

likely violates Treaty promises about education, and makes it very difficult to overcome the educational and consequent income gaps.

In many cases, the fees that First Nations are charged when they send their children to provincial schools are higher than the amount of funding they receive from Canada per student.<sup>63</sup>

## **Calls to Action**

- 8) We call upon the federal government to eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding for First Nations children being educated on reserves and those First Nations children being educated off reserves.
- 9) We call upon the federal government to prepare and publish annual reports comparing funding for the education of First Nations children on and off reserves, as well as educational and income attainments of Aboriginal peoples in Canada compared with non-Aboriginal people.

## **Education reform**

Since 2011, three major reports on First Nations education have concluded that the status quo is unacceptable and that there is a need for a complete restructuring based on principles of self-government, a culturally relevant curriculum, and stable funding. All three reports agree that Aboriginal peoples themselves must lead and control the process of change.<sup>64</sup>

In October 2013, the government released the text of the proposed First Nations Education Act. The bill itself provided no guarantee of increased or stable funding of First Nations schools, leaving such matters to be resolved through regulations, with no assurance of equity in the distribution of resources to educate First Nations children in First Nations schools or in provincial schools. In February 2014, the Government of Canada and the Assembly of First Nations announced an agreement on a new basis for First Nations education reform and legislation. The agreement called for over \$2 billion in new funding to reserve schools, and replaced the 2% cap on annual increases with a 4.5% annual increase and \$1.25 billion from 2016–17 to 2018–19. However, after opposition from Aboriginal leaders, the proposed legislation was put on hold, pending agreement on the principles for a new Act.

Based on all that it has heard from thousands of former students and family members throughout the country, the Commission is convinced that such an Act must recognize the importance of education in strengthening the cultural identity of Aboriginal people and