



# Ihk'enazdulkat (we change ourselves)

CNC Indigenous Education Plan

**2024 - 2029**

College  
of New  
Caledonia  

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**CNC**





Phonetic translation of  
**Ihk'enazdulkat:**  
***ken-naz-dul-kat***

This statement was adopted by the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council in 1988 and still resonates as an aspirational statement for Indigenous communities.

## Yinka Dene Declaration on **Education, Language, and Culture**

Recognizing our Creator put us on this earth to protect all life;

Recognizing that the earth is like our Mother as it nourishes, warms, and clothes us;

Recognizing our great law of respect for all our brothers and sisters and all of creation handed to us through generations as symbolized in the white feathers of peace;

Recognizing our great law of sharing our wealth with our brothers and sisters as set forth in our Balhats (Potlatch);

We hereby agree, and commit ourselves as Elders, Chiefs, and representatives of the member Tribes of the Yinka Dene Nation, to work together as one for the education of our people:

### **The principles that will govern our approach to education are:**

1. The Yinka Dene must control their own education;
2. All Yinka Dene must have the opportunity to reach their full human potential through education;
3. Yinka Dene education needs the full participation of Elders, parents, and community leaders in teaching and learning;
4. Yinka Dene education promotes the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical well-being of our people to ensure their educational success.

### **The goals of Yinka Dene education are:**

1. With the guidance of Elders, to teach the Yinka Dene language, way of life, and history – past and present;
2. To prepare the Yinka Dene with tools for success in the modern world.





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## Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory

### First Nations Traditional Territory

The College of New Caledonia is honoured to work with the Indigenous communities in this region, inclusive of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. We acknowledge the graciousness of the First Nations peoples in welcoming those seeking knowledge on their traditional territories.

### CNC's Aboriginal Partners

It is important to acknowledge the participation of all Indigenous groups who support the Aboriginal advisory committees and the Yinka Dene Council, contributing to the success of Aboriginal Education at CNC:

- Carrier Sekani Tribal Council
- Métis Nation of BC
- PG Nechako Aboriginal Employment & Training Association
- Prince George Native Friendship Centre
- North Cariboo Aboriginal Family Program Society
- Cariboo Chilcotin Aboriginal Training Centre
- Quesnel Tillicum Society/Native Friendship Centre
- Aboriginal representatives from the University of Northern British Columbia, School Districts of Nechako Lakes (SD91), Prince George (SD57), and Quesnel (SD28)







## Letter from the CNC President

***Hadih / Dahooja / Dana chea,***

We're committed to ensuring Indigenous students thrive at CNC. Our aim is to decrease barriers and create an environment where students feel safe, welcomed, and supported to believe in themselves and achieve their goals.

The Indigenous Education Plan | *Ihk'enazdulkat* (meaning "we change ourselves") is the result of extensive discussions and focus groups with Indigenous communities and organizations. From these conversations, we've gained valuable insights into our current standing and our aspirations for the next five years to decolonize and Indigenize the CNC community.

Recognizing that some College initiatives and services may not meet Indigenous student needs, we're dedicated to making meaningful changes. We're grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with Indigenous communities to improve our understanding, deepen our connections, and empower students.

In partnership with Advisory Committees, the Yinka Dene Council, and the CNC Board, we're confident in our ability to evolve – and change ourselves- and provide programs and services that are relevant, responsive, and respectful to Indigenous students and their communities.

I look forward to sharing this plan with you. Together, let's embrace positive change and create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone at CNC.

***Snachailya - I thank you.***  
***Cindy Heitman***



## Letter from the Co-Chair of the Yinka Dene Council

***Hadih / Dahooja / Dana chea,***

On behalf of the Yinka Dene Council of the College of New Caledonia, I am pleased to share the 2024 Indigenous Education Plan, *Ihk'enazdulkat*. The Yinka Dene Council is made up of representatives from each campus's Advisory Committees who meet to discuss and reach consensus on issues common to all campuses.

*Ihk'enazdulkat* provides a clear path forward for the College to address the needs and aspirations of Indigenous students and communities. We are very grateful to all who participated over the past year. Our collaboration with communities showed clearly the common vision for all: that students succeed in their education and career goals.

There is much work to be done and the participants were very clear that as a college we have to change ourselves first. CNC has to change how they serve communities and remove barriers that arise right from applying to CNC to transitioning to employment after graduation.

The Yinka Dene Council is committed to working alongside CNC to achieve the goals of this plan. Understand, connect, and empower have deep meaning in our communities and we can ensure the College's actions going forward reflect the voices of communities and students.

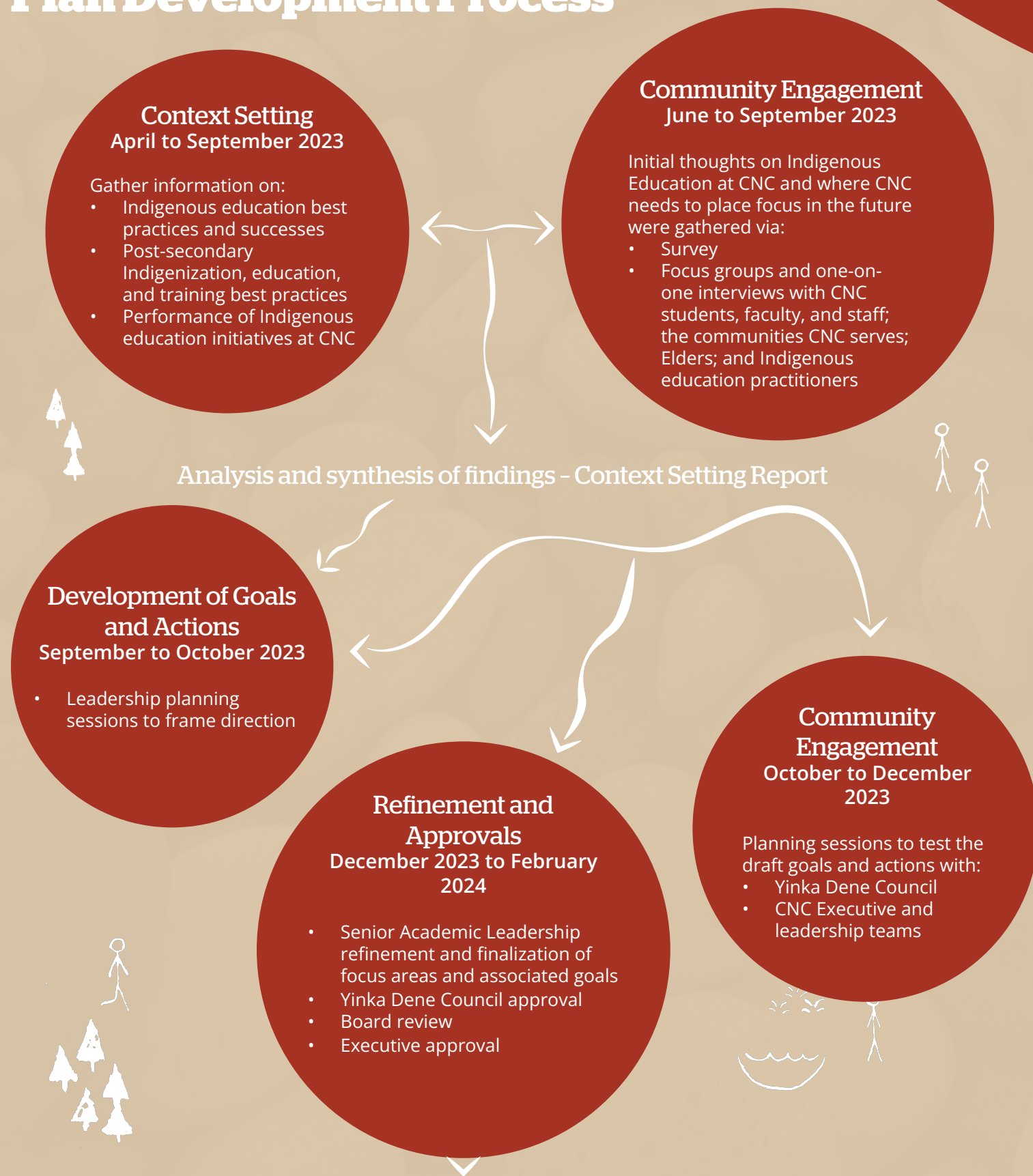
We continue to be inspired by the students' hard work to achieve their goals and commit to helping CNC create a safe space where all students can thrive and reach their goals.

***Snachailya - I thank you.***  
***Ben Berland***

We Exist in Space and Time



# Overview of the Plan Development Process



# Indigenous Students at CNC

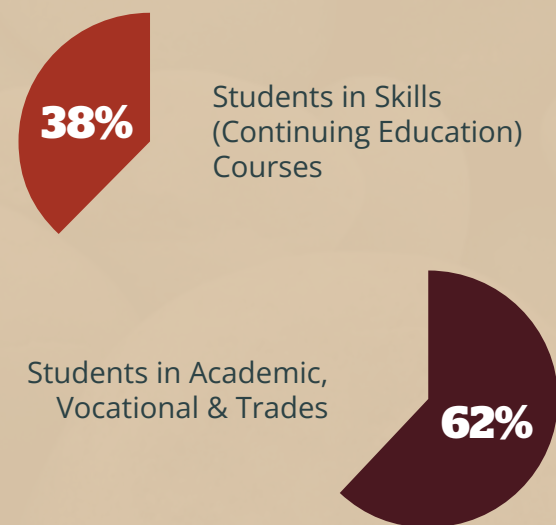
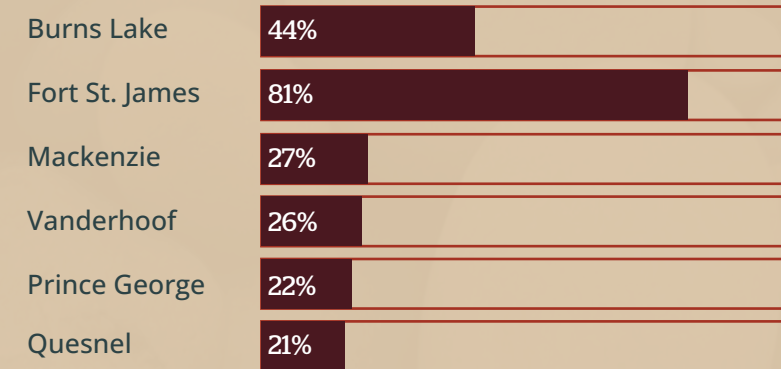
**80+**  
Programs

**1,164**  
Students

**6**  
Campuses

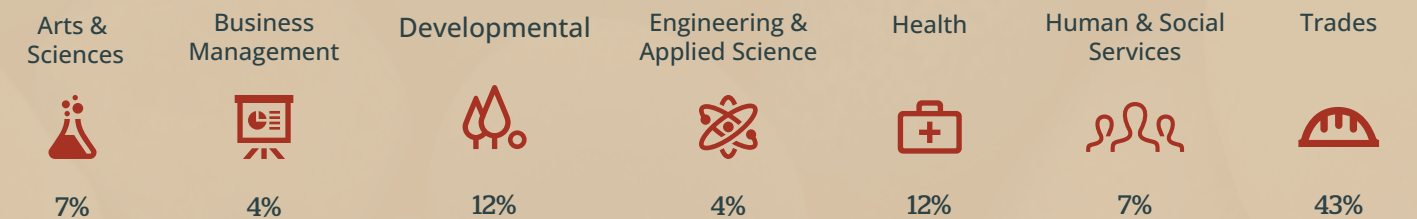
**29**  
Average Age

## Percentage of Indigenous students by campus



## Students by select program area

**579**  
Full-Time  
Equivalents (FTE)





## The change we want to see

We want students to feel that they belong in the CNC community and that they are safe and welcome here.



We want students to believe in themselves and their unique talents and gifts.



Our goal is for Indigenous students to **THRIVE at CNC**

We want students to realize their potential and be able to achieve their dreams.



We have a lot of work to do to make this goal a reality. We need to change ourselves to make it happen.



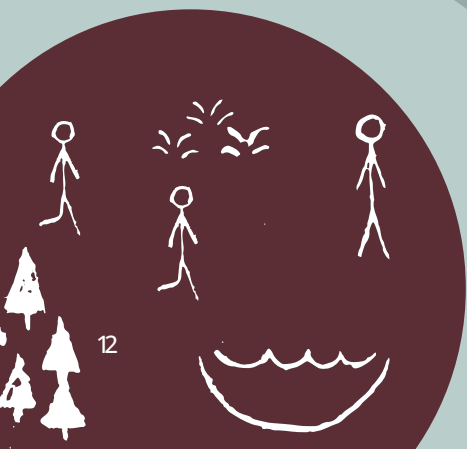
## How CNC will change – **our commitments**

To help Indigenous students thrive, everyone at CNC needs to work to understand, connect, and empower. 'Everyone' means the entire CNC Community, including students (future, current, and past), staff, faculty, employers, partners, and all the communities and community organizations that play a role in helping students thrive.

# Understand

The CNC Community commits to increasing cultural understanding across the College community by:

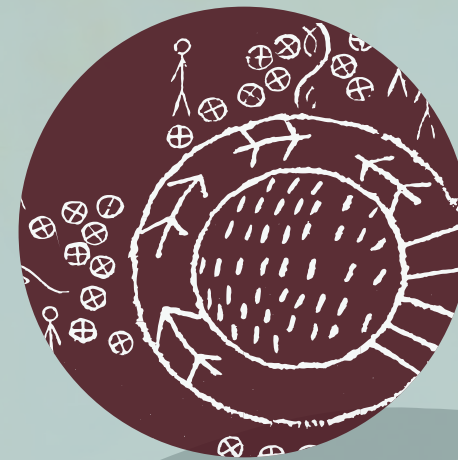
- Improving cultural awareness and humility
- Taking concrete steps to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and the Government of BC's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan
- Working with Indigenous communities to meet their education and training needs



# Connect

The CNC Community commits to building and strengthening relationships between CNC and Indigenous communities by:

- Reaching out to Indigenous communities and participating in community activities and events
- Inviting Indigenous communities to participate in the CNC community
- Proactively attracting and recruiting Indigenous students by focusing on responding to their unique needs and challenges and engaging with Indigenous students earlier in their high-school lives
- Increasing Indigenous representation at the College



# Empower

The CNC Community commits to supporting Indigenous students as they progress through their learning journey by:

- Simplifying application, admission, and registration processes
- Supporting Indigenous students in their transition to post-secondary education
- Offering relevant, accessible educational paths for Indigenous students
- Providing culturally-informed academic and personal supports to meet Indigenous students' needs across their learning journey
- Indigenousizing academic practices – curriculum, delivery, assessment
- Decolonizing our spaces and ways of doing



## Actions we take over the next five years

We have heard from our surrounding communities that CNC needs to change. These actions represent what we have heard from the community on how the College needs to change toward meeting our goal for Indigenous students to thrive at CNC.

## Culture

Enhance cultural activities with a focus on sharing cultural traditions and practices

Offer more safe spaces to talk, to share, and to practice cultural traditions

Increase access to Elders, role models, and mentors

Support language and culture revitalization efforts

Indigenize physical and virtual spaces in consultation with communities

Provide education and cultural/historical awareness training for staff, faculty, and students

Actively address systemic and overt racism in our campus culture



## Wellness

Provide tailored, traumainformed services and supports as well as access to Indigenous counsellors and tutors

Provide entry transitions and supports to prepare Indigenous students for post-secondary life

Offer personal, financial, and spiritual supports

Promote and strengthen the services provided by the Aboriginal Resource Centre (ARC)





# Success

Develop an Indigenous student recruitment and retention plan as part of the College's strategic enrolment planning

Identify, mitigate, and where possible, remove barriers to application, registration, and enrolment

Showcase Indigenous student and alumni successes

Establish Indigenous peer and alumni networks

Work with individual Indigenous students and their community members to identify education and career pathways



# Connections

Act on the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action as well as BC's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People's Act Action Plan 2022-2027

Reach out to Indigenous communities and have a more visible presence in the region

Build partnerships with community organizations, other post-secondary institutions, and employers to support Indigenous employment/career paths

Work with school districts to engage Indigenous youth and generate interest and enthusiasm for post-secondary studies

Proactively attract and recruit Indigenous students by responding to their unique needs and engage with them earlier in their high school journey





## Where we will begin ...

To improve our understanding, deepen our connections, and empower students, CNC will focus efforts in year one on:

- **Cultural awareness and humility**, by launching an Indigenous understanding learning series and hosting a 'People of this Place' seminar.
- **Access and transitions to the post-secondary system**, by reviewing admissions requirements and policy; establishing processes for more proactive outreach to potential Indigenous applicants; assessing and proposing methods for bridging applicants into CNC; utilizing a proactive 'early alert' system to refer students in need to supports and services, and exploring ways to work with school districts to reach out to Indigenous youth earlier in the high school system.

## Where we aim to go ...

To truly understand, connect, and empower, we need to change ourselves. CNC will build on the foundations laid in year one to deliver on several actions over the following four years. These actions are interconnected - working on one will help to progress others.

Actions will be reviewed each year, priorities will be set, resourcing and capacity will be assessed, and focus for implementation will be clarified.

CNC commits to reporting back to communities on the progress of this plan and the actions prioritized each year.

### **Confluence**

**Aaron Harder with Archie Shantyman**

*Situated in the main entrance of the CNC Prince George campus, on the traditional, unceded, and occupied territory of the Lheidli T'enneh.*

*Confluence is an art installation composed of two rivers converging into one and falling into a fish weir held by two Indigenous women.*

*The work pays homage to traditional fishing practices and ways of life of Indigenous peoples.*

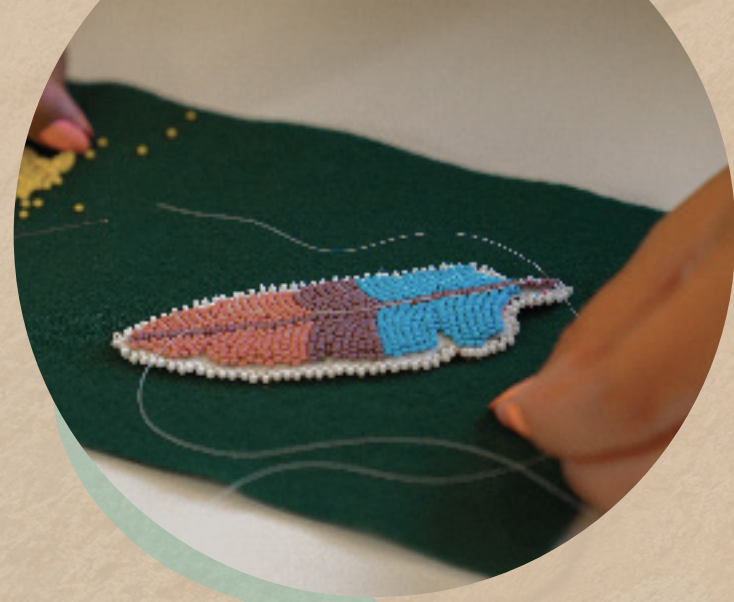
*The sculpture is an expression of the convergence of different cultures, represented by the separate rivers from opposite sides meeting together to form one.*

*The younger figure looks up to acknowledge the past and learn from that history. The Elder looks to the merge with the anticipation of a fruitful future through reconciliation.*

*Stainless steel/glass fiber reinforced gypsum (GFRG)/willow*







# College of New Caledonia

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