



## Invitation to Attend the CSLS Seminar Series on Living Standards

### **The Challenge Facing First Nations Education in Canada**

Paula Isaak  
4:00-5:30 PM  
Monday, November 9, 2015  
Laurier Room, Rideau Club  
99 Bank Street, 15th floor  
Ottawa, Ontario

(please note that the Rideau Club dress code requires men to wear a jacket)

To attend, please RSVP by November 6, 2015 to [andrew.sharpe@csls.ca](mailto:andrew.sharpe@csls.ca).

Average levels of educational attainment of Aboriginal Canadians are well below that of the non-Aboriginal population, with the gap particularly large for First Nations people on reserves. Indeed, the proportion of the 20-24 age group who have completed high school on reserves in 2011 was 39 per cent, compared to 89 per cent for the non-Aboriginal population. This education gap results in much higher unemployment rates, lower labour force participation rates and lower labour income for First Nations members on reserves. The closing of this gap would bring large benefits for the Canadian economy and society, including higher productivity and incomes and lower crime rates.

In this presentation, Paula Isaak, the ADM responsible for the First Nations education file at Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, will address the educational challenges facing First Nations. She will first review the situation on reserves with respect to educational funding, governance, and outcomes; identify barriers to better education opportunities and performance for First Nations youth; and discuss policy options or directions that can be taken by all players, including the federal government, provincial governments, bands, and Aboriginal organizations, to improve the situation.

Paula Isaak is Assistant Deputy Minister, Education and Social Development Programs at Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC). She holds an undergraduate degree in Political Science from the University of Manitoba and a Master's degree in Public Administration from Carleton University. She has been with AANDC for over 20 years. She began her career in Ottawa where she determined that she had a strong interest in working with AANDC's regional offices. She pursued that interest through postings in a variety of regions from the Atlantic to the Pacific and the North. Prior to being appointed as ADM of ESDPP, she was the Director General, Natural Resources and Environment in the Northern Affairs Organization of AANDC.