

capita costs at that time for the Manitoba School for the Deaf (\$642.40) and the Manitoba School for Boys (\$550). In the United States, the annual per capita cost at the Chilocco Indian Residential School in Oklahoma in 1937 was \$350. According to the American Child Welfare League, the per capita costs for well-run institutions in that country ranged between \$313 and \$541.<sup>126</sup> It would not be until the 1950s that changes were made in the funding system in Canada that were intended to ensure that the schools could recruit qualified teachers and improve the student diets.<sup>127</sup> Even these improvements did not end the inequity in residential school funding. In 1966, residential schools in Saskatchewan were spending between \$694 and \$1,193 a year per student.<sup>128</sup> Comparable child-welfare institutions in Canada were spending between \$3,300 and \$9,855 a year. In the United States, the annual cost of residential care per child was between \$4,500 and \$14,059.<sup>129</sup>

## Compelling attendance

It was not until 1894 that the federal government put in place regulations relating to residential school attendance. Under the regulations adopted in that year, residential school attendance was voluntary. However, if an Indian agent or justice of the peace thought that any “Indian child between six and sixteen years of age is not being properly cared for or educated, and that the parent, guardian or other person having charge or control of such child, is unfit or unwilling to provide for the child’s education,” he could issue an order to place the child “in an industrial or boarding school, in which there may be a vacancy for such child.”

If a child placed in the school under these regulations left a residential school without permission, or did not return at a promised time, school officials could get a warrant from an Indian agent or a justice of the peace authorizing them (or a police officer, truant officer, or employee of the school or Indian Affairs) to “search for and take such child back to the school in which it had been previously placed.” With a warrant, one could enter—by force if need be—any house, building, or place named in the warrant and remove the child. Even without a warrant, Indian Affairs employees and constables had the authority to arrest a student in the act of escaping from a residential school and return the child to the school.<sup>130</sup>

It was departmental policy that no child could be discharged without departmental approval—even if the parents had enrolled the child voluntarily. The government had no legislative basis for this policy. Instead, it relied on the admission form that parents were supposed to sign. (In some cases, school staff members signed these forms.)<sup>131</sup> By 1892, the department required that all parents sign an admission form when they enrolled their children in a residential school. In signing the form, parents gave their consent that “the Principal or head teacher of the Institution for the time being shall be the guardian” of the child. In that year, the Department of Justice provided Indian Affairs with a legal