

House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs

March 6, 2023

Improving Graduation Rates and Successful Outcomes for Indigenous Students

Transcript of Question:

Ms. Lori Idlout: *[Member spoke in Inuktitut, interpreted as follows:]*

Thank you. I will ask Rory O'Connor a question.

The federal government, for 46 years, from 1951 to 1997, paid to build and staff 13 residential schools within Nunavut, with the express purpose of eradicating Inuit culture and language, but you are the employees, and I'm sure you are given a lot of direction about reconciliation and the strategy. Reconciliation is very important. Since reconciliation is so important, will the federal government fund 13 Inuit language and culture schools for us in the future?

Mr. Rory O'Connor (Director General, Regional Infrastructure Delivery Branch, Department of Indigenous Services): I hate to answer it this way, in part: I'm responsible for infrastructure delivery on reserve in the south—in the provinces. I'm not sure whether anyone can take that on the CIRNA side.

I will say there is a fund of \$100.1 million for former residential schools that still exist. I'd be happy to provide a bit more information on what can be done with the buildings that still exist, and for communities that want to do something with them—either commemoration or another thing. We have reached out to communities across the country on that fund.

As to your main question, I'm not sure whether someone from CIRNA can answer in regard to the north.

Ms. Lori Idlout: *[Member spoke in Inuktitut, interpreted as follows:]*

If you cannot reply immediately while you are here, I would like to have a written report and an update on that question.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Idlout.

Do our guests undertake to provide a written answer to the question asked by Ms. Idlout?

Thank you, Mr. O'Connor.

Answer:

Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)

The Government of Canada provides funding for elementary and secondary education for First Nations students ordinarily resident on reserve, and provides post-secondary education financial support for eligible First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation students, institutions and community-based programming.

For First Nations in the North (Yukon / NWT), off-reserve First Nations, Inuit and Métis, elementary and secondary education is provided by their respective province or territory.

The Government of Canada has established permanent bilateral mechanisms with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation leaders to identify joint priorities, co-develop policy, and monitor progress. The work of these mechanisms includes education as a priority area.

While elementary and secondary education remains a provincial and territorial responsibility, through the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee Permanent Bilateral Mechanism space, Canada is working with Inuit partners to advance shared education priorities.

Budget 2019 invested \$125.5 million over 10 years and \$21.8 million ongoing to support a 10-year Inuit Post-Secondary Education Strategy, including components for student support, wraparound programs and services, community engagement, and governance and national coordination.

Funding for the preservation and promotion of Inuit culture is available through two Indigenous Services Canada programs:

- The First Nations and Inuit Cultural Education Centres Program supports First Nations and Inuit communities in expressing, preserving, developing, revitalizing and promoting their culture, language and heritage. The 2023 to 2024 call for proposals to support activities under the First Nations and Inuit Cultural Education Centres Program is now open. The deadline to submit a proposal is May 5, 2023 at 11:59 pm, Eastern time. For more information: [First Nations and Inuit Cultural Education Centres Program \(sac-isc.gc.ca\)](https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca)
- The Inuit Cultural Education Centres Grant Program provides grants to Inuit individuals and Inuit cultural education centres to develop and promote Inuit cultural heritage. The 2023 and 2024 call for proposals to support activities under the Inuit Cultural Education Centres Grant Program is now open. The deadline to submit a proposal is May 5, 2023 at 11:59 pm Eastern time. For more information: <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1450705414672/1531920576698>

Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC)

Federal Infrastructure Investments

Budget 2021 announced new distinctions-based funding through the Indigenous Community Infrastructure Fund (ICIF). Through ICIF, a total of \$517.8 million is being provided over four years (2021-22 to 2024-25) to Inuit for their delivery of self-determined infrastructure priorities to help close the infrastructure gap in Inuit Nunangat. Annual funding is delivered to each of the four Inuit land claims organizations through grant funding agreements and can be used in a flexible manner to support Inuit infrastructure needs.

The ICIF funding can cover a wide array of project costs including planning, design, construction, close-out, and operations and maintenance. Infrastructure investments represent a step on the path to reconciliation between the Government of Canada and Inuit. It promotes Inuit self-reliance and self-determination by supporting the growth of Inuit economies, as well as providing the infrastructure necessary to educate and retain younger Inuit.