



# Niigaan Gdizhaami

WE ARE MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

Anishinabek Education System  
Annual Forum Report 2020



## Niigaan Gdizhaami ‘We are Moving Forward Together’ Forum

The 2020 Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum took place on the 25th and 26th of February in Toronto, Ontario.

### Acknowledgments

The Kinoomaadziwin Education Body acknowledges the following partners, organizations and individuals. Their collaboration and support were essential to the success of the 2020 Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum.

#### Participating First Nations of the Anishinabek Education System

**Ontario Ministry of Education**

**Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada**

**Deputy Chief Muriel Sawyer, Nipissing First Nation**

**Elder Alex Jacobs**

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The background is a solid teal color. It features a large, faint, light-teal floral pattern that spans the entire page. This pattern includes a central stem with several leaves and a large flower. Scattered around this central motif are five smaller, stylized flowers in different colors: a pink flower in the top-left, a light purple flower in the top-right, a teal flower in the middle-right, a light blue flower in the bottom-left, and a pink flower in the bottom-right. The word "Contents" is centered in the middle of the page in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

# Contents

# Table of Contents

<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Message from the Kinooaadziwin Education Body</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Message from Ontario</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Message from Canada</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>DAY ONE</b>	<b>6-21</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Master Education Agreement</b>	<b>9-13</b>
<b>Regional Discussions</b>	<b>14-19</b>
Regional Education Council 1	14-15
Regional Education Council 2	15-16
Regional Education Council 3	16-18
Regional Education Council 4	18-19
<b>Keynote Address: Language and Culture and its Effect on Student Well-Being by Dr. Sean Lessard</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Informational Displays</b>	<b>21</b>
Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund	21
Aniish Naa Gegii	21
<b>DAY TWO</b>	<b>22-29</b>
<b>AES Youth Presentation</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	<b>25-26</b>
Cultural Competency Training	25
Special Education Guideline	25
Student Transitions Protocol	26
<b>Forum Reflections</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Next Steps Summary</b>	<b>28-29</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>30-32</b>
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Supporting Documents and Links</b>	<b>32</b>

## Message from the Kinoomaadziwin Education Body

*Catherine Pawis, Chair  
Kinoomaadziwin Education Body*

Catherine Pawis, chair of the KEB Board of Directors (Board) offered welcoming remarks to all participants on behalf of all members of the KEB Board. She acknowledged KEB Board members for their dedication to the work and also acknowledged Elder Alex Jacobs who performed the sunrise ceremony. Catherine spoke of the Seven generations, and the work that is currently being done for the youth and the promise of what lies ahead.

## Message from Ontario

*Taunya Paquette, Director, Indigenous Education Office  
Ontario Ministry of Education*

Boozhoo,

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work that has been accomplished since the launch of the Anishinabek Education System on April 1, 2018. We have made great joint strides in implementing the 17 projects negotiated and detailed in the Multi-Year Action Plan. The Fall 2019 Regional Education Council Meetings provided a forum for continued dialogue, feedback, and collaboration between Participating Anishinabek First Nations and School Boards. Through these gatherings, was affirmation of the positive, ongoing commitment to moving forward together.

As Director of the Indigenous Education Office for the Ministry of Education, I want to say that we are committed to our continued partnership as we work together to support the well-being and achievement of Anishinabek students – whether they study in one of the schools within the Anishinabek Education System or in a provincially-funded school. I am certain that the next two days will be filled with meaningful discussions, collaboration between First Nations and School Boards, informative workshops and productive planning. I look forward to continuing our work as partners as we move forward together on this exciting path.

## Message from Canada

*Carolyn Bennett, Minister  
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada*

Hello, Bonjour, Boozhoo,

I would like to extend my warmest greetings to all participants in the Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum, including, and especially, all the Anishinabek youth participating in today's event. It is truly transformative work that you are doing here, to implement your communities' vision of an Anishinabek-controlled and run education system – a quality Anishinabek Education System that ensures your students have all the tools for success and a strong and proud connection to their culture and language. I wish you all energetic and constructive discussions today and look forward to learning more about all the inspiring work you are doing to build a better tomorrow for Anishinabek students throughout Ontario.

Thank you, Merci, Miigwech!

# Day One

# Introduction

The Kinoomaadziwin Education Body (KEB) hosted the fifth annual Niigaan Gdizhaami “We are Moving Forward Together” Forum on February 25 and 26, 2020, in Toronto, Ontario. With approximately 180 participants in attendance, the event brought together leadership, educators and students from the 23 Participating First Nations (PFNs) of the Anishinabek Education System with Ontario District School Boards (ODSBs), and federal and provincial representatives.

## The objectives of the forum included:

- Sharing information on the implementation of the Master Education Agreement (MEA);
- Securing input from forum participants on MEA initiatives;
- Providing an opportunity for forum participants to learn about educational initiatives and best practices;
- Hearing from Anishinabek youth on their educational priorities and needs, and their collective plan moving forward; and
- Supporting Anishinabek First Nations and ODSBs to advance regional educational priorities.

Members from the PFNs and representatives of the ODSBs worked through a busy two-day agenda, while youth participants were engaged in some activities focused specifically on youth topics and priorities, as well as spending time in the larger group sessions at various points.

This year, the events of the Forum were moderated by Dwayne Pamajewon, a citizen of Shawanaga First Nation. Dwayne got the crowd moving and boosted participants’ energy with a meet-and-greet activity to start the conference.

Deputy Chief Muriel Sawyer, Nipissing First Nation, recited the Ngo Dwe Waangizid Anishinaabe, the preamble to the Anishinabek Nation’s Anishinaabe Chi-Naaknigewin.

## Additional opening remarks were provided by:

- Andrea Crawford, Dokis First Nation, Acting Director of Education for the KEB;
- Catherine Pawis, Wasauksing First Nation, Chairperson for the KEB Board of Directors;
- Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Glen Hare, M’Chigeeng First Nation;
- Cassandra Commanda, Nipissing First Nation, Youth Representative;
- Taunya Paquette, Saugeen First Nation, Director – Indigenous Education Office, Ministry of Education;
- Minister Carolyn Bennett, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada

This report, and its accompanying appendices, provide a summary of events for the 2020 Niigaan Gdizhaami “We are Moving Forward Together” Forum. In addition, there are next steps identified that result from the discussions and input provided by the participants at the Forum.

## Agenda Day One



# Anishinabek Education System

## Niigaan Gdizhaami

### “We Are Moving Forward Together” Forum

**February 25-26, 2020**

Toronto Airport Marriott Hotel, 901 Dixon Road, Toronto, Ontario

## TUESDAY

## FEBRUARY 25

6:30 a.m.	Sunrise Ceremony	Salon C
7:30 a.m.	<b>BREAKFAST BUFFET</b>	Salons D/E
8:45 a.m.	Housekeeping	Salons D/E
9:00 a.m.	Welcoming Remarks/2019 Year Review	Salons D/E
10:00 a.m.	<b>BREAK</b>	Salons D/E
10:15 a.m.	Updates on MEA/MYAP Projects	Salons D/E
12:00 p.m.	<b>LUNCH</b>	Salons D/E
1:00 p.m.	<b>REC Networking Sessions &amp; Youth Breakout Session</b>	
	REC 1 Networking Session	Salon A
	REC 2 Networking Session	Salon B
	REC 3 Networking Session	Salon F
	REC 4 Networking Session	Salon G
	Youth Breakout Session	British Columbia/Alberta
2:30 p.m.	<b>BREAK</b>	Salons D/E
2:45 p.m.	Keynote Speaker: Dr. Sean Lessard	Salons D/E
4:15 p.m.	Closing	Salons D/E
5:00 p.m.	Youth Dinner & Activity	British Columbia/Alberta



# Master Education Agreement (MEA)

## Year In Review

### *Andrea Crawford and Taunya Paquette*

The MEA was signed by the Participating First Nations, the KEB, and Ontario and outlines how we will work together and what the areas of focus are. Though not signatories to the MEA, there are references to our ODSB partners and the importance of the relationships between PFNs and ODSBs, with 92% of our students attending provincial schools.

Following the official launch of the AES in April 2018, the implementation of the Master Education Agreement started with 17 projects outlined in the Multi-Year Action Plan (MYAP). The Acting Director of Education for the KEB, Andrea Crawford, and the Ministry of Education's Indigenous Education Office Director, Taunya Paquette, provided a look at various projects and activities and spoke to the work being accomplished by each of the project leads and committees over the 2019-2020 year.



*Taunya Paquette, Saugeen First Nation and Andrea Crawford, Dokis First Nation*

## Multi-Year Action Plan Update

### *Nick Bertrand and Elizabeth Bigwin*

KEB Special Projects Coordinator, Elizabeth Bigwin, Beausoleil First Nation, and Indigenous Education Office Education Officer Liaison, Nick Bertrand, Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, led participants through a full update on all of the projects outlined in the MEA Multi-Year Action Plan. There was an emphasis placed on how each of the project collectives was informed by youth input, from previous forum discussions, captured in reports over the past few years.

## Strategic Initiatives

Three Pilot Programs are in motion: Graduation Coach, Learning as We Go, and Aaniish Naa Gegii. Communities and ODSBs that are leading the way hosting and managing these programs are Nipissing First Nation, Rainbow District School Board, Long Lake #58 First Nation, Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek, Chippewas of Rama First Nation, and Beausoleil First Nation. Lead partner in the Aaniish Naa Gegii program, Laurentian University, is helping to familiarize pilot communities with this very valuable student support tool.

## Next Steps

1. Project Reports and summative discussions will occur in Spring 2020 between the Strategic Initiatives pilot sites, KEB, and EDU partners. These will result in comprehensive summary reports for each pilot program to be presented to Regional Education Councils for consideration.
2. Recommendations will be made for expansion and adaptation of specific student-support programs for the Anishinabek Education System.
3. Recommendations will inform the development of the second MYAP and funding projections, which are scheduled to begin in June 2020.

## Three Committees, One Working Group

Members of the joint committees were recognized for their dedication to the foundational work of this partnership.

- Joint Master Education Agreement Committee
- Data, Research and Evaluation Committee
- Special Education Committee
- Transitions Working Group

Rainbow District School Board and Superior Greenstone District School Board have provided key information and perspectives to the work of the Special Education Committee and the Transitions Working Group.

Overall, these collaborations enable participants to learn about the operations and aspirations of their partners. Many Anishinabek students will attend schools in a number of settings and some may move from one system to another along the way. It can only be beneficial if all involved, understand the other systems and how each setting will potentially influence those learners that we support. And so, as planning and discussions take place, we also learn and expand our thinking.

Over the past year, the KEB and the Ministry of Education have engaged in just over 60 formal meetings and countless conversations. The positive effects that come from these interactions and experiences is invaluable. Learning, re-learning, shaping and re-shaping the work as we progress is an important part of process.

## Guidelines and Protocols

The following five products are in various stages of development, all with completion dates for late Spring 2020.

- Student Transitions Protocol
- Special Education Guideline
- Sharing Anishinabek Education Resources Guideline
- Revised Education Service Agreements Guideline
- Cultural Competency Training

## Next Steps

1. Product development for the Student Transitions Protocol and the Special Education Guideline.
2. Method for pilot site selection for the Cultural Competency Training to be reviewed by the Regional Education Councils and the Language and Culture Reference Group.
3. Sharing Anishinabek Education Resources Guideline to be reviewed by the Language and Culture Reference Group.
4. Implementation plan will be developed for the sharing of products and consulting on processes over the 2020-2021 school year for full integration beginning September 2021.

*Nick Bertrand, Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte and Elizabeth Bigwin, Beausoleil First Nation*



## Anishinabek Resource Development: Cultural Competency Training and Developing Resources to Support Curriculum

What better way to have all students in Ontario learn about Indigenous people, than from Indigenous people. The focus of MYAP is about supporting communities, ODSBs, and teachers in building courses and resources and engaging in learning about local Anishinabek people, communities, and ways. It is not only the hope, but it is the intention that courses and resources are intentionally developed and utilized in schools where Anishinabek students attend. AES youth have indicated that the curriculum needs to include “Indigenous history beyond residential schools.”

### Next Steps

1. Completion of the Cultural Competency Training Modules.
2. Consider a funding structure to support the local development of resource materials to support curriculum.

### Inventory of Health and Social Services

The purpose of this project is to identify health and social services for AES students. Information is currently being gathered for the implementation of this project. Gabrielle Davey, a representative for THL Information Network, provided an overview of the work that has been undertaken with the 23 Participating First Nations over the last couple of months. Data and feedback for this initiative will continue to be collected and an online survey is available at [Bit.ly/AESWellnessPortal](https://bit.ly/AESWellnessPortal). More information can be found at [www.thehealthline.ca](https://www.thehealthline.ca).

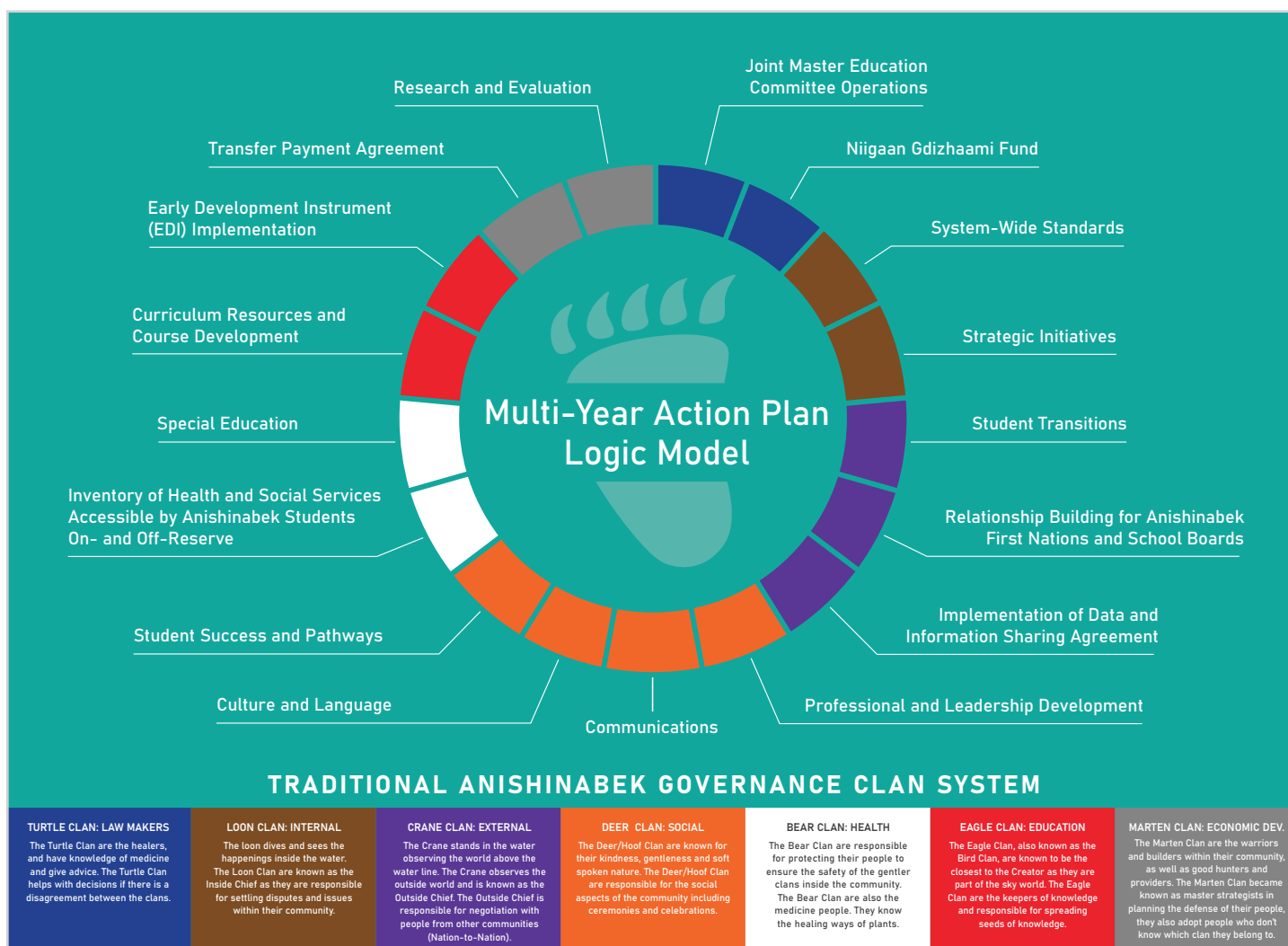
The screenshot shows the homepage of thehealthline.ca. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the logo and a search bar. Below the logo, there is a search bar with the text "Find local health and community services across Ontario:". To the left of the map, there is a list of regions: 1. Erie St. Clair, 2. South West, 3. Waterloo Wellington, 4. Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant, 5. Central West, 6. Mississauga Halton, 7. Toronto Central, 8. Central, 9. Central East, 10. South East, 11. Champlain, 12. North Simcoe Muskoka, 13. North East, 14. North West. The map itself is a yellow map of Ontario with these regions numbered. At the bottom, there is a footer with the text "Service Profile Inclusion" and "© 2020, thehealthline.ca Information Network All rights reserved." There is also a YouTube icon and a link "Learn how to find services in your area".

[www.thehealthline.ca](https://www.thehealthline.ca)

## The MEA-MYAP Evaluation Process

Reflecting on and learning more about the implementation work of the Master Education Agreement and the Multi-Year Action Plan has been a focus over the latter part of this year. The Ministry of Education's systems evaluation expert, Keiko Kuji-Shikatani, brought the Forum participants back to the Evaluation Logic Model Visual. This visual demonstrates the projects of the MYAP and offers links to descriptors. These projects are being reviewed for effectiveness and responsiveness to Anishinabek student needs and to AES system goals. What has been determined so far is that the first 18 months following the launch of the AES was a foundational period and the plans needed to be adjusted as resources and processes were put into place. Over time, pilot projects will help communities collectively identify overall system focus.

## Multi-Year Action Plan Logic Model



## Next Steps

### Learning as we go to identify next steps...

*We should set more realistic plans in the future — there are many variables that needed to be identified and addressed*

*Such a valuable project, we need to be talking with the people on the ground...need more staff to make it happen*

*Participating First Nations debriefing component needs to be embedded into the implementation plan*

*Two levels of discussion — evaluation of what to do — these are simultaneous conversations*

*Need to establish expectations for learners. Relate language instruction and curriculum to indigenous knowledge.*

*As an advocate, we need to pull this together to support individual FNs and students to influence what the provincial government have in their curriculum*

*We need strategies to formally engage the ODSBs — communiques are good but the school board's role needs to be clearly defined*

### Outcomes so far have found that...

*RECCs and EOs have a better understanding of what they need to do individually to implement MYAP*

*Overtime, pilot projects will help communities collectively identify KEB overall system focus*

*Communication & Transition Work needed for Partnerships to work... We have to find a way to communicate with the ODSBs*

*Self governance within self governance relationship is different from the EDU-ODSB relationships*

*Many issues are born from the structures they are built in*

*Awareness is the best thing (e.g., language resources) FNs & ODSBs relationship changing... Sense and shift of relationships of FNs & ODSBs that we are working together and not adversarial*

*ODSB and Ontario obligation to the MEA unfulfilled... When would a conversation with ODSBs happen? ...Their voice is missing*

# Regional Discussions

The KEB's Regional Education Council Coordinators (RECC) facilitated discussions and updates on the regional activities of the four Regional Education Councils (REC). The coordinators were joined by their Indigenous Education Office Education Officer colleagues who also supported the discussions. Each regional discussion had its own flavour and direction.

## Regional Education Council 1

This region's session was facilitated by KEB Culture, Programs, Standards Manager Renee Restoule, Nipissing First Nation, and was supported by the Ministry of Education's Patti Pella and Tania Sterling. The session started off with a review of regional and system priorities established by REC 1 in the fall meetings. Highlights of those priorities are collaborative rapport with ODSBs, shared resources and recognition of First Nation programs and courses.

### Highlight of Priorities and Themes

- Relationships: the importance of face-to-face connections and building relationships.
- Systemic barriers to land-based learning (insurance, liability, policies, rules).
- Authentic parental engagement and community engagement.
- Community protocols about sharing stories and information.
- Indigenous language instruction in the provincial system.
- Supporting youth in care and re-uniting families.

### Discussions in this session were sparked by the following questions:

What programs, courses and resources have been developed in AES communities and Ontario District School Boards? What programs, courses and resources would you like to see developed for AES communities and Ontario District School Boards?

## Authentic Learning

In this region there is a strong desire to ensure instruction and learning are based on authentic community practice and traditional knowledge, supplemented by rich relationships between people. Communities in this region are engaged in developing resources that chronicle community histories and contemporary lives, and they see the importance of building and sharing resources in education settings. Examples of customized learning and teaching include land-based learning, integrating language and practices such as pow-wow, sweats, smudge and story. It is felt that in general, there are barriers in ODSB schools that prevent land-based learning and that somehow, stronger partnered advocacy is needed to move around the barriers.

## Relationships

The key to information-sharing and reciprocal learning, is having others learn first-hand about the Anishinaabek communities and ways of life. Meeting and conversing face-to-face is seen as preferable to anything else. Communities expressed that the ODSBs should be connecting to the schools and communities and working with them in the community.

### Regional Education Council 1

Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek

Long Lake #58

Pic Mobert

Biigtigong Nishnaabeg





## Parent Engagement

Some ODSBs work with local Indigenous staff who act as a liaison between the ODSB and the communities to build relationships. Not all parents navigate through school system complexities the same way. To assist parents with this task, one community has developed a nine-hour course to describe the education system and break down the most important things for parents to know. This approach helps keep parents involved and engaged which enables them to better support their children in their learning.

## Positive Narratives

The need to change the current narrative, to highlight opportunities and to be creative in the process, is critical. Youth are returning home to their communities, after being away for extended periods, and they are building on what it means to be Anishinabek. This is compelling more and more youth to return home and be proud of who they are.

## Other Discussion

PowerSchool is the new Student Information System that supports AES schools. It was referenced throughout the regional discussions, and a need for greater support for this system was expressed

## Next Steps for REC 1

1. More information and support to be provided on PowerSchool.

## Regional Education Council 2

The session for REC 2 was facilitated by KEB Regional Education Council Coordinator, Tammy Moreau, and was supported by the Ministry of Education's Bryon Brisard, Animbiigoo Zaagi'igan Anishinaabek, and Marc Lauzon, and by the KEB's Claire Scanlan.

## Highlight of Priorities and Themes

- First Nation trustees' protocols, roles, and comprehension of self-governance (define AES trustee and First Nation trustee).
- ODSB hiring practices for Native as a Second Language (NSL) teachers.
- Increased collaboration between First Nations and ODSBs beyond advisory councils and RECs.
- A work plan with clearly identified priorities to guide regional collaboration.

## Trustee on Ontario District School Boards

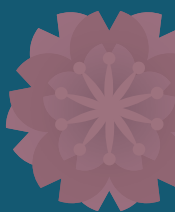
Participants provided their views on the Ontario legislation that speaks to First Nation ODSB trustees. The legislation guides how the role works, how selections/appointments for trustees are made, and which students the trustee represents. There was discussion about the possibility of exploring the need for a trustee position that would specifically represent Anishinabek students. Participants also spoke to the potential value in having current trustees attend AES events, such as the REC Fall Meetings and the Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum. This would allow trustees to get a better sense of the scope work and AES directions.

## Language Teachers

Regional Education Council 2 talked about hiring practices in ODSBs for Indigenous Language Teachers. The restrictions in place don't encourage new practices and effective ways to welcome teachers of Anishinaabemowin into ODSB schools.

## Regional Education Council 2

Atikameksheng Anishnawbek  
Aundeck Omni Kaning  
Sheshegwaning  
Zhiibaahaasing  
Whitefish River  
Michipicoten



## Collaboration

Participants very clearly value the opportunity to collaborate and learn from one another, in order to advance educational supports for Anishinabek students. Current structures are primarily those of ODSBs, which have positive and negative associations. It was suggested that having ODSBs continue to attend AES events will prove to be positive and beneficial moving forward.

Face-to-face meetings have always been the preferred method of engagement, because it allows for a fuller human connection, linked to traditional Anishinabek ways. An added element to this discussion was the desire to build a formal regional plan that would chronicle collaborative initiatives and directions.

## Partnered Projects

A concern was raised around the joint projects funded through the Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund. Where a project required the hiring of a person, the ODSB position is that school board policies must prevail. It would seem that there may be other ways to approach this issue within the context of the PFN-ODSB partnerships.

## Next Steps for REC 2

1. Seek information and clarification on the existing role of First Nation trustees. Specifically, the current legislation that guides this and which students are represented.
2. Explore the role of ODSB trustees within the context of the Anishinabek Education System.
3. Education Service Agreements/AES and ODSB partners to maintain partnerships and agreements.
4. Increase effectiveness of First Nation/ODSB collaboration:
  - a. More face-to-face meetings.
  - b. Encourage more First Nation representation on advisory committees.

- c. PFN/ODSB – one-on-one meetings to create a collaborative action plan.
- d. Better communication to ensure understanding of projects and general progress.

## Regional Education Council 3

The session for REC 3 was facilitated by KEB Regional Education Council Coordinator, Lisa Wabegijig, Atikameksheng Anishnawbek, and was supported by the Ministry of Education's Romaine Mitchell, Mohawks of Akwesasne, and Shelley Duquette-Lafortune, Dokis First Nation.

## Highlight of Priorities and Themes

- Strategies for Student Success
- Ideas for Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund
- The Importance of Relationships

## Discussions in this session were sparked by the following questions:

### What programs, courses and resources would you like to see developed for AES communities and Ontario District School Boards?

There was discussion around dual credit programs that could support students moving into college. Access to funding for students through the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program is available to

*Lisa Wabegijig, Atikameksheng Anishnawbek First Nation*





all students. Language programs, supported by community parents, Elders and knowledge keepers, will in turn support the wellness of Anishinabek students. Land-based curriculum was touched on as an area for our communities to build on and explore with ODSB partners. Building and maintaining strong community connections needs to be a priority. Land-based learning and season-based curriculum would be a great Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund proposals that could be integrated into programming throughout the school. These types of projects would support language, culture and Anishinabek ways of knowing, throughout every area of curriculum.

### **What programs and strategies could promote and drive student success?**

Participants discussed ways to address and improve student attendance. Incentive programs and encouraging parents to monitor attendance are important factors. The Graduation Coach Approach program also encourages student engagement and improves communication with students. Schools with Community Outreach employees have also had success with engaging transitioning students from other communities and settings.

When participants considered the importance of language and culture in student success, the knowledge and understanding of staff in ODSBs was an essential element. Anishinabek student success and well-being are strongly linked to having teachers and educators who are familiar with Anishinabek

students and who have the ability to make connections Anishinabek students.

Romaine Mitchell, an Education Officer with the Ministry of Education, spoke about ways that this can be achieved, and shared an example of the Ottawa Elders of the Inuktitut Language Circle. This Language Circle has a Stand Up ceremony that creates certified language teachers.

The importance of continuing to build strong relationships between the PFNs and ODSBs was also discussed as being important to driving student success.

### **How can the number of Indigenous Teacher Professionals and Education Assistants be increased in schools?**

Two main points emerged from discussions on this topic. The first point reflected on the importance of having Anishinabek teachers present in the settings where Anishinabek students attend. The second point explored the concept of existing programs, such as the Ottawa Carlton Pilot Project, which developed their own standards for the certification of teachers.

### **How should the use of student data be approached, in the next steps of AES implementation?**

Further questions raised were:

- Are we linking the data and strategies for student success and planning for what we need to do next? (i.e. data from the Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund)
- How is the data being used along with provincial partners as approximately 92% of students eventually attend the provincial system?
- How can the data be used to support student assessments that address the specific ways that Anishinabek students learn? The non-Indigenous approach to academic testing may not be accurate.
- Can the data be used to determine our priorities?
- How can the data identify trends within the AES?

## **Regional Education Council 3**

Dokis

Henvey Inlet

Magnetawan

Nipissing

Wahnapitae

Wasauksing



## How is the Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund working for the AES?

There was a lot of cross-over discussion regarding language and Elders, which led participants to consider the use of the NG Fund as a platform for creating programs and agreements to ensure Elders have access to the classrooms. This could support ODSBs by having Elders provide assistance to new teachers who do not know the language or who are not familiar with Anishinabek culture. Some ODSBs have Elder-in-Residence programs.

The questions posed by the participants of REC 3 are of particular importance to the future planning of the AES and the KEB. An overall report of the NG Fund is required to be prepared each year of the Fund, with an analysis of effectiveness of programs as they link to intended outcomes. In the next-phase of planning for the AES, the reports from the NG Fund will be used to determine the viability programs for more permanent funding and implementation.

## Next Steps for REC 3

1. Develop a repository where Anishinabek language and educational resources can be kept and accessed by everyone.
2. Inquire with the Mushkegowuk Tribal Council about sharing their Cycle of Life Model.
3. Explore the avenue for ensuring the presence of Elders in all school settings where Anishinabek student attend.
4. Ensure the collection of data for all programs and initiatives and use the data to inform overall planning and funding decisions.

## Regional Education Council 4

The session for REC 4 was facilitated by the KEB's Regional Education Council Coordinator, Sara Jamieson, Beausoleil First Nation, and was supported by the Ministry of Education's Ian McCallum, Munsee-Delaware Nation, and JoAnn Henry, Chippewa of the Thames First Nation. The session started off with a review of regional and system priorities established by REC 4 at previous regional meetings. Highlights of those priorities included student transitions, language and culture, curriculum resources, community connections, wellness, communication, and teacher retention.

## Highlight of Priorities and Themes

- AES expectations: policies, trustees, Indigenous Education Advisory Circle, direct voice
- Language speakers in schools
- Wellness
- Data and information

## Communications

One of the areas of discussion in REC 4 led to questions about the expectations for the AES. Participants agreed there is a need for more formal communications with ODSBs in order for responses and change to be system-wide. Current lines of communication include the First Nation trustees, the PFNs and the Indigenous Education Advisory Circles.

## Regional Education Council 4

Aamjiwnaang  
Chippewas of Georgina Island  
Munsee-Delaware  
Chippewas of Rama  
Mississaugas of Scugog Island  
Beausoleil

## Language

Goals and challenges related to language were shared among REC 4. There was specific attention to the Lenape language, as this language is unique to the region. Teachers are needed for all ODSBs, which have struggled to retain qualified teachers. Some teachers have been hired on letters of permission, which creates challenges with compensation. New strategies need to be explored. Participants discussed options such as implementing satellite classes, and creating models similar to the Inuit Elder Circle which is recognized by the Ontario College of Teachers.

## Wellness

Participants expressed a need and desire to build on the inner confidence in students. There is a student well-being tool being piloted in Rama and Beausoleil First Nations, which identifies high-risk behaviours in students and allows schools to address and support those students in immediate and responsive ways. Communities are working to develop strategies to address these needs, ensure the expertise of specialists, and to support parents in understanding mental health needs and the resources available. The discussion led to linkages between effective academic programming and student wellness. Where there is understanding around our histories and contemporary issues, there is a better chance of having youth respond in positive ways. Knowledge and understanding is key.

*Below: Dwayne Pamajewon, Shawanaga First Nation, presenting welcoming remarks to the main plenary at the Toronto Airport Marriott Hotel.*



## Data

The collection and use of Anishinabek student data brought forward strong discussions and points of interest. For instance, having access to Anishinabek student data can increase the accountability of school principals. Superintendents are aware that principals have this data and so this should support strategic planning at school and system levels. That planning should include identifying the supports that are available to assist the students.

Qualitative data needs to be accompanied by a narrative. It is important to understand the trends and to identify the root of bigger issues. AES data can enable school administrations to have better awareness, to ask more questions and to be more responsive and intentional towards Anishinabek student needs.

## Next Steps for REC 4

1. KEB and Ministry of Education to ensure greater communications about the AES with ODSBs.
2. KEB and Ministry of Education to further consider the accreditation for languages used in Participating First Nations.
3. ODSBs and PFNs to collaborate on the collection of relevant and meaningful student data in areas of well-being and academics.
4. Develop collaborative plans at school, community, and system levels that respond to student data.



# Keynote Address: Language and Culture and its Effect on Student Well-Being by Dr. Sean Lessard

The keynote address on Day One of the forum was presented by Dr. Sean Lessard, who engaged all participants in his very personal talk about how he approaches education and life. Dr. Sean Lessard is from Montreal Lake Cree Nation in Treaty 6 territory Northern Saskatchewan. He is an award winning writer, international speaker and researcher in the field of indigenous education and youth studies. Sean is an Associate Professor at the University of Alberta and was recently awarded by the Canadian Association for Teacher Educators and the American Education Research Association. His work focuses on indigenous youth empowerment and leadership including the development of his not-for-profit indigenous youth bursary and wellness program that has contributed over \$150,000 in the past three years to indigenous high-school and post-secondary students across Canada.

## Dr. Lessard spoke about the seven turns of educational pedagogy:

1. Mapping the landscape
2. Releasing the imagination
3. Embracing uncertainty
4. Remaining open to possibilities
5. On the edge of vision
6. Animating life transitions
7. Sustaining Stories

Sean Lessard's powerful anecdotes and stories were messages to the youth, but they greatly impacted all participants at the forum.



Top: Dr. Sean Lessard delivering his keynote presentation.  
Middle and Bottom: Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund and Aaniish Naa Gegii informational displays.

## Informational Displays

At this year's forum, in addition to the presentations and facilitated discussions, display booths were set up, where participants could learn more about the projects and initiatives being implemented in PFNs and ODSBs. Two of the KEB's project coordinators, Tammy Desmoulin and Marie Chalykoff, creatively prepared a wealth of information to be shared. Their knowledge and leadership of the initiatives was a benefit to all. Vendor booths were also set up this year, which allowed participants to collect information about other education resources available to communities.

### Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund

#### *Project Coordinator – Tammy Desmoulin*

The Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund (NG Fund) is an annual grant that allows Participating First Nations, together with ODSBs and other organizations, to apply for individual and joint project funding under five priorities. The priorities for 2019-2020 are:

- Increasing knowledge and understanding of Anishinabek histories, cultures, perspectives, languages, and contributions (“Bimaadziwin”) and traditional Anishinaabe knowledge passed down from one generation to the next through ceremonial teachings (“Kendaaswin”);
- Enhanced opportunities for the engagement and participation of Anishinabek students, families, and communities to support Anishinabek student success and well-being;
- Facilitating the successful transition of students between Anishinabek First Nations' schools and schools in the Provincially-Funded Education System;
- Innovation and introduction of leading practices in Indigenous education.

### Next Steps

1. KEB to develop an evaluation tool that will enable the community to provide evidence of success.
2. KEB to analyze the results of the Fund projects and create a bank of exemplary models available to the Participating First Nations, ODSBs and the Ministry of Education
3. PFNs and ODSBs to consider linking funding to certain strategies that are proven to support student success and well-being.

### Aaniish Naa Gegii

#### *Project Coordinator – Marie Chalykoff*

Aaniish Naa Gegii is a project that involves the implementation of the Aboriginal Children's Health and Wellbeing Measure (ACHWM) within the four regions of the AES. The ACHWM was first developed in Wiikwemkoong as a culturally appropriate, and child-friendly way, to gather data on the status of Indigenous children's health and well-being. The information gathered from the ACHWM can be used to inform program and service planning in Indigenous communities to meet children's health needs.

At the forum, Marie shared information on how the KEB is supporting five communities within the AES to pilot the measure in their schools. The information focused on the benefits of the measure to AES communities and answered questions on how the data will be used in the pilot project. For further information, participants were directed to check out the ACHWM website hosted by Laurentian University.

# Day Two

## Agenda Day Two



# Anishinabek Education System

## Niigaan Gdizhaami

### “We Are Moving Forward Together” Forum

February 25-26, 2020

Toronto Airport Marriott Hotel, 901 Dixon Road, Toronto, Ontario

### WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 26

6:30 a.m.	○	Sunrise Ceremony	Salon C
7:30 a.m.	○	<b>BREAKFAST BUFFET</b>	Salons D/E
9:00 a.m.	○	Housekeeping/Introduction	Salons D/E
9:15 a.m.	○	Youth Presentation	Salons D/E
10:15 a.m.	○	<b>BREAK</b>	Salons D/E
10:30 a.m.	○	Breakout Sessions:	
		Cultural Competency (Group 1)	British Columbia/Alberta
		Student Transitions (Group 2)	Salons F/G
		Special Education (Group 3)	Salons A/B
11:30 a.m.	○	<b>LUNCH</b>	Salons D/E
12:30 p.m.	○	Breakout Sessions:	
		Cultural Competency (Group 3)	British Columbia/Alberta
		Student Transitions (Group 1)	Salons F/G
		Special Education (Group 2)	Salons A/B
1:30 p.m.	○	<b>BREAK</b>	Salons D/E
1:45 p.m.	○	Breakout Sessions:	
		Cultural Competency (Group 2)	British Columbia/Alberta
		Student Transitions (Group 3)	Salons F/G
		Special Education (Group 1)	Salons A/B
2:45 p.m.	○	Closing, Youth Acknowledgment & Prize Draws	Salons D/E



## AES Youth Presentation

Thirty-six AES students participated in the youth portion of the forum, with representation from 18 of 23 Participating First Nations. The youth participated in many of the main activities of the forum and special activities designed exclusively for them, including:

- Exploring the development of the AES Youth Council
- A youth dinner and games night
- Workshop to talk about youth priorities

### An AES Youth Council

Anishinabek youth aspire to create an Anishinabek Education Youth Council. Their ideas have been collected over the last two youth forums, and were enthusiastically shared with participants at the event. The youth have identified the roles they would include in their council, the importance of Elder involvement, and the intention to seek out people with expertise in areas such as education to help advise them. Council communications would involve social media, conferences, community events, and virtual meetings.

### Guided by their own priorities:

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| • Live healthy  | • Safe space to be alone                      |
| • Friendship    | • Having someone to trust                     |
| • Freedom       | • Care for yourself                           |
| • Accessibility | • Happy and healthy                           |
| • Confidence    | • Doing well emotionally mentally, physically |
| • Comfort       | • Being able to handle stress                 |
| • Ceremonies    | • Self-love                                   |
| • Sleep         | • Strength                                    |
| • Support       | • Support                                     |
| • Freedom       | • Good health                                 |
| • Self-care     | • Faith in yourself                           |
| • Mental health |   |
| • Family        |   |



Top: Kaitlynn Tomaselli, Sheshegwaning First Nation  
Middle Left: Makenzie Dokis, Dokis First Nation  
Middle Right: Cassandra Commanda, Nipissing First Nation  
Bottom: Dr. Sean Lessard, Montreal Lake Cree Nation



## Breakout Sessions

The second day of the forum included a rotation of the designation breakout sessions. The sessions were designed to offer current information and to gather feedback from participants. This feedback from PFNs and AES partners informs the final development of AES products.

### Three breakout sessions were held:

- Cultural Competency Training
- Student Transitions Protocol
- Special Education Guideline

### Cultural Competency Training

*Andrea Crawford and Nick Bertrand*

Forum participants were re-introduced to the AES Cultural Competency Training program. The program has been in development since 2018, and will be available for initial implementation to the AES, ODSBs and the Ministry of Education over the 2020-2021 school year. The development and implementation of the program is a direct deliverable of the MEA and falls under professional and leadership development. The breakout session offered a glimpse into the modules with a goal of garnering feedback. The modules will next be reviewed by the AES Language and Culture Reference Group.

<b>Module 1</b>	First Nations Awareness
<b>Module 2</b>	History of Indigenous Education
<b>Module 3</b>	Indigenous Worldviews
<b>Module 4</b>	Understanding through connection to land and story
<b>Module 5</b>	Respectful Relationships

### Next Steps

1. Participant feedback will be incorporated into the modules.
2. Process for and criteria for pilot selection will be finalized.
3. Implementation plan and communications will be finalized.
4. Implementation and familiarization targeted for 2020-2021 school year.

### Special Education Guideline

*Nancy Allaire and Elizabeth Bigwin*

The Special Education Committee (SEC) was developed to support the implementation of the MEA. As part of its responsibilities, SEC reviews current education services and practices, and makes recommendations to the Joint Master Education Agreement Committee. Over the past year, the SEC has been preparing a framework to support the Special Education Guideline. Main components of the Guideline are:

- a. Student Assessment and Identification
- b. Parental and Community Engagement
- c. Communication
- d. Student Transitions

Highlights of feedback from the sessions included the importance of seeking the guidance of an Elder in all initiatives, the need for information sessions for community education personnel, and to use less Ministry of Education language and practice in Anishinabek resources.

## Next Steps

1. The SEC will use the input from the forum to draft the Special Education Guideline.

## Student Transitions Protocol

*Renee Restoule and Beena Kondoopparampil*

The Transitions Working Group (TWG) provides advice and recommendations to the Joint Master Education Agreement Committee regarding successful transitions for students moving between schools on-reserve and ODSBs, and in other transitions. The TWG facilitated a workshop with forum participants to provide updates and collect feedback related to the Student Transitions Protocol, which has been in development since 2018-2019.

Highlights of feedback from the sessions included involving parents, grandparents and the wider community in student transitions; celebrating student success; ensuring a circle of care that creates accountability for follow-up; addressing negative factors that might impede transition success. The overall consensus in discussions were that there needs to be proper support for students, and student counts need to be redesigned by administration for better accuracy.

## Main transition points identified in the protocol document are:

1. Home to elementary
2. Early Years Care Centre to elementary
3. Elementary to secondary
4. First Nations school to a provincially-funded school
5. First Nations school to First Nations school
6. Provincially-funded school to provincially-funded school
7. Secondary school to post-secondary (e.g. apprenticeship, college, university)
8. Secondary school to workforce
9. Early leavers

## Next Steps

1. The TWG will use the input from the forum to complete the draft protocol on student transitions.

*Below left: Nancy Allaire, Nipissing First Nation and Elizabeth Bigwin, Beausoleil First Nation presenting the Special Education Guideline breakout session.*

*Below right: Renee Restoule, Nipissing First Nation and Beena Kondoopparampil presenting the Student Transitions Protocol breakout session.*



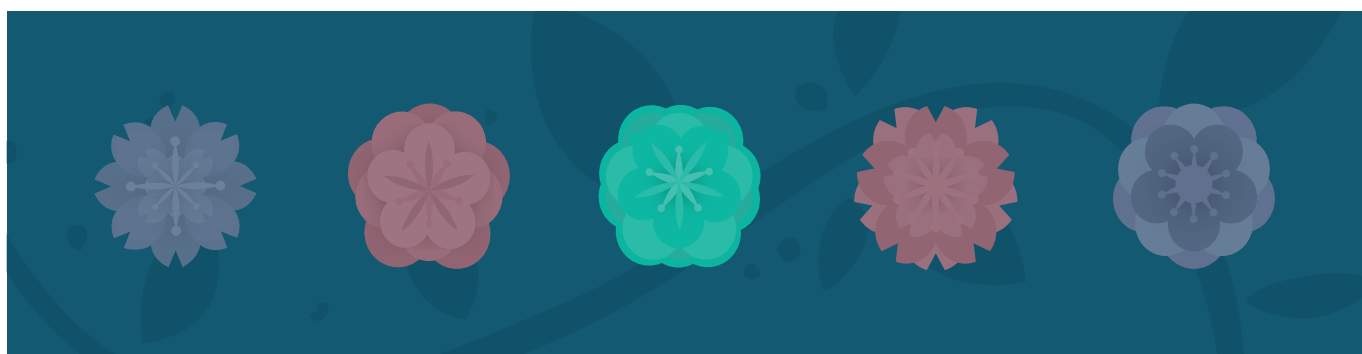
## Forum Reflections

The Kinoomaadziwin Education Body and the Ministry of Education would like to offer sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone who supports and contributes to the Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum. This year marks the fifth annual forum; and the second forum since the implementation of the Master Education Agreement.

The Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum continues to provide a platform for knowledge sharing, goal setting and priority planning for the Anishinabek Education System, Ontario District School Boards, the Ministry of Education, and Canada.

Finally, the Kinoomaadziwin Education Body and the Ministry of Education would like to offer a special thank you to the youth of the Participating First Nations. Their attendance at this event is inspiring, and a reminder that our youth have a strong desire to participate in the Anishinabek Education System. Their contributions are invaluable and carry lasting impacts that drive the continued work of each party.

Chi-Miigwech!



# Next Steps Summary

## Master Education Agreement (MEA)

### Strategic Initiatives (Page 9)

1. Project Reports and summative discussions will occur in Spring 2020 between the Strategic Initiatives pilot sites, KEB, and EDU partners. These will result in comprehensive summary reports for each pilot program to be presented to Regional Education Councils for consideration.
2. Recommendations will be made for expansion and adaptation of specific student-support programs for the Anishinabek Education System.
3. Recommendations will inform the development of the second Multi-Year Action Plan and funding projections, which are scheduled to begin in June 2020.

### Guidelines and Protocols (Page 10)

1. Product development for the Student Transitions Protocol and the Special Education Guideline.
2. Method for pilot site selection for the Cultural Competency Training to be reviewed by the Regional Education Councils and the Language and Culture Reference Group.
3. Sharing Anishinabek Education Resources Guideline to be reviewed by the Language and Culture Reference Group.
4. Implementation plan will be developed for the sharing of products and consulting on processes over the 2020-2021 school year for full integration beginning September 2021.

### Anishinabek Resource Development (Page 11)

1. Completion of the Cultural Competency Training Modules.
2. Consider a funding structure to support the local development of resource materials to support curriculum.

## Regional Discussions

### REC 1 (Page 14-15)

1. More information and support to be provided on PowerSchool.

### REC 2 (Page 15-16)

1. Seek information and clarification on the existing role of First Nation trustee. Specifically, the current legislation that guides this and which students are represented.
2. Explore the role of ODSB trustees within the context of the Anishinabek Education System.
3. Education Service Agreements – AES and ODSB partners to maintain partnerships and agreements.
4. Increase effectiveness of PFN/ODSB collaboration:
  - a. More face-to-face meetings
  - b. Encourage more First Nation representation on FNAC, IEAC, IAC (advisory committees);
  - c. PFN/ODSB – one on one meetings; create a collaborative action plan
  - d. Better communication to ensure understanding of projects and general progress

### REC 3 (Page 16-18)

1. Develop a repository where Anishinabek language and educational resources can be kept, and accessed by others.
2. Inquire with the Mushkegowuk Tribal Council about sharing their Cycle of Life Model.
3. Explore the avenue for ensuring the presence of Elders in all school settings where Anishinabek student attend.
4. Ensure the collection of data for all programs and initiatives and use the data to inform community and system planning and funding decisions.

## Next Steps Summary

### REC 4 (Page 18-19)

1. KEB and Ministry of Education to ensure greater communications about AES with ODSBs.
2. KEB and Ministry of Education to further consider the accreditation for languages used in the Participating First Nations.
3. ODSBs and PFNs to collaborate on the collection of relevant and meaningful student data in areas of well-being and academics.
4. Collaborative plans at school, community, and system levels to be put in place to respond to student data.

### Targeted Initiatives: Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund (Page 21)

1. KEB to develop an evaluation tool that will enable the community to provide evidence of success.
2. KEB to analyze the results of the NG Fund projects and create a bank of exemplary models available to the Participating First Nations, ODSBs and the Ministry of Education
3. PFNs and ODSBs consider linking funding to certain strategies that are proven to support student success and well-being.

### Cultural Competency Training (Page 25)

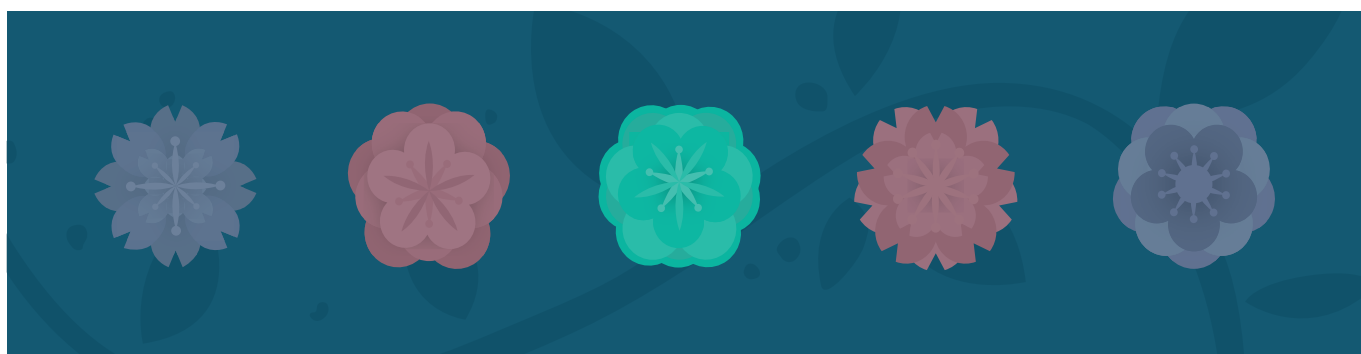
1. Participant feedback will be incorporated into the modules.
2. Process for and criteria for pilot selection will be finalized.
3. Implementation plan and communications will be finalized.
4. Implementation and familiarization targeted for 2020-2021 school year.

### Special Education Guideline (Page 25-26)

1. The SEC will use the input from the forum to draft the Special Education Guideline.

### Student Transitions Protocol (Page 26)

1. The TWG will use the input from the forum to complete the draft protocol on student transitions.



# Appendices

## Glossary

<b>AES</b>	Anishinabek Education System
<b>ACHWM</b>	Aboriginal Children's Health and Well-Being Measure
<b>AN</b>	Anishinabek Nation
<b>ANEA</b>	Anishinabek Nation Education Agreement
<b>BSID</b>	Board School Identification Number
<b>CCT</b>	Cultural Competency Training
<b>DREC</b>	Data, Research and Evaluation Committee
<b>EDI</b>	Early Development Instrument
<b>EDU</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>EFTA</b>	Electronic Fiscal Transfer Agreement
<b>ESA</b>	Education Services Agreement
<b>EO</b>	Education Officer
<b>FN</b>	First Nation
<b>FNAC</b>	First Nations Advisory Committee
<b>IAC</b>	Indigenous Advisory Committee
<b>IEAC</b>	Indigenous Education Advisory Committee
<b>KEB</b>	Kinoomaadziwin Education Body
<b>MEA</b>	Master Education Agreement
<b>MYAP</b>	Multi-Year Action Plan
<b>NGF</b>	Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum
<b>NG Fund</b>	Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund
<b>ODSB</b>	Ontario District School Board
<b>PFN</b>	Participating First Nation
<b>REC</b>	Regional Education Council
<b>RECC</b>	Regional Education Council Coordinator
<b>SEC</b>	Special Education Committee
<b>TWG</b>	Transitions Working Group

## Supporting Documents and Links

A. Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum Agenda 2020

<https://aes-keb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/A.-Niigaan-Gdizhaami-Forum-Agenda-2020.pdf>

B. 2019 Niigaan Gdizhaami Annual Forum report

<https://aes-keb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/B.-2019-Niigaan-Gdizhaami-Annual-Forum-Report.pdf>

C. Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum - Presenter Biographies 2020

<https://aes-keb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/C.-Niigaan-Gdizhaami-Forum-Presenter-Biographies-2020.pdf>

D. Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum 2020 - Main PowerPoint Presentation

<https://aes-keb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/D.-Niigaan-Gdizhaami-Forum-2020-Main-PPT.pdf>

E. Draft Youth Council Structure - Developed in February 2019

<https://aes-keb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/E.-Draft-Youth-Council-Structure-Developed-in-February-2019.pdf>

F. REC 1 Fall Meeting Report 2019

<https://aes-keb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/F.-REC-1-Fall-Meeting-Report-2019-FINAL.pdf>

G. REC 2 Fall Meeting Report 2019

<https://aes-keb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/G.-REC-2-Fall-Meeting-Report-2019-FINAL.pdf>

H. REC 3 Fall Meeting Report 2019

<https://aes-keb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/H.-REC-3-Fall-Meeting-Report-2019-FINAL.pdf>

I. REC 4 Fall Meeting Report 2019

<https://aes-keb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/I.-REC-4-Fall-Meeting-Report-2019-FINAL.pdf>

J. Workshop - Cultural Competency

<https://aes-keb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/J.-Workshop-Cultural-Competency.pdf>

K. Workshop - Special Education

<https://aes-keb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/K.-Workshop-Special-Education.pdf>

L. Workshop - Student Transitions Protocol

<https://aes-keb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/L.-Workshop-Student-Transitions-Protocol.pdf>

Healthline

[www.thehealthline.ca](http://www.thehealthline.ca)