

## First Nations School of Choice

For more information, see [School of Choice Policy](#).

### 1. What is First Nations school of choice?

- The School Act sets out a process for First Nations to be able to designate which schools (elementary, middle, or high school, where applicable) First Nation students who live on-reserve, or lands subject to a self-government agreement or modern treaty, have priority to attend.

### 2. Does a First Nation have to designate a school of choice?

- It is optional for First Nations to designate a school(s) of choice.
- A First Nation may already have existing school arrangements or individual family accommodations in place with a board and opt not to designate a school(s) of choice.

### 3. Can a First Nation designate a school outside of their school district as their school of choice?

- The legislation allows a First Nation to choose a school in their school district (i.e. the district where their students who are ordinarily resident of the First Nation and are receiving funding from Canada for their education, are resident).
- A First Nation may not designate a school outside of their district as a school of choice, except for districts where the First Nation has boarded students (see below).

### 4. Can a First Nation designate a school of choice for boarded students (i.e. a group of ordinarily resident on-reserve students who temporarily live outside of their community to access education)?

- Yes, a First Nation may designate a school within a district where their students are boarded.
- This is only applicable if the students' tuition is being received from the government of Canada.

### 5. If a First Nation designates a school that is already full, does the board have to send already enrolled students somewhere else?

- The board must accommodate First Nation students that have priority to attend the designated schools of choice, even if that school is full. This may involve planning to ensure future space is held for those First Nation students, reviewing catchment areas, adding classes, or adjusting capital plans. This may impact some current or enrolling students in the next school year.
- If a First Nation designates a school of choice, the designation overrides the existing "hierarchy of enrolment" at section 74.1 of the School Act.
- Identifying the designated school on or before the earliest date enables boards to prioritize the First Nation's choice.

### 6. Do the school of choice provisions of the School Act override current rules for ratios and class composition?

- No, boards will need to ensure alignment with collective agreement provisions related to class ratios and composition.

- 7. What if a First Nation parent/caregiver does not want their child to attend the First Nation's school of choice?**
- If a First Nation parent/caregiver does not want their child to attend the school of choice, they can enroll their child in a different school, or stay at their existing school, and would be subject to existing district enrollment policies.
- 8. Is there additional funding to accommodate transportation to First Nations' school(s) of choice?**
- There is no additional funding. Boards should consider the use of existing funding sources (e.g., Operating Grants, Student Transportation Fund (STF), Student Location Factor (SLF), Supplemental Student Location Factor (SSLF), Transportation Proxy which is comprised of the STF, SLF and SSLF portion of the First Nation Student Rate, BCTEA First Nation Student Transportation Fund) when implementing First Nations School of Choice.
- 9. Can a First Nation change an existing school of choice designation after the school year has begun?**
- No, the First Nation must remain with their school of choice for that school year.
  - A new or different school may be designated for the next school year by the earliest date of enrolment set by the board, typically the pre-enrolment or kindergarten enrolment date in early spring.
  - Identifying the designated school on or before the earliest date enables boards to prioritize the First Nation's choice.