



Information on Establishing a First Nations Language Authority

The Teacher Regulation Branch has a policy with regards to the recognition of First Nations Language Authorities. Once established, the language authorities may recommend proficient speakers of their language for a First Nations Language Certificate. This allows First Nations persons to teach in BC schools while holding valid BC certification. This decision was a response to encourage and assist proficient speakers to work in the schools and pass the language on to new generations.

There are now more than 25 language authorities in BC. As there can only be one authority for each language, please inspect the list of language authorities on our website to determine whether an authority already exists for your language. If there is an established authority, you should direct speakers of your language to the appropriate language coordinator.

If no language authority exists for your language, you will need to establish one. The first step is to pass a resolution at your tribal council stating that the tribal council will be the language authority for your language. Having done that, you need to write to the Teacher Regulation Branch requesting recognition of your language authority. This letter must include:

1. **A copy of the Tribal Council resolution** designating the Language Authority (or a request from another body acceptable to the Teacher Regulation Branch designating a particular Language Authority).
2. **An official mailing address** and telephone number for the Language Authority.
3. **The name of a coordinator (contact person)** with whom the Teacher Regulation Branch can interact regarding applications for the First Nations Language Certificate.
4. **Original signatures** of persons who will sign the individual recommendation for the First Nations Language Certificate. (Please include clear printed names and ancestral First Nations names, if any). These are the people who will decide whether an applicant is fluent in the language and culture.

A sample outline for an application letter is attached. Once the Teacher Regulation Branch has received this information, it may recognize the recommended language authority and add the name of the language authority to the list of accepted languages.

Once your language authority is recognized by the Teacher Regulation Branch, you will play an important role in the certification of First Nations language and culture teachers in BC by testifying to an individual applicant's fluency in your language or dialect and culture. You may be asked to assist the applicant in putting together an application. It requires them to complete information about their background and experience; and it requires the language authority to complete a form attesting to the person's proficiency. Please refer to the application for a First Nations Language Teacher's Certificate on our website (www.bcteacherregulation.ca) under *forms and publications* for information regarding the application process.

It is recommended that you contact Pauline Klyne at the Teacher Regulation Branch for assistance before you begin the process of applying for a language authority. You can reach her by calling 604 775-4883 or toll free at 1 800 555-3684.

Sample Letter
Concerning Establishing an Official Language Authority for a First Nations Language

Director of Certification
Teacher Regulation Branch
Ministry of Education
400-2025 W. Broadway
Vancouver, BC V6J 1Z6

To whom it may concern:

I would like to inform the Ministry of Education that the *(insert name of First Nations/Band Council)* have agreed, at a meeting held on *(insert date)*, that the *(insert name of appointed Language Authority)* will be the local Language Authority for certification of the *(insert name of language)* language.

Please be advised that the following person is nominated as the official Language Coordinator, and all correspondence and telephone communications should be addressed to this person.

(Name of Nominated Language Coordinator)
(Address & Postal Code)
(Phone and Fax Number, including Area Code)
(E-mail Address)

The following are official signatures of persons authorized by the *(name of appointed Language Authority)* to make recommendations to the Teacher Regulation Branch.

(name of authorized signatory)

(name of authorized signatory)

(name of authorized signatory)

(name of authorized signatory)

For all recommendations for certification, the language coordinator's signature and at least *(*number)* other authorized signatures will be required. Please advise me at your earliest convenience when the Teacher Regulation Branch has considered this application to have the *(name of appointed Language Authority)* recognized as the official Language Authority for the *(name of language)* language.

Sincerely,

Enclosure: Tribal Council Resolution