

Indigenous Education Councils

For more information see the [Ministers Order](#) and [Distinctions-Based Approach Primer](#).

1. What is the new process to establish an IEC?

- A board must invite each local First Nation on whose territories the board operates schools to be part of the IEC.
- Each local First Nation can designate 2 members to an IEC and the board must appoint those designates.
- The board must also invite non-local First Nations with boarded students to designate 1 member.
- After seeking the advice of local First Nations, a board may appoint additional representatives who bring perspectives relevant to the Indigenous student population (e.g. local First Nations, other First Nations, Métis, Inuit) served by the board. These individuals may also be associated with relevant Indigenous service organizations who bring insight into the needs of Indigenous students, such as friendship centres.
- This approach is a recognition that boards are operating in local First Nations' territories and is in alignment with a Distinctions-Based Approach.
- Annually, and in the event of a vacancy on the IEC, a board must work with their IEC to review the membership of the IEC and appoint members in accordance with the Order.

2. Who is referred to as non-local First Nations in the Ministers Order?

- There are over 200 on-reserve First Nations students who leave their community to attend public schools and are boarded within school districts across the province.
- Only non-local First Nations from BC who are purchasing education services from a board are guaranteed representation on an IEC. This is typically First Nations with boarded students.
 - Those non-local First Nations decide whether to designate a person as a member of the IEC.
- Non-local First Nations without boarded students or organizations interested in participating on the IEC should identify their interest to the board.

3. What if there are no First Nations with reserves or on-reserve students in a school district?

- The legislation identifies First Nations on whose traditional territory a board is operating and is not tied to the location of reserves or band offices.

4. Can a representative from a Tribal Council, or similar, sit on an IEC?

- Yes, a representative from a Tribal Council, or similar, could be appointed as an additional member on an IEC that brings perspectives relevant to the Indigenous student population.
- The decision to appoint such a member must be made with local First Nations.

5. Who does an IEC advocate for?

- IECs advocate for the entire Indigenous student population in a school district.
- The IEC should include individuals relevant to the Indigenous student population, and may include local First Nations, other First Nations, Métis, or Inuit student advocates.
- Boards should be using their own student data, or other information to assist in determining additional IEC members.

6. Will individuals representing Métis and Inuit students have a seat on the IEC?

- A number of districts across British Columbia have Indigenous student populations that include Métis and Inuit students.
- Individuals who bring Métis or Inuit student perspectives should be considered when appointing additional members to an IEC.
- These individuals may be identified through Métis or Inuit organizations.

7. What role do school district staff and trustees have with respect to IECs?

- The IEC may, from time to time, invite or request school board trustees and district staff to attend meetings of the IEC.
- Trustees and board employees may not be members with voting rights on an Indigenous education council.

8. Who sends out the invitations to an IEC?

- A board is responsible for inviting members to sit on an IEC, in accordance with the Ministers Order.

9. How does the IEC approve targeted funds when it isn't currently set up/meeting?

- The *School Act* requires that boards establish and maintain an IEC for the purposes set out in the legislation. Boards will be unable to spend funds that are targeted to Indigenous students without approval of the IEC.

10. What if a local First Nation does not designate individuals to the IEC?

- A board must invite each local First Nation to designate individuals to the IEC and keep this opportunity available to local First Nations.

11. What if there are no local First Nation representatives on an IEC?

- An IEC can still function without representation from a local First Nation; however, this is not ideal.
- Without local First Nation representation, an IEC would not be able to advise on the local First Nation languages, cultures, customs, traditions, practices or history.

12. Why are boards required to make reasonable efforts to ensure that representatives of local First Nations outnumber other members who bring perspectives relevant to the Indigenous student population?

- The majority of the IEC should be comprised of representatives of local First Nations in recognition that boards of education and IECs are operating in the territories of local First Nations, and because the views of local First Nations are critical to fulfilling the IEC's purposes.

13. Can other members outnumber local First Nations representatives?

- The total number of local First Nations representatives should not be outnumbered by other members on an IEC.
- In certain instances, local First Nations may be outnumbered on an IEC, for example if there is no other option (i.e. if local First Nations choose not to designate individuals), or if local First Nations support the appointment of a greater number of additional persons to the IEC.

14. Our district already has an IEC, with representation from First Nations and other Indigenous individuals representing Indigenous students, and district staff don't vote. Do we need to change?

- The School Act amendments and Ministerial Order reset IECs.
- A new IEC may have similar membership to the previous iterations of an IEC, but a board must ensure it complies with the Ministerial Order.

15. Does our IEC need to be named the "Indigenous Education Council"?

- The *School Act* amendments and Ministerial Order reset IECs.
- A new IEC may have similar membership to the previous iterations of an IEC, but a board must ensure it complies with the Ministerial Order.

16. How do K-12 collective agreements intersect with IECs?

- The Ministry and the BC Public School Employers' Association are developing guidance for boards of education on how to navigate potential intersections between the role of IECs and collective agreements. More information will be shared on this topic later this summer.
- Boards of education are required to comply with collective agreements provisions – these provisions are negotiated between employers and unions.
- The Ministerial Order requires boards to consult an IEC on the procedures to recruit and hire staff that develop and deliver programs and services for Indigenous students, or whose role involves significant interaction with Indigenous students. The board must also consult with the IEC on activities that a board proposes for the purpose of professional development for school district staff relating to cultural competencies and non-instructional time focused on enhancing Indigenous student achievement or Indigenous world views.
- Boards should ensure transparency with IECs about collective agreement provisions that may be relevant to IEC discussions, advice, and direction. Boards should also ensure unions are aware of the IEC's perspective.

17. When are more details coming out?

- The Ministry of Education and Child Care anticipates an IEC policy, including a template terms of reference to be published in mid-August 2024.