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**Task Force Lays Out Ways Forward for Northern Post-Secondary Education**

The federal Task Force on Northern Post-Secondary Education releases its final report today, with 37 calls to action aimed at improving opportunities for Northerners to succeed at the post-secondary level.

The Task Force was appointed as an arms-length body by Northern Affairs Minister Dan Vandal in October 2020.

Calls to action cover topics such as more local delivery of education, better access to student supports, and improvements in the kindergarten to grade 12 system across the North.

“We found that ongoing colonial legacies, especially residential schools, have left many Northerners wary of the value and intent of the education system,” said Task Force member Jodie Lane. “The best way to fix that is to return leadership of education, with equitable funding and supports, to Northerners so that the post-secondary system meets their needs and aspirations.”

The Task Force heard from more than 800 Northerners through engagement sessions and surveys. The Task Force also looked at research and plans of Northern governments and post-secondary institutions, and invited people working in Northern post-secondary education to speak to Task Force members.

"For generations, students in the North have often had to leave home to access post-secondary education, creating major personal, cultural, and financial barriers and challenges," said Task Force member Ashlee Cunsolo. "Local access to post-secondary education, whether in person, on the land, or online, has transformative potentials to support people in achieving their educational goals, at home."

"There are exciting Indigenous-led and Northern-focused educational initiatives happening across the North that integrate Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being into the curriculum and the classroom," said Task Force member Kelsey Wrightson. "It is essential that Indigenous and Northern students see themselves and their cultures reflected in the curriculum and the classroom to support their learning success and flourishing."

Creating more opportunities for Northerners to succeed in post-secondary education will depend on many sectors of society working together, from the federal government to territorial and provincial governments, Indigenous governments, post-secondary institutions, communities, families, and the learners themselves. The Task Force is calling on people in all of those categories to look at the calls to action, and consider how they can be accomplished.

The Task Force report is available on its website, <https://northernpse.ca/> from 12:00 ET

For more information and to arrange interviews

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