



TEACH FOR  
ENSEIGNER POUR LE  
CANADA  
GAKINAAMAAGE

# 2023 Annual Report

EQUITY, EDUCATION, AND EMPOWERMENT:  
A YEAR OF IMPACT AND PROGRESS





**Teach For Canada–  
Gakinaamaage partners  
with remote First Nations to  
recruit, prepare, and support  
committed educators to  
ensure that all students  
have access to high-  
quality education in their  
community**

## **Board of Directors**

---

**Adam Goldenberg**

**Christie Kneteman**

**Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux**

**Harry LaForme**

**Kyle Hill**

**Lyn Blackburde**

**Mark Dockstator (Chair)**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	3
A Letter from Executive Director Ken Sanderson	4
Our Name: <i>Gakinaamaage</i>	5
First Nations Community Partners	6
2022/23 At A Glance	7
Supporting Student Success	8
Looking Ahead: Addressing the National Teacher Shortage	9
Program Highlights	10-11
Summer Enrichment Program	12
Supporting School Leadership	13
What Community Partners Are Saying	14
First Nations Data Sovereignty	15
Financials 2022/23	16
Miigwetch–Thank You	17
Our Supporters	18



“In some way or another, we are all teachers,  
from the smallest child to the oldest Elder.”

–**Ken Sanderson**, Executive Director  
TFC–Gakinaamaage





# Acknowledgements

The TFC–Gakinaamaage team acknowledges that the land we meet on, Tkaronto, is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples, which is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Tkaronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.

Due to a transition to remote work throughout COVID-19, we acknowledge that our workspaces reach beyond our office, across Turtle Island, specifically the land we now know as Canada.

TFC–Gakinaamaage is deeply appreciative of the 26 First Nation partners from Northern Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and Saskatchewan in Treaty 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, and 10, whose educational leadership shapes and guides our work.

- |                                 |                                    |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Bearskin Lake First Nation      | Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation        |
| Beaver Lake Cree Nation         | Northlands Denesuline First Nation |
| Big Grassy River First Nation   | North Spirit Lake First Nation     |
| Big Island Lake Cree Nation     | Ojibways of Onigaming First Nation |
| Cat Lake First Nation           | Pikangikum First Nation            |
| Deer Lake First Nation          | Poplar Hill First Nation           |
| Eabametoong First Nation        | Red Sucker Lake First Nation       |
| Fort Severn First Nation        | Sachigo Lake First Nation          |
| Gakijiwanong Anishinaabe Nation | Sagkeeng First Nation              |
| God's Lake Narrows First Nation | Sandy Lake First Nation            |
| Kitchenuhmaykoosib              | Sayisi Dene First Nation           |
| Inninuweg                       | St. Theresa Point First Nation     |
| Lac Seul First Nation           | Weenusk First Nation               |
| Marten Falls First Nation       |                                    |

“By supporting our work, you are actively supporting the future of Indigenous thinkers and leaders, and truly investing in reconciliation.

Thank you—chi miigwetch—for your continued support as we push forward in the movement to make education more equal.”

- **Ken Sanderson**  
Executive Director, Teach For Canada–Gakinaamaage



## A LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KEN SANDERSON

Dear Friends, Supporters, and Partners,

I am thrilled to welcome you to the annual report of Teach For Canada–Gakinaamaage, a testament to a year that has been truly transformative. As we reflect on the 2022/23 school year, we can proudly declare that it was a year of profound impact and remarkable progress as we continued championing equity, education, and empowerment in First Nations across Turtle Island.

Our journey over the past year was made possible by the unwavering dedication of a team of remarkable teachers, staff, Community Partners, and supporters. Together, we have made strides in advancing First Nations student success. Our teachers, especially, have wholeheartedly embraced their roles as educators, mentors, role models, and advocates. They are pivotal in our mission to bridge the education gap affecting First Nations youth.

This year was punctuated by growth. We received a traditional name, Gakinaamaage, and expanded our reach with the First Nations we serve, extending our impact into Alberta and Saskatchewan. In our interactions with the 26 First Nations we partner with, we have listened closely and learned from their invaluable feedback and wisdom. This community-led approach has been instrumental in shaping our programs to meet the unique needs of each First Nation we serve.

Within this annual report, you will discover the impact we have collectively achieved. It showcases the unwavering dedication of our teachers and the innovative programs we have initiated, all with the aim of upholding Indigenous control of Indigenous education. You will also witness the progress we have made in measuring our impact and ensuring accountability, a testament to our commitment to transparency and continuous improvement.

While we celebrate our successes, we remain ever-conscious that our journey toward equity is ongoing and that there are more miles to traverse. Teach For Canada–Gakinaamaage is dedicated to continual evolution, growth, and a commitment to the First Nations we partner with.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you who has contributed to our cause, whether through your time, resources, or support. Together, we are creating a profound difference in the lives of First Nations youth and their communities. Thank you for being part of this extraordinary journey to make education more equal—a journey that places First Nations Community Partner interests and our collective outcomes at its very core.

With gratitude,

Ken Sanderson, Executive Director, Teach For Canada–Gakinaamaage

# Our Name: *Gakinaamaage*

In March 2023, Teach For Canada received the Anishinaabemowin name Gakinaamaage.

Teach For Canada recognizes the historical and ongoing impacts of colonialism on Indigenous peoples in Canada and understands education's role in perpetuating these injustices.

The organization, under Executive Director, Ken Sanderson's leadership, has been on an organization-wide decolonization journey. As part of this journey, Teach For Canada sought a traditional name obtained through ceremony.

*"The name that we were given—Gakinaamaage—translates to "one who teaches," but it goes beyond literal translation and speaks to the fact that we are all teachers, lifelong learners, and all students. It speaks to the reciprocal nature of teaching. Even a small child can be a teacher."*

— Ken Sanderson,  
Executive Director  
TFC—Gakinaamaage

Learn about  
Gakinaamaage, our  
Anishinaabemowin  
name meaning  
'one who teaches'.



# First Nations Community Partners

## TFC–Gakinaamaage Becomes a National Organization

TFC–Gakinaamaage is currently working with **26 First Nations** in the territories of Treaty 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, and 10 in Northern Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, and Saskatchewan. Over the next 5 years, we will **expand our reach** to establish new partnerships in **Manitoba, Alberta, and Saskatchewan**.



First Nations  
Community Partners

26



Enrollment  
in schools

7,370



Population of  
communities

180-4,500+



Languages spoken  
in the communities

Oji-Cree, Ojibwe, Cree,  
Dene, and English

## ADVISORY COUNCIL

Community Partners are built into the governance structure of TFC–Gakinaamaage to ensure community-centred work that advances local education goals and promotes Indigenous control of Indigenous education.

Education leaders from each First Nation sit on an Advisory Council and we hold bi-annual meetings to gain feedback and collaborate. Our 2022/23 meetings covered the following topics:

- Changes in First Nations education, including the impact of national teacher shortages on teacher recruitment and retention
- Mental health and wellbeing for educators in remote First Nations
- The impact of social media on student attendance and engagement
- Longitudinal trends in teacher attrition in remote First Nations schools and strategies to support school employee retention
- The introduction of a data portal to understand our collective impact

Get to know the  
First Nations  
that TFC–  
Gakinaamaage  
serves!



# 2022/23 At A Glance

Teach For Canada–Gakinaamaage’s programming has four main pillars: Recruit, Prepare, Support, and Sustain.

These pillars address the urgent need for educators in remote First Nations schools and make a long-term investment in a future with more local and Indigenous educators.



## RECRUIT

From September to June, TFC–Gakinaamaage conducted rigorous national and local recruitment efforts to support the staffing needs of First Nations schools, bringing in **43 educators**—21 teachers and 22 teacher assistants—and engaging **26 administrators**. **31%** of teachers say that they would not have applied to teach in a remote First Nation school without TFC–Gakinaamaage.



## PREPARE

In July 2023, **19** of the **certified teachers** who were selected and hired by a First Nations Community Partner attended our hybrid **Summer Enrichment Program** before going North. **13 principals and administrators** joined our **Administrator Preparation Program**, which offered four sessions in August.



## SUPPORT

In the 2022/23 school year, TFC–Gakinaamaage provided support programming to **143 educators**—teachers, teacher assistants, and administrators—to help them succeed—and stay—in the classroom and community. **95%** of teachers were retained throughout the school year. These educators directly impacted **2,980 students** (K-12), supporting student attendance, engagement, and achievement.



## SUSTAIN

TFC–Gakinaamaage delivered capacity-building programs for **22 local teacher assistants** and **26 local education leaders**, aimed at strengthening the sustainability and effectiveness of First Nations schools. We also successfully repositioned an additional **3 northern teachers** to address vacant roles. Detailed program outcomes are enclosed.





# Supporting Student Success

This year, 143 TFC–Gakinaamaage educators directly impacted 2,980+ students (K-12). The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in enduring impacts to student outcomes in schools in remote First Nations and across the country. TFC–Gakinaamaage will continue to work with First Nations to help engage learners in a good way by recruiting and retaining committed and supportive educators and reinforcing local education goals.



## Student Attendance

Student attendance remains a challenge post-pandemic, with educators reporting an average student attendance rate of **58%**. The 3 primary drivers of student absences in 2022/23 were COVID-19, illness, and “other factors,” including bereavement and a lack of motivation. Strategies to increase student attendance will be integrated into 2023/24 programming.



## Student Engagement

TFC–Gakinaamaage provides robust resources and coaching to help educators prepare and deliver engaging lesson plans, with a focus on locally responsive pedagogy. TFC–Gakinaamaage reported a median of **65%** of students regularly participating in the classroom during the 2022/23 school year.



## Student Achievement

TFC–Gakinaamaage educators shared countless anecdotes about their pride in the achievements of their students throughout the 2022/23 year. While only **37%** of educators reported that their students were at or above grade level, **71%** of educators reported increases in literacy for the majority of students and **69%** of educators reported increases in numeracy for the majority of their students.

# Looking Ahead: Addressing the National Teacher Shortage

**TEACHER SHORTAGES ARE HAVING A DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT IN FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS** with an average of 21% (700+)¹ of total job postings on leading Canadian teacher recruitment websites listed for roles in First Nations.

We are proud of the progress we have made over the past year, but there is more work to do. An under-supply of local certified teachers, paired with an ever-tightening labour market, puts thousands of First Nations students at risk of having a non-certified teacher in the classroom, or even no teacher at all.

There is an urgent need for hundreds of certified teachers in remote First Nations schools for the coming school year. With the direction and guidance of partners, TFC–Gakinaamaage is actively adapting to the long-term effects of the teacher shortage through four pathways:

- **Selection Path:** An annual national recruitment campaign and community-led selection process paired with efforts to secure loan forgiveness through the government to incentivize teachers to work in the North.
- **Practicum Path:** Partnering with universities to coordinate teaching placements in northern schools, lending valuable capacity and hands-on experience, and cultivating a strong pathway for recruitment.
- **Secondment Path:** Working with school boards to fulfill the TRC Calls to Action by creating opportunities for teachers to engage in rich culturally responsive learning through secondments in First Nations schools.
- **Local Path:** Extending our programming to local educators who are or aspire to be certified teachers to boost professional development and retention and invest in a growing supply of certified local teachers.

## CASE STUDY TFC–Gakinaamaage



49

Midyear classroom vacancies in



14

remote First Nations schools, resulting in



980+

students without a certified teacher²



24%

of partner respondents may consider hiring uncertified teachers for some roles due to teacher shortages³

1. Source: May 2023 postings on Education Canada and ApplyToEducation  
2. Source: TFC-Gakinaamaage 2023 Winter and Spring partner surveys  
3. Source: TFC-Gakinaamaage 2023 Winter partner surveys, 4/17 respondents

## COMMUNITY RESEARCH LEAD TRAINING PROGRAM

The Community Research Lead Training Program is a 16-week program that builds local research capacity by preparing and supporting First Nations community members to conduct community-led research and evaluation projects.

### COMMUNITY-LED RESEARCH: THE NEXT 40 YEARS OF FIRST NATION CONTROL OF EDUCATION IN NISICHAWAYASIHK (2021 - 2061)

This year, the Impact and Learning department finalized a report for publication with four high school students in Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, titled “The Next 40 Years of First Nation Control of Education in Nisichawayasihk”. This report brings together community voices to guide the path for education in the future, demonstrate that First Nations people are very capable of creating their own education system, encourage more community-based research, and share research findings with other First Nations. The complete report will be available for public distribution in 2023.



## TEACHER ASSISTANT PROGRAM

TFC–Gakinaamaage works directly with local teacher assistants to develop their professional skills, build community capacity, and increase student success.

### 2022/23 OUTCOMES

**22 local teacher assistants** opted to receive monthly coaching to support their personalized goals, professional development workshops tailored to localized needs, and work-related resources and support (eg. mental health counseling). Retaining participants for the duration of this program was a challenge, with 10 of 22 completing the program. We are revising our strategy to address common barriers.

- **71%** of participants are interested in pursuing a Bachelor of Education certificate
- **86%** of participants rate the quality of programming that they participated in as excellent
- **100%** of participants report improved confidence, effectiveness, job satisfaction, and are playing a bigger part in supporting student success

### WHAT TEACHER ASSISTANTS ARE SAYING:

“I hope to develop skills that will help my students surpass difficulties in and out of the classroom. I also want to further my education in the teaching field and to pursue helping my people.”

“I would like to be able to handle any type of situation in the classroom, and be able to give professional and helpful advice to the students whenever they need it. I’m always open to learning new things.”

## CIRCLE OF ADMINISTRATORS

Many studies emphasize that effective school leadership is crucial for student success. TFC–Gakinaamaage has expanded our programming to meet leadership needs, in an effort to reduce educator attrition rates in First Nations schools.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**16 administrators** participated in monthly professional development meetings on topics including post-pandemic mental health initiatives, the impact of social media on student outcomes, and school-year planning. **13 administrators** from **9 First Nations** took part in our Administrator Preparation Program in August 2023.

### PEER NETWORK

We were encouraged to see the development of an active peer network of Administrators across partnering First Nations, with requests to convene and share resources outside of regular monthly meetings. We hope this peer network will build strong regional and national connections to support student success.

### MENTORING

**17 administrators** opted in to receive 1:1 mentorship from an experienced practitioner, including regular check-ins, bi-annual coaching, and resource support.



## NORTHERN PRACTICUM PROGRAM

The pilot Northern Practicum Program is seeing growing interest among universities and First Nations Community Partners. Together, we connect teacher candidates with short-term teaching placements in remote First Nations schools.

### 2022/23 OUTCOMES

**8 Teacher Candidates** from Trent University and Wilfrid Laurier University completed their practicum across **6 First Nations** Community Partners.

Teacher candidates provided valuable midyear capacity to northern schools and received professional development and hands-on experience. In the coming year, we will expand this program to include up to 30 teacher candidates.

### WHAT TEACHER CANDIDATES ARE SAYING:

*“I always knew that I wanted to teach in an Indigenous community, but never knew how to go about it. There had never been a clear path. Once I heard about Teach For Canada–Gakinaamaage, I had found a reason, and a way to go North.”*

# Summer Enrichment Program



 **88%**

Summer Enrichment Program participant experience rating<sup>1</sup>

In July 2023, **19 teachers** participated in our first-ever hybrid Summer Enrichment Program. For the first time since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Program brought participants together for in-person learning alongside virtual elements.

Teachers began their learning journey by completing 15 hours of asynchronous online learning modules, before joining the 2023 cohort and Teach For Canada–Gakinaamaage team for one week of in-person learning from Indigenous leaders, northern teachers, and education experts at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay.

***“I wish we could attend SEP every year, as this has been an amazing experience. I have learned so much in such a short amount of time!”***

***“I was on the fence about going North in September until I returned from Thunder Bay after the Summer Enrichment Program. At that point, I knew I was packing up and going.”***

– 2023 Summer Enrichment Program Participants



# Supporting School Leadership

*“I learned about the importance of bringing the students out into the community and bringing the community into the school. It was fantastic.”*

– 2023 Administrator Preparation Program Participant

Teach For Canada–Gakinaamaage’s Administrator Preparation Program is an integral part of our commitment to educational excellence. Geared towards current and aspiring educators stepping into administrative roles, the program offers tools, resources and knowledge exchanges to support effective school leadership.

This online program empowers northern principals with the skills and knowledge necessary for successful school leadership. Throughout the month of August, we led a series of four transformative sessions, with topics ranging from decolonizing leadership practices to culturally responsive ways of living.

## 2022/23 OUTCOMES

**13 administrators** from **9 First Nations** took part in **four sessions** on the following topics:

**Addressing Colonial Mindsets, Fostering Decolonized Leadership:** Recognizing and combatting colonial mindsets and fostering decolonized leadership practices.

**Year-Round Critical Approaches:** Implementing critical approaches year-round and ensuring inclusivity before, during, and after the first day of school.

**Administrator Priorities and Proactive Strategies:** Defining administrator priorities and responsibilities and developing proactive strategies for challenges.

**Integrating Indigenous Knowledge in Leadership:** Embedding Indigenous Knowledge and values in leadership and upholding cultural norms and protocols.

# What Community Partners Are Saying

## **SHERYL WHITE**

Director of Education,  
God's Lake Narrows First Nation

“Partnering with Teach For Canada–Gakinaamaage is a wonderful opportunity for any First Nation looking to hire quality teachers for their students—especially those struggling to attract teachers to their remote locations.

We have always encouraged our non-local teachers to become part of the community by getting involved in events. It is easier said than done, but TFC–Gakinaamaage teachers have certainly lived up to that! They are getting involved in community events, and are seen out and about. Local community members are pleased to see them enjoying themselves, and having a great time. It makes the teachers more personable, which creates friendships and better teacher-parent relationships.”



## **ROBIN CHAMNEY**

Principal  
Fort Severn First Nation

“For the past 5 years, our school has greatly benefitted from our partnership with Teach For Canada–Gakinaamaage. The recruitment, support and assistance provided to teachers has been very rewarding.

TFC–Gakinaamaage is a very open and supportive organization. They have helped our community share culture, traditions, and ways of life with many talented educators, with both parties benefitting in a positive way.”



# First Nations Data Sovereignty

TFC–Gakinaamaage recognizes that First Nations have an inherent right to the ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP®) of their information and should be active partners in every aspect of research taking place in their communities.

Across Turtle Island, Indigenous communities have a history of colonial-imposed research practices, aimed at conducting research “on” rather than “with” First Nations. These methods typically fail to include Indigenous perspectives, ways of knowing, and culture in their approach.

The Impact and Learning department—an arm of TFC–Gakinaamaage dedicated to upholding First Nations data sovereignty when determining our collective impact—was launched with this as a fundamental principle.

## **INTRODUCING OUR COMMUNITY DATA PORTAL**

Living the spirit of First Nations data sovereignty and adhering to the First Nations principles of ownership, control, access, and possession of data, TFC–Gakinaamaage built an online data portal to build community capacity through data sharing, giving First Nations partners access to current, raw, and anonymous survey responses and data analytics (local and aggregate) related to teacher retention, teacher well-being, and student outcomes.

Over the next year and beyond, the Impact and Learning department will provide database training to partnering First Nations to ensure they can access helpful data and insights. Together, we will collaborate to make the most of this powerful tool and advance local education goals.

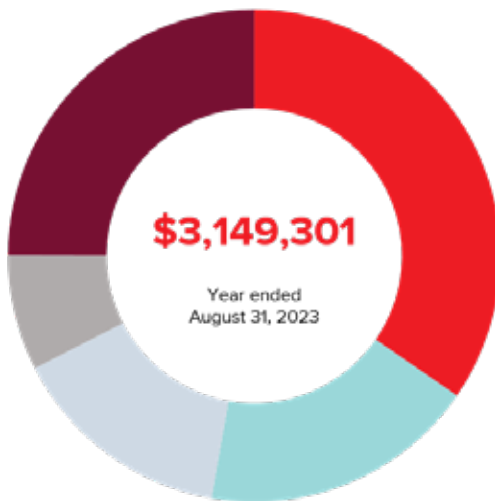


# Financials

## 2022/23

TFC–Gakinaamaage’s **year-to-date expenses** and revenue from our internal financial management are outlined below. Audited financials are finalized in February annually and are available upon request.

### Expenses



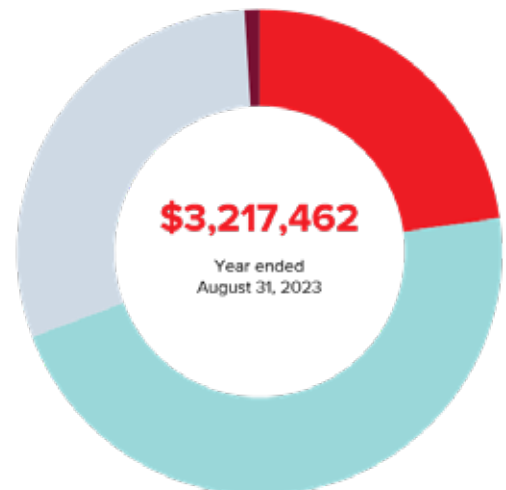
#### PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

- **\$1,037,984.10** Teacher Development and Support
- **\$544,134.41** Teacher Recruitment and Selection
- **\$439,953.28** Community Engagement
- **\$228,014.08** Impact and Learning

#### SUPPORT EXPENDITURES

- **\$899,215.35** Fundraising and Administration

### Revenue



#### REVENUE SOURCES

- **23%** Governments
- **47%** Foundations
- **30%** Corporations
- **<1%** Individuals



# Miigwetch—Thank You

We deeply value and extend our heartfelt gratitude to our generous partners, collaborators, and supporters who make our work possible. Together, we are dedicated to achieving a future where every child across Turtle Island can access high-quality education in their own community.

We honour the trust and dedication you place in us by consistently upholding our core values—humility, respect, collaboration, integrity, and a commitment to learning—in all that we do.

# Our Supporters

We sincerely thank and acknowledge the generous contributions of the foundations, corporations, governments, and individuals who have supported TFC–Gakinaamaage. Their donations signify a commitment to educational equity for youth across what we now know as Canada.

## \$1,000,000 +



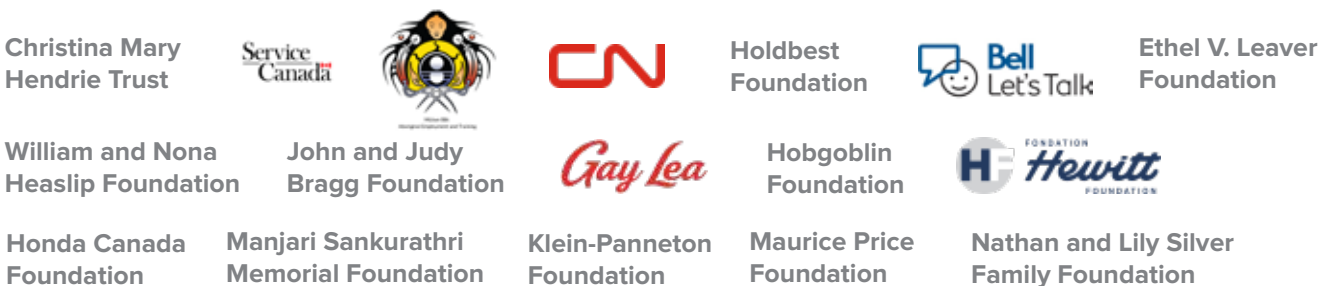
## \$500,000 - \$999,999



## \$100,000 - \$499,999



## \$25,000 - \$99,999



## \$5,000 - \$24,999



**18** Alice and Murray Maitland Foundation Ben and Hilda Katz Foundation Douglas and Margaret Derry Foundation



**@TEACHFORCANADA**  
TEACHFORCANADA.CA

Teach For Canada—Gakinaamaage  
215 Spadina Avenue  
Suite 550, Toronto, ON  
M5T 2C7

**phone:** (647) 886-0640

**fax:** (647) 498-1389

**e-mail:** [info@teachforcanada.ca](mailto:info@teachforcanada.ca)

BN number: 819967282RR0001

