



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs  
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 22, 2021

## **AMC statement on International Day of Education**

**Treaty One Territory, Manitoba** – This Sunday, January 24, 2021 marks the International Day of Education and in these demanding times, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) takes this moment to honour all teachers, administrators, education assistants, families and school staff who work with great devotion and care for First Nation children in Manitoba.

AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas stated, “the global COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all our learners, in particularly the K-12 students in our First Nations schools, many of whom have not had in-class teaching and learning for almost a full year, but our First Nation children and their education remains a top priority of the AMC. I call on the Federal government to ensure that First Nations schools in Manitoba are resourced appropriately to not only recover from the pandemic, but to also make up for the lost learning opportunities caused by COVID-19.”

“Although safe reopening strategies such as blended and remote learning have been put in place, and there are continuous safety provisions that are needed to protect students, staff and First Nations and COVID-19 has emphasized the disparities in education for Manitoba First Nations. In spite of long-standing inequities, First Nations continue to enforce strong health policy guidelines to protect students, staff and First Nations. I can say without a doubt, teachers go above and beyond what is expected of them working endlessly to create and provide an education that adapts to our present challenges. I am especially proud that our teachers provide land-based education that includes their First Nations culture and languages.”

“I note that First Nations have an inherent and Treaty right to education. However, we have suffered years of underfunding by the Federal government and the AMC continues to advocate for funding that is equitable, sustainable and predictable to enable us to improve First Nations educational outcomes,” continued Grand Chief Dumas.

The AMC has set up a task force and a negotiations team to develop a Regional Education Agreement and Interim Funding Formula based on provincial approaches with specific adaptations and enhancements to meet the true needs of First Nations students. Presently the AMC awaits the establishment of a negotiation table with Canada where these approaches can be discussed.

The AMC negotiated funding that has given Yellowquill College the mandate to develop a teacher education program specifically to train First Nations teachers to provide culturally relevant education to our First Nations children. Further, the AMC is presently developing a First Nations Post-Secondary Education strategy/model and our own regional Post-Secondary Institution.

Grand Chief Dumas concluded, “First Nation schools face difficulties that do not compare to their provincial counterparts. As such, a new funding formula is the foundation for creating success in our educational system and reasserting our sovereignty. This will enable First Nations to have control of our own education to ensure that our First Nations students can achieve substantive equality and have the necessary tools and skills to compete favourably in other mainstream institutions in Canada. Our First Nations children are and will always be our top priority and deserve the best educational opportunities to set them up for the best future opportunities.”

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**About the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs**

The AMC was formed in 1988 by the Chiefs in Manitoba to advocate on issues that commonly affect First Nations in Manitoba. AMC is an authorized representative of 62 of the 63 First Nations in Manitoba with a total of more than 151,000 First Nation citizens in the province, accounting for approximately 12 percent of the provincial population. AMC represents a diversity of Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Nehetho / Ininew (Cree), Anishininew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.