

**From:** [Government of British Columbia](http://www.government.bc.ca)  
**To:** [info@bccpac.bc.ca](mailto:info@bccpac.bc.ca)  
**Subject:** Support for B.C. First Nations language programs  
**Date:** March 31, 2011 11:46:40 AM

---

NEWS RELEASE  
For Immediate Release  
2011AVED0018-000322  
March 31, 2011

Ministry of Advanced Education

Support for B.C. First Nations language programs

VICTORIA - The B.C. government is providing \$500,000 to the First Nations Education Steering Committee Society (FNESC) to support First Nations language teacher education programs, Advanced Education Minister Naomi Yamamoto announced today.

The funding will help B.C.'s First Nations further develop and implement teacher education programs leading to a Developmental Standard Term Certificate (DSTC) issued by the BC College of Teachers. Aboriginal persons holding a DSTC in Language and Culture are certified to teach First Nations languages to K to 12 students.

To qualify for a DSTC certificate, students must complete a three-year program that includes: BC College of Teachers academic requirements, course work in First Nations Language and First Nations Studies, as well as a teacher education component delivered by an approved teacher education program at a B.C. university.

Today's funding announcement coincides with National Aboriginal Languages Day, which was established by the Assembly of First Nations in 1989 to create awareness across Canada of the languages of the First Peoples, and to build support for their preservation.

Quotes:

Naomi Yamamoto, Minister of Advanced Education:

"Funding for programs leading to the Developmental Standard Term Certificate will help ensure more instructors are able to teach First Nations languages to the next generation of British Columbians."

Tyrone McNeil, president of the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC):

"First Nations language teachers are at the heart of our efforts to support language revitalization for students, parents and communities. We are very pleased with the support that the Ministry of Advanced

Education will provide for First Nations language teacher education in British Columbia."

Mary Polak, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation:

"The cultures and languages of B.C.'s First Nations are intrinsically linked to the health and well-being of Aboriginal people and communities

throughout our province. This funding is an important step in the work we all have to do to keep these diverse languages and cultures alive."

Quick Facts:

- \* An estimated two-thirds of all indigenous languages in Canada are found in B.C. , the most linguistically diverse region in the country.
- \* There are as many as 32 distinct First Nations languages in B.C.
- \* Fluent speakers make up 5.1 per cent of the First Nations population, and most are elders.
- \* First Nations language learners in B.C. make up 11.1 per cent of the total Aboriginal population.

Learn More:

About the First Nations Education Steering Committee:

<http://www.fnesc.ca/>

Media Contact:

Gordon Keast  
Public Affairs Bureau  
250 952-0132

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: [www.gov.bc.ca/connect](http://www.gov.bc.ca/connect)