



- *Teacher Staffing:* Recruitment to fill teacher vacancies in the First Nation schools for fall 2020 will need to be done remotely. It is possible that all teachers may not be able to return to communities in the fall depending on community health restrictions and safe teacher residences.
- *Parental Concerns:* Parents will naturally be concerned about sending their children to school. Some may choose not to regardless of safeguards put in place. There will need to be options put in place for parents if they chose not to send their child to school (e.g. whether the child is accessing online learning or is being homeschooled, we will need to connect those parents with organizations such as the Ontario Federation of Teaching Parents for resources and instructions on how to homeschool. Materials, supplies and student/parent supports for home schooling are not currently available for parents in the communities.
- *Boarding Programs:* It will be difficult to maintain social distancing for students who reside in private boarding homes or student residences.
- *Connectivity/Broadband:* On-line learning programs and resources depend on reliable access to the Internet.
- *Learning Resources:* Appropriate and culturally relevant learning resources which are self-directed are not readily available. There is a strong need for language, cultural and land-based programming.
- *Planning:* NAN Communities do not have the funding to undertake the comprehensive planning required for education programs, facilities and student supports during the COVID-19 crisis.
- *Funding:* Delivering First Nation education programs and services during the COVID-19 crisis will require significant additional funding.
- *Teacher Orientation:* Many education organizations begin the school year with teacher orientations and professional development - these orientations are especially important for new teachers. In light of the COVID crisis there will likely be many changes to way classes are delivered, which will require additional PD for all teachers. There will also be a need for training so that teachers can be proficient with the new level of technology and various online learning platforms.

### 3. Opportunities

The following are some of the opportunities and strategies that can be pursued to help ensure a continuation of education programs and services during the crisis and beyond.

- *Remote Teaching/Virtual Classrooms.* There are many emerging programs to support educators in the planning and remote delivery of education programs and services. The [Google Teach From Home](#) platform is an example of the excellent online resources that are emerging to support remote teaching.
- *Student Learning Supports.* Learning at home will be a reality for education delivery in NAN communities regardless of whether the schools open or remain closed. Providing students with the materials they will require – including Chromebooks, Ipads or laptops – will enable them to access education resources at home.

- *Home Based Instruction.* Providing supports and strategies to empower parents, guardians and other family members to assist students with home-based instruction is an important component of education, and particularly so during the COVID-19 crisis.
- *School Schedules.* School may need to adjust their schedules and have the flexibility to do so in a manner that best suits their community and their programs. Options include having two sessions daily - half the class in the morning and half in the afternoon - splitting classes for alternate full day sessions and so on.
- *Community Based High School Programs.* For students who normally would leave the community to attend high school but who wish to remain in the community during the crisis, distance learning high school programs.
- *On-the-Land Learning.* Many of the restrictions impacting education in classrooms and schools during the COVID-19 crisis can be mitigated with outdoor on-the-land learning opportunities.

## 4. Action Plan

### PHASE 1 – March-April 2020

- Create a ***NAN COVID-19 Education Emergency Advisory Taskforce***
- Conduct an environmental scan of all communities to determine nature and scope of assistance or advocacy required
- Continue regular communication and meetings with federal (ISC) and provincial (EDU) governments
- Allocate appropriate NAN staff to cover COVID education initiatives
- Maintain contact with the communities through the Tribal Councils and educational organizations

### PHASE 2 – May-June 2020

- Meetings of the ***NAN COVID-19 Education Emergency Advisory Taskforce*** continue.
- Analyze community environmental scans and summarize required assistance
- Advocate with federal government for supplementary funding (an “Emergency Student Grant”) required to assist with the purchase of required learning devices
- Develop and distribute a “Community Emergency Education Planning Tool” which will assist communities to set out the activities and required resources for the Fall school year.
- Create a NAN Education resource website that provides easy access to learning resources for students, parents and teachers.
- Create a Facebook presence for NAN Education as an alternate way to reach out to students and parents
- Support the development of a land-based learning curriculum
- Advocate with the provincial government to recognize land-based curricula and allow for the assignment of credits for a student’s successful completion of the land-based programming

- Hold a special meeting of the NAN Education Committee to develop planning strategies for the Fall school term, including transition plans for all possible scenarios:
  - Schools open as usual;
  - Schools remain closed;
  - Schools reopen, but communities do not allow their students to attend schools outside of the community for the 2020-2021 academic year.
- Community-Based Planning will continue with support from Tribal Councils, Education Organizations and Chiefs & Councils. Planning will consider and outline all actions that need to be taken to prepare for the new school year and determine the level of resources required to implement the community plans.
- NAN will provide as requested, planning assistance for Tribal Councils, Education Organizations, and First Nations as they prepare their individual plans for Fall 2020. NAN Education Department will hold meetings to facilitate Tribal Councils and Educational Organizations working together to share ideas and overcome barriers.

### **PHASE 3 – June-July 2020**

- Meetings of the *NAN COVID-19 Education Emergency Advisory Taskforce* continue.
- Information obtained from the completed Education Transition plans will be presented to the NAN leadership at a Chiefs in Assembly Meeting. A resolution will be sought directing the federal and provincial governments to provide sufficient funding to NAN communities to enable implementation of the NAN Communities' Education Transition Plans.
- Continue to lobby the governments for additional funding to cover the costs as laid out in the transition plans
- Continue to update NAN Education resource website with information, tools and guidance.

### **PHASE 4 August-September 2020**

- First Nations, Tribal Councils and Educational Organizations implement their Education Transition plans
- Ongoing communication and meetings with NAN Education Committee
- Assistance from Grand Chief, DGC and NAN Education as requested to ensure education programs and services can be delivered for all NAN students
- Continued liaison with federal and provincial governments.