

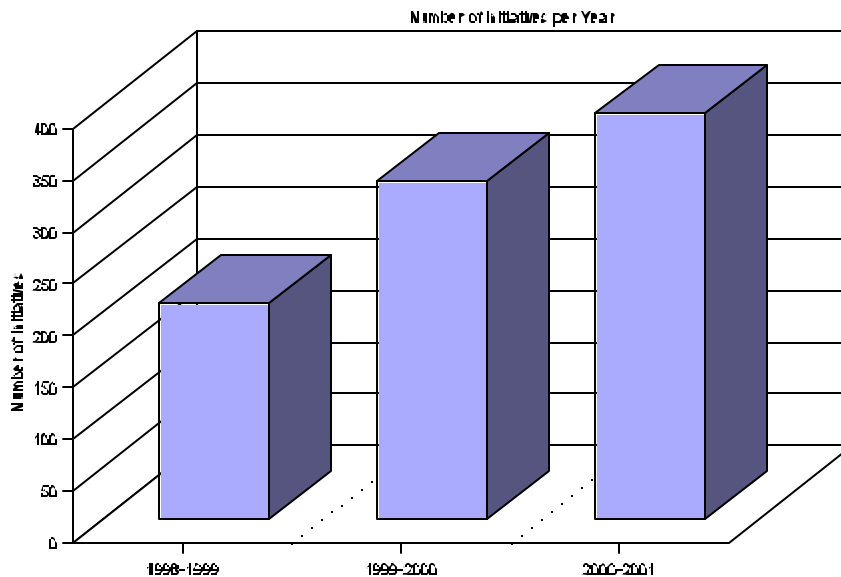
Gathering Strength – Investing in Education Reform 2000-2001

Education Reform is an initiative that was launched in 1998 as part of *Gathering Strength - Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan*. Education Reform resources are used to improve the quality of education and academic achievement in First Nations schools.

The Chiefs' Committee on Education (CCOE) of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) have identified four priority areas for nationally allocated resources.

1. Strengthen management and governance capacity.
2. Improve the quality of classroom instruction.
3. Increase parental and community involvement in education
4. Aid the school-to-work transition for First Nations youth.

Since 1998, Education Reform investments totalling \$76 million have gone to support more than 870 initiatives delivered by First Nations schools, education authorities, boards and regional education organizations. In 1998-1999, \$10 million was contributed to 200 initiatives; in 1999-2000, \$26 million was invested in 320 initiatives; and in 2000-2001, \$40 million supported the delivery of more than 390 initiatives.



From 1998 to 2001, First Nations, education organizations and regions shifted spending from small independent initiatives (a micro approach) to long-term, strategic initiatives (a macro approach). This change meant greater support for institutional capacity in First Nations schools through board members training and staff management. Also during this period, regional organizations have improved the delivery of activities that add value to classroom instruction.

For the most part there were two types of initiatives delivered by education organizations. The school-based type, provided programs and services that are part daily operations, including instructional services, administrative support, curriculum adaptation, technology acquisition and maintenance, Aboriginal language and culture instruction and after-school programs.

The second type of initiative provided programs and services to a group of schools. These included program adaptation, curriculum design, special education support (e.g. psychological services and subject area specialists), research, school evaluation, library services and administration.

Under the four priority areas, Education Reform initiatives fall into eight themes. Most initiatives address more than one theme.

**PRIORITY: Strengthening management and governance capacity
(\$19,704,000 in 2000-2001)**

Theme: Building Institutional Governance and Capacity

Activities in this category include expanding the managerial role, strategic planning, policy development and research that will strengthen the governance and capacity in First Nations education.

**PRIORITY: Improving the effectiveness of classroom instruction
(\$16,676,000 in 2000-2001)**

Theme: Special Education

Special education initiatives deal with programs and services for children with special education needs and have been identified as a priority by First Nations communities. Special education is a major part of many initiatives, particularly in the areas of student achievement, strategic planning and policy development.

First Nations education organizations have developed projects under this theme such as First Nations remedial reading, teacher training, behavioural management training and the hiring of the teachers' assistants.

Theme: Language and Culture

Initiatives in this category include research, design and implementation of programs to make sure Aboriginal culture, history, language and dialects are preserved in schools.

Theme: Information Technology in Aboriginal Schools

Education Reform resources in this category are allocated to support the installation, upgrading and maintenance of information technology systems in First Nations schools.

Theme: Professional Development and Training

These initiatives support three priority areas identified under Education Reform (strengthening education management and governance; improving classroom instruction; and community and parental involvement). It provides a wide range of training activities (e.g., instruction methods, information technology in the classroom, and educational planning and management practices) to education professionals, managers and stakeholders.

Theme: Student Retention and Achievement

This type of initiative enables the development of strategic actions contributing to the improvement of student achievement and commitment towards educational pursuits.

Tutoring, guidance, extracurricular activities, mentoring, Elders-in-Residence and homework support clubs are some examples of initiatives in this category.

**PRIORITY: Supporting parental and community involvement in education
(2,120,000 in 2000-2001)**

Theme: Parental and Community Involvement

Supporting strategies aimed at increasing parental and community involvement in First Nations education has been a priority of Education Reform since its inception in 1998.

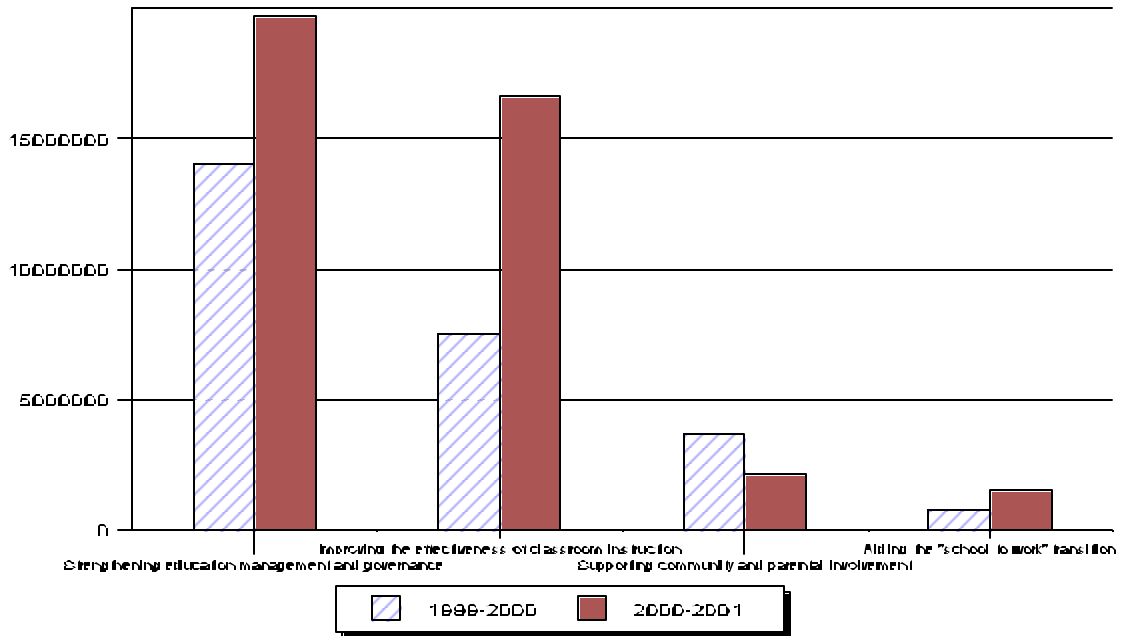
Parental and community involvement contributes significantly to other initiatives, such as language and culture and student achievement and retention, by using local resources as a starting point.

**PRIORITY: Aiding the School-to-Work transition
(\$1,500,000 in 2000-2001)**

Theme: Career Development and the School-to-Work Transition

These initiatives ease the transition from school to work and enable the appointment of qualified individuals to important positions in the community. In the long term, such initiatives may contribute to the social and economic needs of the community.

Investment by Priority Area in 1999-2000 and 2000-2001



In 2000-2001 Education Reform resources (through 390 ongoing initiatives) improved both the quality of education in First Nations schools and academic achievement as well as fostering the sustainable development that is essential to attaining strong communities, people and economies. First Nations are addressing educational issues through strategic initiatives designed to have long-term effects on quality of education and academic achievement.