



**ANISHINABEK
EDUCATION SYSTEM**

Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund

Project Booklet

2021 - 2022



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Introduction

The Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund (the Fund) is an annual grant established by the Kinoomaadziwin Education Body (KEB) and the Ministry of Education. The objective of the Fund is to support and invest in community and joint projects, that advance the objectives of the Master Education Agreement (MEA), through five guiding priorities:

- i. 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”);
- ii. Enhanced opportunities for the engagement and participation of Anishinabek students, families, and communities to support Anishinabek student success and well-being;
- iii. Facilitating the successful transition of students between Anishinabek First Nations’ schools and schools in the Provincially-Funded Education System.
- iv. Innovation and introduction of leading practices in Indigenous education; and
- v. Supporting collaboration between the AES and School Boards, including data and information sharing.

“Having youth at the center of the learning is most important. Spending time and building relationships with the youth truly gives them a voice. They know they are loved and valued by the community and the school. They are developing a sense of belonging that lasts throughout secondary school and beyond.”

Vicki Ware, Aamjiwnaang First Nation, Secondary Youth Leadership

“Sylas Wyld represented his community with such amazing talent and achievement, it was so amazing he was chosen as the representative for the entire graduating class.

This is a perfect example of exactly everything I dreamed of for my students. To walk with pride across that stage and for the celebration to be inclusive of who our students are, where they come from, and the incredible gifts they offer.”

Erica Kelly, Indigenous Transition Coordinator

“There were lots of excited parents and grandparents telling us how wonderful it was to see the students embracing their culture and traditions.”

“This was an incredibly unique opportunity for our students. It was the most beautiful uprising of our Indigenous students. To watch each student fall in love with their culture and traditions was such an honor to witness. So many beautiful things happened in the lodge, bonds were forever built.”

2021-2022 was the fourth year of the Fund, which resulted with 24 projects that were supported in 17 Participating First Nations (PFNs), totalling \$746,020. The projects supported by the Fund were all vital to the PFNs in the Anishinabek Education System (AES). These projects positively affected over 2,100 students throughout the AES. What was learned from this year's report is that there is a clear need for student support/wellness workers, cultural advisors, land-based learning and language focused positions, and youth leadership positions in the AES schools and in provincially funded schools that AES students attend.

24
Projects
Supported

2,100
Students
Supported

17
Participating
First Nations

\$746,020
Funding Utilized

Four major themes emerged from the 2021-2022 Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund. They were:

1. Student Support and Student Success (7 Projects)
2. Cultural Knowledge, Cultural Support, and Language Revitalization (8 Projects)
3. Land-Based Learning (6 Projects)
4. Curriculum Development (3 Projects)

The Fund projects reported the following positive outcomes within the AES communities:

- Increased attendance and engagement;
- Increase in Anishinaabemowin;
- Strong relationships with staff & peers;
- Increase in cultural knowledge;
- connections with the community;
- Increase in credits achieved;
- Increased skill development;
- Increase in graduation rates, learning growth; and
- Trust built with educators/community members.

Testimonials provided by over **2,100** students, teachers, and staff who participated in the Fund projects highlighted the following areas:

- Youth feeling heard/have a voice
- Having the knowledge to talk through difficult topics
- Relationship building
- Youth leadership
- Sense of safety in their learning environment
- Feeling recognized
- Forming a school family
- Bridge between parents and school
- Feeling empowered to know their culture
- Sense of belonging
- Sense of identity
- Sense of community
- Being proud of one's heritage
- Feeling part of the school community
- Identity reflected in their school
- Meaningful learning
- Building cultural knowledge capacity amongst teachers and staff
- Students thriving

STUDENT SUPPORT AND STUDENT SUCCESS PROJECTS

Biigtigong Nishnaabeg

STUDENT SUCCESS/EDUCATION COUNSELOR

Target Audience: Biigtigong Nishnaabeg students in grades 8 - 12

Project Summary:

This project included a position titled Student Support Person/Education Counselor. They were a community member of Biigtigong Nishnaabeg and they provided support and comfort to students who were in a setting that is not their own or part of their community. Biigtigong Nishnaabeg students attend high school off-reserve in Marathon, Ontario. Marathon High School does not have teachers or other staff who are community members, or Anishinaabe, who can relate to the students of Biigtigong Nishnaabeg.

The counselor helped students navigate the education system, provided advocacy, and offered a support system for students. The counselor provided academic support and overall assistance that contributed to the well-being of students. The counselor met with the students' teachers on a regular basis, made referrals when needed, and was a link to the community and school staff.

Success Stories:

At Biigtigong Nishnaabeg, the student counselor actively participated with, and supported, Biigtigong Nishnaabeg students at Marathon High School. The student counselor was described as the connection between the secondary school, the students, and the parents. Many students described this support person as *“someone in their corner when they feel alone in an unfamiliar environment.”*

The student counselor also assisted with attendance rates. There were a small number of students who experienced chronic absenteeism. The education counselor assisted these students with frequent home communication, mental health supports, and other interventions.

Students achieved more credits in 2020-2021 versus the 2019-2020 school year

First term

- 13 out of 17 students achieved 100% credits enrolled

Final term

- 12 out of 13 students achieved 100% of credits enrolled

Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek

INDIGENOUS ACADEMIC AND WELLNESS SUPPORT WORKER, EDUCATION COUNSELOR

Target Audience: Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek (BZA) students in grades 8 - 12

Project Summary:

The Indigenous Academic and Wellness Support Worker provided a direct link between the school and the students, which enhanced student success. The wellness worker actively connected with students from BZA as they transitioned from grade 8 in the First Nation school to grade 9 in the local provincial high school. The wellness worker had a designated space in the community, which was accessible by students, families, and community members.

Part of their role was to assist with organizing cultural events for students, such as ribbon skirt making, ceremonial teachings, smudging, and sharing stories and teachings about traditional medicines.

Success Stories:

The partnership with the Superior Greenstone District School Board has enabled BZA to begin creating new curriculum documents with a focus on revitalization of the traditional forms of parenting, and further explaining and exploring the relationship between Indigenous people as they relate to Canadian law.

The wellness worker had a positive impact on students. Nipigon-Red Rock District High School staff also witnessed and appreciated the positive impacts of the wellness worker.

“Having Rose in the building eases my anxiety, knowing that she is there for me no matter what I may need makes me look forward to attending school. Having chosen to learn from home this last semester I realize how much I depend on Rose every day.”

“Rose is an integral part of our student success team. She provides one-to-one support, creates positive connections between students, teachers, educational staff, and the community of BZA. The students know she is there for them and provides an extra level of comfort that helps students know they are part of the school community. Students benefit immeasurably from Rose’s hard work to support and connect them to people/opportunities. The importance of the role that Rose plays, cannot be overstated.”

The Wellness Support Worker was responsible for:

- i. engaging the grade 8 teacher at the on-reserve school to develop a transition plan;
- ii. sharing information from the First Nation school with the high school;
- iii. working with schools to create a standard transition plan;
- iv. providing a supportive, welcoming, and safe environment;
- v. meeting with students on a scheduled basis;
- vi. providing opportunities to share Anishinaabe culture;
- vii. academic tutoring;
- viii. planning cultural events;
- ix. transporting students to and from non-academic activities;
- x. engaging BZA students to assess their well-being during transition to high school; and
- xi. providing life skills and mentoring.

Long Lake #58 First Nation

BIMAADIZOWIN CENTRE WELLNESS WORKER

Target Audience: Students in the Bimaadizowin Centre at Migizi Wazisin Elementary School and Migizi Miigwanan Secondary School.

Project Summary:

The Bimaadizowin Centre wellness worker performed a variety of duties to support the school and its students. The wellness worker followed a holistic, student-centred approach which took care of the needs of the students, providing them with programming and services that included health care, mental health care, addictions treatment, life skills, spiritual programming, cultural programming, and recreation activities.

Success Stories:

The Bimaadizowin Centre provided a place for the students to stay on task and a place to complete their work. Students at Long Lake # 58 First Nation felt a sense of belonging and formed a school family in the Bimaadizowin Centre. The wellness worker took the students out to participate in many land-based learning outings and students learned leadership skills. One student who was typically quiet in the classroom, took on leadership roles while out on land-based outings.

“Students feel a sense of belonging and have formed a school family in the centre. Positive relationships between students and staff have been formed. The students enjoy land-based outings and are encouraged to explore their traditional land. They are eager to show others the skills they have learned.”

Wahnapiatae First Nation

RECOGNIZING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Target Audience: Elementary and secondary students of Wahnapiatae First Nation

Project Summary:

The purpose of this project was to recognize the accomplishments of Wahnapiatae First Nation's students over the last two years. The awards congratulated the students for their individual achievements. Teachers provided a written statement for each student that spoke to an achievement they witnessed the student accomplish through the year.

Success Stories:

The awards and acknowledgements positively affected the students. Past graduates from 2019-2022 were invited to speak to the younger students and offered some inspirational words. The graduates spoke of the successes and challenges that they overcame during the pandemic. Students who graduated from grade 8 and 12 received a graduation cap and a certificate. Each student demonstrated pride as they received their awards.

Atikameksheng Anishnawbek

ENSO BEBEZHİK MIINGOWEZWIN ADA'AAN ABINOOJINH (Every child has their gift)
Designing an Education Support Program for Anishinaabek Learners with Disabilities

Target Audience:

Teaching staff at Akinoomoshin, Sudbury Catholic District School Board (SCDSB), Atikameksheng Education, Atikameksheng Social Services, and Atikameksheng Health staff. The individuals and families who were part of the Akinoomoshin learning community and members of Atikameksheng.

Project Summary:

Enso bebezhiik miingowezwin ada'aan abinoojinh translates to “every child has their gift.” This project designed and developed an education support program for learners with disabilities. The program provided Anishinaabemowin learning, cultural and spiritual learning, and land learning to its audiences. The program also promoted Anishinaabe ways of being, knowing, learning, and doing, by reclaiming Anishinabek pedagogy and applying it in Atikameksheng's education practice. Special considerations were given to support children to understand and learn about the spiritual gifts and abilities that they may carry such as their Anishinaabe name and their clan.

As the program was being written, the writer reached out to SCDSB staff, Atikameksheng staff, and knowledge carriers to discuss ideas that would benefit the program, including elements such as the determination of groupings, descriptions of learning activities, identifying knowledge carriers, lesson plan templates, considerations for intergenerational learning, language transmission, staff training, and program evaluation, etc.

Success Stories:

Atikameksheng Anishnawbek used a traditional tikanagan to assist learners with disabilities. The tikanagan has not been commonly used. There are generations of children who have not learned the skills and uses for the tikanagan. Through the program, the abinoojinh (children) were able to regulate and calm strong emotions because they learned what security felt like. Through the teachings of the tikanagan, the abinoojinh felt a sense of safety in their learning environment, felt a sense of calm and peacefulness, and learned that the feeling of the tikanagan can be replicated through swaddling, wewebigan (swing), and a hammock.



“Abinoojinh have learned how to regulate and calm strong emotions because they have learned what security feels like, by use of the tikanagan.

Older learners have used the hammock to replicate the tikanagan. By using the natural environment of the trees, leaves, birds, and the sounds of the forest, learners have felt a sense of calm and peacefulness.”



Aamjiwnaang First Nation

SECONDARY YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Target Audience: High school students

Project Summary:

This project supported student learning and leadership. The students enhanced their own learning through building relationships and building a safe environment within the school and the community. The project partnered with local Elders and Knowledge Keepers to develop youth leaders. Youth were split into two working groups: youth mentorship and youth leadership. Each group built connections with the youth and built support for the youth to continue to participate at various levels of their learning.

Success Stories:

Aamjiwnaang First Nation recognized the positive impact that the student leadership program had on their students and the entire school over two years. The program had so much success that students who graduated, returned to volunteer their time to mentor younger students. Relationship building among parents and community has resulted in open communication between students, parents, and community. Throughout the project, students took ownership of their own learning. The students decided which topics they wanted to address with the school population, created an action plan, initiated the action plan, then debriefed on their learning.

Aamjiwnaang First Nation's Secondary Youth Leadership Program saw an increase in parental engagement, with 55 parents who joined the learning opportunities that the program offered. The relationship building among the parents and the community was visible through the open dialogue, open communication, and idea conceptualization based on youth voice. In addition to parent participation, the program saw families and non-Indigenous school peers participate in the events. The opportunity for the community to witness the learning and vision of the students in the Secondary Youth Leadership Program was incredibly impactful.

One of the many events that occurred was an art installation created by the youth to build awareness of Indian Residential Schools. The unveiling of the art installation was attended by Survivors, youth, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, school community, families, and parents.

Magnetawan First Nation

LEARNING HUB/LITERACY CAMP

Target Audience: Students through grade 8 - 12

Project Summary:

This project provided an opportunity for Magnetawan First Nation's students to gain enhanced reading and writing habits, which they will carry on when they enter college or university. The learning hub/literacy camp broadened their knowledge and enhanced their self-worth and social skills.

Success Stories:

Magnetawan First Nation focused on a learning hub/literacy camp and saw a benefit to having a worker in the school to assist the students with literacy. Students that did not want to attend school looked forward to attending school when the literacy worker was in the classroom.

CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE, CULTURAL SUPPORT, AND LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION PROJECTS

Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation BRINGING US TOGETHER

Target Audience: Students in JK - grade 12

Project Summary:

This project focused on preservation and further development of language resources. Students were encouraged to participate and engage in various language initiatives. The programming included workshops that promoted self worth, pride, and enhanced relationships within families.

Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation utilized community members' special gifts, such as planting, caring for and harvesting medicines, setting fishing nets, cleaning fish, sorting through fish catches, maple syrup production, and drum making. After each workshop, the community's efforts were celebrated with a feast.

Success Stories:

Students at Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation reflected on their learning. Their reflection was noticed by the school, the community, and families.

Nokomis Corner

Nokomis Corner is a designated safe space for students, a space to hold traditional medicines, and a space for visiting Elders and Knowledge Keepers.



"We have one student, who with lots of coaxing and building trust, agreed to attend the program. This student has had a very tough upbringing and was unsure that he belonged in his community. He did attend our first welcome and teaching. He was very quiet and just kind of looking around at everyone. He did introduce himself and was given a warm welcome from our Healer. He was asked to carry the smudge around the circle and give to those who wished a chance to smudge. You could see the pride on his face to be asked to do this for our group. From that moment, you could see the anxiety and unsureness leave his face and body. His love for his culture was always there, he just felt almost unworthy."

Patti Big Canoe, Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation

Wahnapiitae First Nation

EKINAMADIWIN (TEACHINGS)

Target Audience: Students in JK - grade 12 and Teachers/Staff

Project Summary:

Cultural awareness workshops were offered to students and staff of the Rainbow District School Board to learn more about First Nation cultural teachings, including traditional ceremonies, medicines, crafts, dance, land-based teachings, and storytelling which has been passed down for generations.

Success Stories:

Staff at the Rainbow District School Board shared testimonials of their experiences. Non-Indigenous participants recognized the resilience of Anishinaabe people.

“I learnt that history has created an impact on the Indigenous Peoples. The trauma and tragedies that were encountered are devastating. The sufferings of loss of culture, values, identity are unacceptable. Everyone has a story to tell. By educating, discussing, and sharing, it can help right those wrongs. Listen, accept, and respect.”

“Spark. Everyone has a spark. The struggles and resilience of the Indigenous people is amazing. The movement towards healing to teach the culture and history and impacts of residential schools so that all people can unite to make a better place and a bigger spark in each of us.”



Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation

MINO BIMAADZIWIN (LIVE THE GOOD LIFE)

Target Audience: Students and community members

Project Summary:

Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation utilized the land for their cultural knowledge project. Students were taken on the land to harvest the sugar bush and learn the identifying characteristics of nininaatigoog. Students learned from start to finish how to harvest the maple syrup. Over 75 trees were tapped, the sap was cooked, and processed into maple syrup. Students also learned about, harvested, and propagated medicinal plants near the sugar bush.

Success Stories:

The Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation saw a dramatic increase in cultural pride, identity, stewardship responsibilities, and appreciation for the natural resources found within their territory.

The project also supported off-reserve band members through the collection and delivery of traditional plants/medicines. The long-term goal was to propagate medicines while developing inventory that members off and on-reserve can access, to support wellness and traditional medicinal plant knowledge.

“The Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund Project has been a great support for our ongoing land-based program initiatives. The sugar bush is located among medicinal plants that have been identified, harvested, and propagated. Students in the community who previously used this forest as a walking trail, have developed a greater sense of appreciation and connection as they recognize a variety of trees, plants, and roots. They have begun to foster a relationship with these beings and see the forest in a more Anishinaabe way.”

Matthew Stevens, Cultural Coordinator

Dokis First Nation

CULTURAL ADVISOR NORTH

Target Audience: Anishinabek students, other Indigenous students, and non-Indigenous students in the Near North District School Board

Project Summary:

This project included a full-time Cultural Advisor who supported Near North District School Board schools with the delivery of culturally-appropriate lessons and activities. The Cultural Advisor was a regular presence in the schools and worked alongside students and staff to help build cultural competence capacity for teachers. They also delivered meaningful and engaging activities for students. This project was an important and necessary opportunity for Indigenous students to see themselves reflected in their school and to build a trusting relationship with an Indigenous role model.

Success Stories:

The Cultural Advisors hosted a variety of activities including repairing Grandfather drums and hand drums, creating shakers, creating feathers, creating bundles for schools, creating ribbon skirts, gifts for Elders/knowledge keepers, medicines for programs, celebrations and ceremonies, language promotion and resource building, and participating in sharing circles.



Moose Deer Point First Nation

CULTURAL ADVISOR WEST/EAST

Target Audience: Anishinabek students, other Indigenous students, and non-indigenous students in the Near North District School Board

Project Summary:

This project included a full-time Cultural Advisor who supported Near North District School Board schools with the delivery of culturally-appropriate lessons and activities. The Cultural Advisor was a regular presence in the schools and worked alongside students and staff to help build cultural competence capacity for teachers. They also delivered meaningful and engaging activities for students. This project was an important and necessary opportunity for Indigenous students to see themselves reflected in their school and to build a trusting relationship with an Indigenous role model.

There are currently 14 schools in the Parry Sound and Almaguin Region and only five schools get to experience the benefits of having Indigenous staff and programming in their schools on a regular basis. There are urban Indigenous students who do not have a regular connection to their own First Nation community.

Success Stories:

Moose Deer Point First Nation reported that youth were taking initiative and their confidence had noticeably risen, as the youth could see more of themselves in the cultural events. Not only were the youth positively affected by the Cultural Advisor, but families also reached out to the Cultural Advisor. The youth described the Cultural Advisor as an uncle, cousin, friend, singer, knowledge carrier, role model, culturally safe, humorous, kind, and a big brother.



Surveys show that:

Youth wanted more:

- Speaking Anishinaabemowin in circles or independently with youth
- Leading in drum songs
- Wanting to host cultural events
- Youth seeing culture reflected in their school
- Less shame in knowing their history

Teachers reported that cultural advisors:

- Are essential to authentic and meaningful learning
- Necessary so Indigenous students can see themselves in their schools
- Work alongside teachers to build capacity and support student learning
- Promoted engagement, improved well-being, and created learning environments that encourage students to thrive

Nipissing First Nation

REVITALIZING CULTURE AND LANGUAGE THROUGH INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES

Target Audience: Native as a Second Language students in grades 6, 7, and 8 at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Elementary School

Project Summary:

Nipissing First Nation and Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Elementary School developed a meaningful partner project to revitalize culture and language through innovative strategies. Students learned about their culture and language by fusing technology and land-based learning together. Students worked with staff to create an outdoor garden. Throughout the project, students learned about traditional medicines, different types of lodges (tipi, sweat lodge, etc.), Anishinaabemowin vocabulary related to medicines and gardening, medicine wheel teachings, connection to nature, stewardship, and gratitude for Mother Earth. Students used the information learned to plant traditional medicines in the school's courtyard, then students harvested the traditional medicines.

Success Stories:

Students were visibly proud of the medicine garden. Nipissing First Nation and Our Lady Sorrows Catholic Elementary School reported an increase in:

- Student engagement
- Increase in family engagement and connections
- Increase in Anishinaabemowin use
- Increased outdoor space
- Decrease in student incidents
- Increase in student well-being



"I am grateful for the tipi, the garden, and our school for the opportunities that helped us learn and celebrate our culture and our language. I am grateful that I was able to help in building of the garden and the tipi. It is something that I will remember forever! I think the garden helps me connect to the Grandfather teachings and I really enjoy being at the garden for the celebrations."

Student, Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Elementary School

"I am grateful for the tipi and the garden because they represent our Indigenous culture. I am thankful for my father who was a big part of building the garden. I am very proud of what he brought to the school, as well as the teachers and staff. Being part of building the tipi and garden really connects me to my family because they also teach me about my history and language."

Student, Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Elementary School

Whitefish River First Nation

CULTURAL EDUCATOR AT SHAWANOSOWE SCHOOL

Target Audience: Students in kindergarten to grade 6, staff, and families of Shawanosowe School

Project Summary:

This project enabled Shawanosowe School to hire a Cultural Educator to work with students at the school. Students and staff at Shawanosowe School participated in cultural activities, learned the history of Whitefish River First Nation, and learned Anishinaabemowin throughout the year. The entire school community benefited from this position at the school, with students, staff and families participating in activities that included:

- moose hide tanning
- medicine walks
- sewing ribbon skirts
- berry teachings
- hiking
- storytelling
- sacred fires
- Robinson Huron Treaty information
- Orange Shirt Day knowledge
- harvesting moose
- making Three Sisters soup
- Indigenous Veteran's Day
- decolonizing through literacy
- Rock Your Mocs



Success Stories:

One student was so inspired with the ribbon skirt making, that she asked her parents for her very own sewing machine for Christmas.

Chippewas of Rama First Nation

YOUTH SUMMER LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Target Audience: Youth ages 16 - 25 years old

Project Summary:

Chippewas of Rama First Nation developed the Youth Summer Language Program to address the ongoing issue of loss of language. Students had an eventful summer attending pow-wows, Chief Island, youth centres, and a youth sweat lodge.



Success Stories:

Youth who were previously quiet in gatherings became comfortable with others, developed more social skills, developed event planning skills, developed budgeting and marketing skills, and teamwork skills/experience. Youth explored their culture through pow wows, sweat lodge ceremony, and an art mural designed and painted by the youth.

“Seeing these youth come together to work hard at planning, collaborating with each other on their ideas, and putting these plans into motion have really showcased the skills they have and have developed over the course of the summer. We have some really amazing youth with wonderful ideas.”

Lise Kwekkeboom, Director of Education, Chippewas of Rama First Nation

LAND-BASED LEARNING PROJECTS

Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek

SPIRIT BAY SCHOOL LAND-BASED LEARNING PROGRAM

Target Audience: Elementary students of Spirit Bay School

Project Summary:

This project included a full-time outdoor recreation program with a recreation educator within the school. The program offered new land-based opportunities with language integrated throughout the program. Students learned about ceremony and traditional teachings.

Success Stories:

Students who did not want to attend school became interested in attending school once again. Students and their families learned the traditions of snaring and harvesting fish through the land-based learning program.

What did students and families participate in?

- Axe safety
- Cooking on an open fire
- Building a fire
- Cooking traditional foods
- Sharing circles
- Hand drumming
- Singing
- Storytelling
- Language games
- Snowshoe teachings
- Gill net teachings
- Garden teachings



What did the program offer?

- i. locally developed lesson plans
- ii. local history and language
- iii. focus of mental health and wholistic world views
- iv. frequent consultation with community and Elders
- v. cultural events



Beausoleil First Nation

AGAAMING SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAM

Target Audience: Grade 8 Beausoleil Students

Project Summary:

Agaaming Summer Learning Program tied community, water, wind monitoring, and land-based learning to mitigate climate change issues. Beausoleil First Nation created the Agaaming Summer Learning Program to utilize the summer months to engage students in innovative land-based learning that supports credit acquisition.

The summer learning program also allowed grade 8 students the opportunity to gain a credit ahead of schedule. This allowed opportunity for students in grades 9 and 10 to have access to a spare for credit recovery or extra assistance during the school year. The spare also eased the pressure of gaining all credits and allows space for remedial help in subjects where there may be challenges.

Success Stories:

Beausoleil First Nation had **100% credits achieved** at their Agaaming Summer Learning Program. Beausoleil First Nation reported that all 15 students registered in the Summer Learning Program achieved their geography credit.

Check out these videos from the Agaaming Summer Learning Program!

<https://aes-keb.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/BeausoleilVideo.mp4>

<https://aes-keb.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Beasoleil-SimcoePartnershipVideo.mp4>

Did you know?

Students who have 16 credits by the end of grade 10 increase exponentially the likelihood of graduating high school.



Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation

GAACH BIMAASEDAA GII SHKAKIMI-KWE: LET'S ALL WALK SOFTLY ON MOTHER EARTH (OUTDOOR CLASSROOM & LAND-BASED LEARNING)

Target Audience: Chippewas of Georgina Island students in kindergarten - grade 12, with a specialized focus on grades 7-12 to support transitions, parents, staff, community, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers.

Project Summary:

Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation created an outdoor land-based learning environment to further build an improved state of education for all Indigenous people. This space created a place of learning that is founded in the resiliency of the Indigenous community, local to our school, and advocates for inclusion and change through reflective opportunities designed for Indigenous learners. This outdoor land-based learning site has given students an opportunity to reconnect with the land, Elders, and language. In turn, it created a space that fosters holistic health. The outdoor classroom created a culturally-rich, vibrant, and safe space for students to gather on the land and learn in community.

Success Stories:

Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation proudly reported that their students had a very successful year. The Valedictorian for Sutton District High School was Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation's own Syllas Wyld. Another grade 12 graduate, Ava Charles, received an award in Anishinaabemowin and an honours letter for Academic Standing. Hailey Wheeler won the award for Athletics for 2021.



New Partnerships

- Partnering with The LINK community hub programs for Indigenous youth
- Jays Care Initiative (food insecurity program)
- The Working Group Georgina (community outreach)
- Georgina Trades Training Institute (training and employment)
- Road to Freedom (Indigenous Film and Television program)

"There had been a great deal of student/staff engagement in making these partnerships work within our entire community. Inclusion of parents/guardians, aunties/Elders/cousins as part of our Indigenous educational framework is tantamount to the successful outcomes for our students. Both students, their parents/guardians and our community members are seeing themselves reflected in the governance, protocols, and continued reconciliation in education for our membership as a result of projects like the Outdoor Classroom. We consistently have parents, family and members of community volunteer and consult their time and knowledge to best support ongoing initiatives in the Courtyard, our Anishinaabemowin language program and within the First Nations Study Centre. This continues to ensure the inclusion of our membership and the valuable teachings they carry will continue to work in partnership with curriculum expectations."

Erica Kelly

Whitefish River First Nation

COMMUNITY EDUCATION ARCHIVING

Target Audience: Students in junior kindergarten - grade 6 at Shawanosowe School

Project Summary:

Whitefish River First Nation recognized the need to record the stories of local traditional knowledge keepers for the purposes of creating resources to be utilized within the classroom. This project not only preserved the stories and traditional knowledge of those within Whitefish River First Nation, but it also provided the resources to help create curriculum content to be used within Shawanosowe School.

Success Stories:

Students spent time with a local Knowledge Keeper and member of Council learning on the land about Whitefish River First Nation's history. Students experienced a variety of local trips and while on the outings, students thrived in their natural elements. One student who was often disengaged in the classroom was so interested in learning about their history and listening to the stories from the local Knowledge Keeper that the student even wanted to sit and have lunch with the Knowledge Keeper.

Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg

EXPANDING WHAT WE KNOW!

Target Audience: Grades 3 - 8 at Netamisakomik Centre for Education

Project Summary:

The focus of this project was expanding on the students' knowledge. Students learned about survival skills, trapping, hunting, season changes, drum making, language, and culture. Students learned how to harvest the four medicines. Students have made connections in the community that will support life-long connections.

"Students are learning to get along. Students have learned to think five minutes ahead and five minutes behind. Students are learning to deal with their anger. Students are learning about trauma. Students are learning that teachers are human, and everyone has trauma. The class starts with a smudge and prayer. The community had two suicides recently. Students in grade 4 are learning the Bear Song, which is the song of protection. The land is a healing place, and Netmizaaggamig is surrounded by water. All our students are proud of their community and land."

Biigtigong Nishnaabeg

COMMUNITY/LAND BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Target Audience: Students, educators, and staff

Project Summary:

Biigtigong Nishnaabeg's goal was to enhance the understanding of Indigenous education from an authentic standpoint, by providing authentic Indigenous learning opportunities for all students, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Biigtigong Nishnaabeg took their students out on the land for their annual moose camp. Biigtigong Nishnaabeg invited students from the Superior Greenstone District School Board to participate in the moose camp.

Success Stories:

Students and teachers have a deeper understanding of Indigenous education and Indigenous students were given an opportunity to engage in meaningful learning in a comfortable and familiar setting and built intersecting relationships at various levels.

What did students at the moose camp learn?

- Hunter safety
- How to harvest a moose
- How to make moose stew
- How to harvest partridge
- How to use a sling shot
- How to make a shelter



Curriculum Development Projects

Munsee-Delaware Nation

CREATING A HISTORY COURSE FOR GRADE 10 BASED ON THE HISTORY OF MUNSEE-DELAWARE'S HISTORY FROM THE VIDEOS PRODUCED BY PREVIOUS PROJECTS

Target Audience:

- Munsee-Delaware students attending Strathroy District Collegiate Institute
- Non Munsee-Delaware students attending Strathroy District Collegiate Institute who interact with Munsee-Delaware students on a daily basis
- Future Munsee-Delaware students who will be taking the history course in the proposed future high school on the Nation
- Any band members, and other Canadians who are interested in learning the history of Munsee-Delaware people

Project Summary:

Currently there is no textbook or course material on Munsee-Delaware history. The 2020-2021 project focused on recording history of Munsee-Delaware through a series of videos. The history was transformed into course format by qualified teachers under the Ontario College of Teachers. Students attending high school will be able to take the course and learn about their own history. This was historical as it was the first time ever Munsee-Delaware students learned about their own history. This project built bridges between the Munsee-Delaware students and non-Indigenous students, who realized how resilient the Munsee-Delaware people are. This promotes mutual respect among peers.

Success Stories:

Munsee-Delaware students were excited to learn that their history had been recorded.

“Students were really excited to see that the history of their Nation had not only been recorded but can be learned by way of a high school history course.”

Dr. Oscar Correia, Munsee-Delaware Nation

The course binder will include:

- i. course outline
- ii. unit plans
- iii. daily lesson plans
- iv. quizzes, tests, and assignments
- v. final exam or culminating project

Data collection and performance monitoring:

- i. documentation of course taught/ event
- ii. track number of Munsee-Delaware students and non Munsee-Delaware students who take course and successful completions
- iii. evaluation form asking Munsee-Delaware students if their attitudes and perspectives of themselves has changed as a result of taking the course and if so how did it impact them

Nipissing First Nation

LAND-BASED SECONDARY CURRICULUM

Target Audience: Students from grades 9 - 12

Project Summary:

This project was the beginning of a repository of locally-developed resources that can be used to meet the Ministry of Education expectations in the high school courses in Ontario. The courses developed introduced foundational First Nation history, teachings, and ways of being into the school curriculum. It was the hope of Nipissing First Nation that the connections made between the education, lands and natural resources, and the culture and heritage departments may inspire some students to enter careers in these fields of work within their own community.

Success Stories:

Students went out on the land at least 3 to 5 school days each week which often led to teaching moments with students from other classes. Students taught other students what they had learned in class. Students participated in ice fishing, prepping tipi poles, beading, making leather mitts, creating an outdoor cooking fire pit, gathering maple water, boiling down the sap to make maple syrup, and preparing and sharing traditional medicines. Each activity included a community leader, artist, Elder, or local program expert that provided direct teachings and skills to the students.



The curriculum covered the following:

- overview of the 13 Moons teachings
- harvesting and creating medicines
- harvesting maple syrup-teachings from the sugar bush
- stewardship and management of moose
- stewardship and management of the fishery
- stewardship and management of forests

Video and curriculum development of units of study will link the teachings to specific expectations in specific courses for each topic, encompassing Elder knowledge and shared knowledge from each department listed above.



“These almost daily activities increased the students’ attendance, increased pride and confidence in their identity and the traditional knowledge they brought to the class, and provided opportunities for students to develop their leadership skills as they took on the role of teaching other students what they had learned.”

Lacy Farrell, Principal of Nipissing Secondary School

Munsee-Delaware Nation

CREATING A TEXTBOOK ON MUNSEE-DELAWARE'S CULTURE

Target Audience:

- Munsee-Delaware students attending Strathroy District Collegiate Institute
- Non Munsee-Delaware students attending Strathroy District Collegiate Institute who interact with Munsee-Delaware students on a daily basis
- Future Munsee-Delaware students who will be taking the history course in the proposed future high school on the Nation
- Any band members, and other Canadians who are interested in learning the history of Munsee-Delaware people

Project Summary:

This project included developing a completed textbook on the culture of the Munsee-Delaware Nation. This was a first of its kind. There has been no such textbook written documenting the Munsee-Delaware culture before now.

Success Stories:

Students assisted with typing out the material. One student found it interesting and intriguing to learn what food his ancestors ate and how his ancestors governed themselves.

The course binder will include:

- i. course outline
- ii. unit plans
- iii. daily lesson plans
- iv. quizzes, tests, and assignments
- v. final exam or culminating project



KINOOMAADZIWIN EDUCATION BODY

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