST RECENT REPORT, THE GRADUATION RATE HAS GONE FROM 38% TO 64%
- STILL A 22% GAP WITH THE GENERAL GRADUATION RATE
- FIRST NATIONS ON RESERVE RATE IS 53%
- CAUTION ON “CURRENCY OF GRAD RATES”
- GETTING IT RIGHT IN K-4 ESSENTIAL
- REPORT OF B.C.’S AUDITOR GENERAL

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

- BILL 33 - "THE FIRST NATIONS CONTROL OVER FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION ACT"
- IT WASN'T
- COMMAND AND CONTROL STRUCTURE
- REJECTED - SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS - "SUNSET PROVISIONS"

BACK TO THE TABLE

- NEGOTIATIONS ON A RENEWAL OF TEFA ARE ON-GOING
- HOWEVER; IF THERE IS GENUINE INTEREST IN GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIPS, ISN'T IT TIME TO REVITALIZE THE JURISDICTION AGREEMENTS?

SHIFTS IN FEDERAL POLICY

- ROOM FOR OPTIMISM
- SUBSTANTIAL NEW INVESTMENTS IN LAST TWO BUDGETS
- SIGNIFICANT CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT
- NEED ROOM FOR REGIONAL VARIATION

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

- CLEAR LONG TERM COMMITMENTS
- EQUITY NOT COMPARABILITY
- RECOGNIZE THE REALITY - AND VALUE - OF STUDENT MOBILITY
- IN B.C., WE HAVE A MODEL THAT HAS BEEN SITTING THERE - READY - FOR MANY YEARS - TIME TO GET ON WITH IT