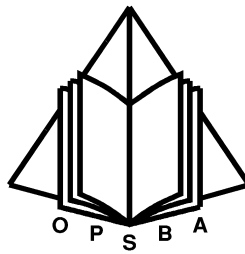


Rick Johnson
President



GAIL ANDERSON
Executive Director

ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS' ASSOCIATION

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November 27, 2006

The Honourable Jim Prentice
Minister for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Dear Minister Prentice

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) represents public district school boards and public school authorities across Ontario, which together serve more than 1.3 million public elementary and secondary students. Our members include First Nations trustees who have responsibility for the agreements under which First Nations students receive education in provincially funded schools.

It is a matter of grave concern to First Nation trustees and to the entire Board of Directors of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association that the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada took a decision at the end of the last school year to reduce the funding for First Nations special needs students. Funding reductions experienced by individual First Nations ran as high as \$325,000 and the impact for students is severe. The per pupil amount approach to funding for special education adopted by INAC does not reflect the incidence of high needs or the costs of particular supports, including educational assistants, that some students need.

We believe that every student in our provincial schools deserves the level of assistance and support that will help them achieve their full potential. INAC's funding decision shortchanges First Nations students and runs counter to equity of opportunity.

We respectfully request that the matter of education funding for First Nations students with special needs be re-opened and that funding be restructured to recognize the real costs of providing First Nations students with the support to which they are entitled. Your Department's mandate includes ensuring that First Nations receive services comparable to those available to other Canadian residents. Equitable treatment for students with special needs is one of these services.

We look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

Sincerely

Rick Johnson
President