



**TEACH FOR  
ENSEIGNER POUR LE  
CANADA  
GAKINAAMAAGE**

*For immediate release*

## **CLASSROOMS OF FIRST NATIONS STUDENTS THAT DON'T HAVE TEACHERS: TEACH FOR CANADA–GAKINAAMAAGE WITNESSING UNPRECEDENTED RATES OF FIRST NATIONS HIRING NEEDS, URGES LEADERS AND POLICYMAKERS TO HELP BRIDGE THE EDUCATION GAP**

TORONTO, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023 – First Nation schools are struggling to provide quality education to their students due to the shortage of qualified teachers across Canada. First Nations students are falling behind academically, creating gaps in educational outcomes that might never be closed if urgent measures aren't taken.

Teach For Canada–Gakinaamaage is a non-profit organization that works with northern First Nations to recruit, prepare, and support teachers. Even with the organization's support, of the 23 First Nations that Teach For Canada–Gakinaamaage serves, 43% have reported classrooms of students that don't have a teacher. According to a report by the Assembly of First Nations, approximately one-third of First Nations schools in Canada are understaffed.

While the consequences of this shortage are far-reaching for students nationwide, First Nations students in understaffed schools are more likely to fall behind academically than their peers in other parts of the province. First Nations students are also at greater risk of not completing high school altogether. This cycle perpetuates the barriers and disadvantages that many First Nations communities are already struggling to break.

It is clear that action needs to be taken to address the nationwide teacher shortage, particularly in First Nations. Ultimately, the solution is for members of these communities to become qualified teachers themselves. To this end, Teach For Canada–Gakinaamaage's Teacher/Education Assistant Professional Development Program provides training and support to First Nations teacher assistants, helping them to develop their professional skills while increasing access to pathways for becoming certified teachers.

What's needed is an intersectional approach to supporting First Nations education autonomy. In the short term, we need immediate solutions to fill the vacant roles in Northern schools and prevent learning loss. Teach For Canada–Gakinaamaage has plans to work directly with school boards to attract and retain qualified teachers to fill positions in remote First Nations and advocate for policy change.

The education gap affecting First Nations learners will only continue to widen unless leadership and policymakers realize and uphold the experience of teaching in First Nations schools as revered. Only then might we increase the supply of teachers in remote First Nations and ensure that every child has access to high-quality education in their community.



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## **About Teach For Canada**

Teach For Canada–Gakinaamaage is a non-profit organization making a difference in the lives of First Nations students and communities across Canada. By providing training, mentorship, and support to certified teachers working in remote and northern communities, Teach For Canada–Gakinaamaage is helping to address the nationwide teacher shortage affecting many First Nations schools.

Teach For Canada–Gakinaamaage is partnered with 23 First Nations in Ontario and Manitoba and is building new partnerships with First Nations in Alberta and Saskatchewan. In March 2023, the organization received the Anishinaabemowin name [Gakinaamaage](#) through ceremony. The name translates to “one who teaches”.

For more information, visit [www.teachforcanada.ca](http://www.teachforcanada.ca).

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For media inquiries, please contact:

Meredith Stapon  
Director of Communications  
[meredith@teachforcanada.ca](mailto:meredith@teachforcanada.ca)  
416-562-4402