



Anishinabek Education System
Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum

“We are Moving Forward Together”

April 20-21, 2022

Annual Forum Report

Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum

“We are Moving Forward Together”

April 20-21, 2022

Acknowledgements

The Kinoomaadziwin Education Body acknowledges the following partners, organizations, and individuals. Their collaboration and support were essential to the success of the 2022 Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum.

Participating First Nations of the Anishinabek Education System
Knowledge Keeper Mary Otakwadjiwan
Dr. Alan Corbiere
Notorious Cree – James Jones
Great Lakes Cultural Camp
Teddy Syrette (Ozhawa Anung Kwe/Yellow Star Woman)
Ontario Ministry of Education
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
Ingaged Creative Productions
Kinoomaadziwin Education Body Staff
Kinoomaadziwin Education Body Board of Directors

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Glossary

AES	Anishinabek Education System
ANEA	Anishinabek Nation Education Agreement
DISA	Data and Information Sharing Agreement
DREC	Data, Research, & Evaluation Committee
EDU	Ministry of Education
EKAN	Ezhi Kendmang Anishnaabe Naadziwin
EO	Education Officer
FNMI	First Nation, Metis, and Inuit
IEO	Indigenous Education Office
IEP	Independent Education Plan
JMEAC	Joint Master Education Agreement Committee
KEB	Kinoomaadziwin Education Body
MEA	Master Education Agreement
MYAP	Multi-Year Action Plan
NG Fund	Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund
DSB	Ontario District School Board
PFN	Participating First Nation
REC	Regional Education Council
SEC	Special Education Committee

Welcoming Messages

Kinoomaadziwin Education Body – Interim Director of Education Team

The theme of the seventh annual Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum brings focus to *Anishinaabe Aadziwin*, a holistic learning path using Anishinabek ways of knowing and celebrating a bright future for our people. This forum provides a platform for the working relationships between the Participating First Nations and partnering District School Boards (DSBs) to be strengthened through open discussion and collaboration. At the centre of discussions this year were the regional priorities, updates on the Master Education Agreement's (MEA) Multi-Year Action Plan (MYAP) projects, introduction of the five-year Anishinabek Education System (AES) Strategic Plan, the Student Transitions Protocol, language resource sharing, curriculum and pedagogy, and the Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund. As in previous years, one of the most anticipated agenda items is the opportunity for all participants to hear directly from the youth. Anishinabek youth from across the four regions of the AES participated in a youth agenda highlighting what education means to them. The students designed TikTok videos, which were short, powerful statements sharing their personal thoughts and experiences in the education system today.

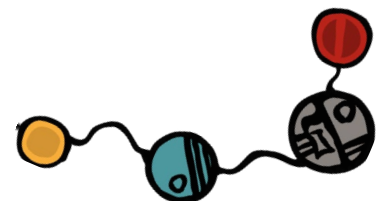
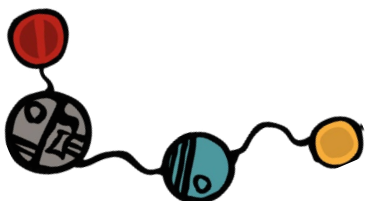
Ontario - Deputy Minister Nancy Naylor

"I am honoured to be here today in-person for the seventh annual forum to see firsthand the incredible work being done to implement the Master Education Agreement and to experience in-person the powerful impact this is having for boards, students, and communities that are all partners in the Anishinabek Education System. I would like to extend my greetings to: Grand Council Chief Niganobe; and the Kinoomaadziwin Education Body (KEB) for hosting us today. In particular, I want to acknowledge the KEB interim Director of Education team, including Andrea Crawford, Nancy O'Donnell, and Alicia Cameron. Thank you for your continued dedication and commitment to this work. I also want to acknowledge the strong leadership of Phyllis Anderson, Director on the Board for the KEB, and Tracey O'Donnell who has, and continues to be, a champion from the beginning over 22 years ago to today. Thank you as well to the Elders for starting off the forum this morning at the Sunrise Ceremony. I was truly honoured and deeply moved to participate in this ceremony. I would also like to acknowledge the participants who are joining us remotely and those who are with us today. I am particularly excited to listen and learn from the youth participating.

Our joint work through the Master Education Agreement is now in its fourth year, with a new MYAP finalized last summer. I am so inspired by this partnership and the progress that has already been made in the first three years of implementation. It is remarkable that 17 successful multi-year projects were fully implemented in the first three years and that 14 more are on track for the next three years including the Student Transitions Protocol and enhancing data collection. The most important marker of success though is the ongoing strengthening of relationships between district school boards and Participating First Nations. These relationships ensure that students are at the centre of everything we do and will have every chance of achieving success.

This has been an unprecedented couple of years in education due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I want to thank you for the incredible work being done to support Anishinabek students, families, and educators during these years of uncertainty. When I think of Regional Education Council #1 and their project with students Learning on the Land, centred around fall hunts and fall harvests, I know that as we return to the classrooms, these students now see their educational environment as both indoor and outdoor, and they are able to see themselves, their identity, and their family traditions reflected in what they learn. I know the next two days will be full of meaningful sharing, and I am grateful to be learning with you and deepening our partnerships. Miigwetch, Thank you."

Acknowledgement to Assistant Deputy Minister Denise Dwyer who attended the event virtually.



In Memory



Catherine Jeanette Pawis baa passed away suddenly on June 14, 2022, in the home she loved.

Catherine was a lifelong, gifted educator. She devoted herself to her students, colleagues, and school communities. Starting her career in Toronto, Catherine was a long-serving member of the Toronto District School Board, inhabiting many roles, and ascending to the role of principal.

Catherine was a longstanding member of the KEB Board of Directors, where she held various positions on the Executive Committee, including Chair and Secretary. She played a critical role in the implementation of the AES in its earliest stages, and through its implementation. Catherine was a tireless advocate for the AES and she fulfilled her role with the highest integrity and the best intention.

In recent years, Catherine was best known for the roles she held as the Education Director for Wasauksing First Nation and the Principal of Wasauksing Kinomaugewgamik. Her dedication to the students and school community of Wasauksing was boundless.

Whether she was interacting with students, colleagues, or leadership, Catherine's ability to make people feel heard and appreciated was a unique gift that she carried with humility. Her kindness and empathy, her devotion to education and youth, and her genuine nature are just a few of the qualities that many will remember her for.



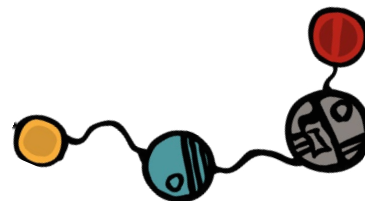
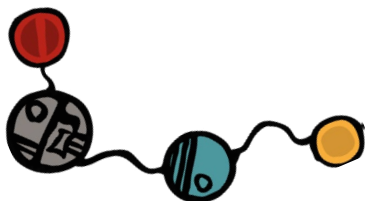
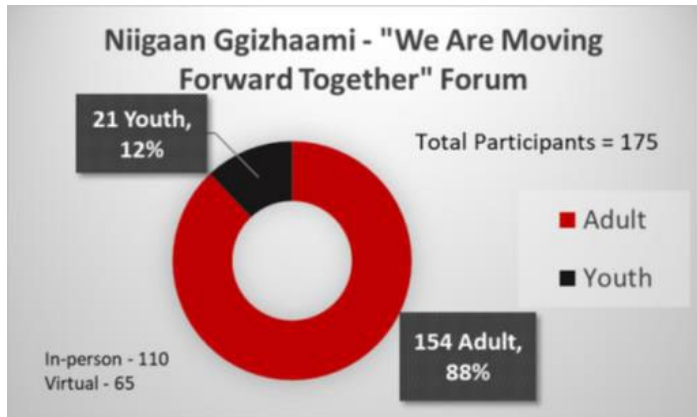
Introduction

The KEB hosted the seventh annual Niigaan Gdizhaami “We are Moving Forward Together” Forum on April 20-21, 2022. The event, held for the first-time as a hybrid forum, was hosted in partnership with the Indigenous Education Office (IEO) of the Ontario Ministry of Education (EDU).

As an annual event established under the MEA between the PFNs, the KEB, and Ontario, the forum’s main objectives are:

- Sharing information on the implementation of the 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 DSBs to advance regional educational priorities.

This report, and its supporting documents, provide a summary of events for the 2022 Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum.



Day One Summary

The first day of the gathering began with a Sunrise Ceremony offered by Knowledge Keeper Mary Otakwadjiwan. The two-day event was facilitated by Master of Ceremonies Teddy Syrette, who welcomed participants with energy, humour, and good spirit. A competitive ice breaker encouraged everyone to connect with their fellow participants and started the day with a good laugh.



Year in Review

Taunya Paquette, Director, Indigenous Education Office, EDU

Tracey O'Donnell, JMEAC Co-chair, KEB

The co-chairs of the Joint Master Education Agreement Committee (JMEAC) shared a review of the last year of MYAP activities. The year offered many highlights and milestones, which included the sixth annual Niigaan Gdizhaami “We are Moving Forward Together” Forum on May 4-7, 2021. The event was held for the first-time as a virtual forum over four days, with more than 300 people registered. Fourteen sessions focused on the theme of *Anishinabek Student Well-Being*, including two key guest speakers, James Vukelich and Dr. Brenda Restoule. James shared the language and origins of the “Seven Generations and Seven Grandfather Teachings”, while Dr. Restoule provided a keynote address on youth mental health. Overall, the Forum included 14 sessions that occurred over four days.

Highlights of the new MYAP and Transfer Payment Agreement (2021-2024) outlined the joint work between Ontario and the KEB to implement the MEA. On December 17, 2021, Ontario and the KEB announced the signing of a multi-year funding agreement totaling \$7.9 million over three school years, from 2021 to 2024. This is the second funding agreement signed between Ontario and the KEB. The inaugural multi-year agreement which supported a grant of up to \$5.8 million from 2018-2021 was completed in 2021. The new MYAP includes 14 projects to be implemented by the KEB, PFNs, and Ontario.

The importance of relationship building is always at the centre of the collaborative work between the KEB and Ontario, which is strengthened through annual meetings to discuss important topics including:

- Special education;
- the Niigaan Gdizaami Fund;
- MEA committees;
- Strategic initiatives;
- Communications;
- Addressing racism; and
- Language and culture.

Moving Forward

1. Implementation and progress of the newly-signed MYAP will be communicated through various products including joint communications with Ontario, monthly updates to the Regional Education Councils, and quarterly reports to the JMEAC.



Updates on the Multi-Year Action Plan

Nancy O'Donnell, MYAP Manager

Alicia Cameron, Anishinabek Education Services Manager

The fourteen projects of the MYAP are supported by a dedicated Lead from the KEB and the Indigenous Education Office (IEO). For this session, the Leads of each project established an information booth at the forum for participants to explore and learn more about implementation activities. Participants were encouraged to visit each booth to meet the Project Leads and find the answers to questions about the projects that were hidden in the information displays. Participants who attended virtually, were able to complete the same activity by visiting a webpage with a digital version of the information booths.



The session was interactive and engaging for participants and received positive feedback that expressed an appreciation for being able to connect personally with each of the Project Leads and with each other.

Moving Forward

2. Project Leads will continue the implementation of the projects of the MYAP, with monthly updates provided to the Regional Education Councils. Both KEB and IEO meet over the year to engage in critical conversations in an evaluation framework titled “Learning as We Go”.

Regional Networking

Joshua LeClair, Regional Education Council Coordinator (region 1)

Alicia Cameron, Interim Regional Education Council Coordinator (region 2)

Lisa Wabegijig, Regional Education Council Coordinator (region 3)

Greer Atkinson, Regional Education Council Coordinator (region 4)

The Regional Education Council (REC) Coordinators facilitated discussions and updates on the activities of the four RECs. These sessions focused on system-level initiatives as well as local priorities and initiatives. The discussions were supported by the IEO Education Officers from the Ministry of Education and are based on input from the previous year’s Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum and the Spring Regional Meetings.

Regional Education Council I

The region I networking session offered a new approach to relationship building by bringing colleagues into the circle of discussion. In collaboration with the IEO Education Officer, the session created a space to bring the Medicine Wheel into the discussion, framing the conversation around the teachings of blue people as students in the AES. Region I representatives and partners spoke to their perspectives and teachings on how the Medicine Wheel could frame an understanding of Anishinabek education.

After discussing each of the four directions, Region 1 representatives and partners were able to create a vision board using the Medicine Wheel. Several themes were represented in the answers, including:

- Youth and young ones;
- Decolonization of ways of thinking, education, and systems; and
- Interconnectedness of language, ceremony, home, family and community to education.



Moving Forward

3. Bring updates to Region 1 representatives and partners on AES Youth Council implementation and the opportunities associated with it.

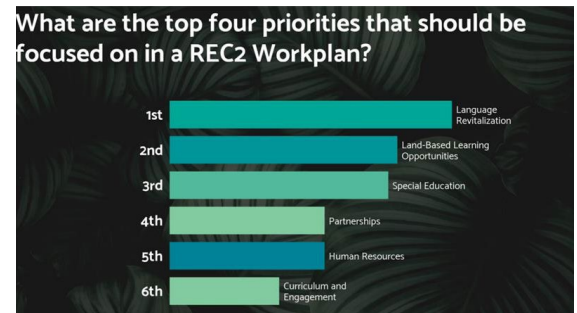


Regional Education Council 2

Region 2 focused on revisiting the educational priorities of the region, in order to discuss the development of a regional workplan. Throughout February and March 2022, the REC Coordinator collected input regarding the identification of priority areas through individual meetings with PFNs. This information was compiled into a list that was shared at the session, with topics ranked according to how many communities indicated the same priority areas.

An interactive survey platform was used to collect further input from the participants at the session. According to feedback generated through this session, the top three priority areas identified for Region 2 include: Language Revitalization, Land-Based Learning Opportunities, and Special Education.

The discussion was valuable, and the participants provided great feedback. Some attendees were already discussing the potential of additional priorities to be added in follow-up workplan development sessions.



Moving Forward

4. Proceed with the development of a regional workplan that focuses on the priorities identified by Region 2, partnerships with DSBs, and student transitions. The workplan will allow the region to track and mobilize work in the priority areas consistently.

Regional Education Council 3

Region 3 focused its networking discussions on two topics: the development of an Engagement Framework Agreement and the Community Profile Books project.

In accordance with the MEA, there is a requirement for parties to foster a collaborative, mutually-supportive relationship between the AES and DSBs. To build on that relationship, the MYAP has outlined Project 4: Relationship Building for Anishinabek First Nations & School Boards. This project sets out that the KEB will work with PFNs and DSBs to develop engagement protocols at regional levels to strengthen relationships.

Tracey O'Donnell, KEB Legal Counsel, provided a presentation on the purpose of an Engagement Framework Agreement, moving beyond consultation and into engagement, how the Engagement Framework ties into the MYAP, and the various elements of an Engagement Framework.

There was discussion around the Framework Agreement becoming a part of the Education Service Agreements (ESAs). The Engagement Framework is only effective when both parties, PFNs and DSBs, sign off on it. The engagement process will be established by the RECs and DSBs. There will also need to be consideration of the French language DSBs in terms of translation. It is a regional decision if they want the Framework to be a legally binding agreement or a protocol arrangement.

Region 3 then reviewed the status of the Community Profile Books project which began in the fall of 2020. The goals of the Community Profile Books are to:



- highlight the characteristics, geography, and history of the PFNs;
- teach others about the challenges faced by the PFNs;
- help make the school curricular more accurately reflect the history and experiences of the PFNs; and
- promote a greater understanding of the PFNs by celebrating the communities, and what makes them unique.

The project will produce six new community profile books and one updated community profile book. A Teacher's Resource Guide will also be developed to support the books.

Moving Forward

5. More discussion will be held with the REC and DSBs on what an Engagement Framework consultation process will entail. For example: Will there be a committee to work on the framework agreement? Who will be involved in the process, and timelines? Will it be a legally binding agreement or a protocol?



Regional Education Council 4

The Region 4 session started off with an icebreaker then moved into a review of the priorities of the Student Transitions Protocol, followed by a round table discussion on current Reach Ahead programs and plans in the region.

Student Transitions Protocol Discussion

The REC Coordinator for Region 4 guided the group through a detailed review of the AES Student Transitions Protocol document. The discussion that came from the review is captured below.

<p>Key points and highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is our responsibility to work on this together• The protocol looks at transitions at every stage• There is special consideration for language, culture and special education• The protocol looks at what should be taking place – at the leadership level and at the First Nation level, with both leadership and community establishing a process for who will be working on the transitions	<p>Key actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does your school and community have a school transition calendar – how do we do it?• Ensure we are developing a plan for transition collaboratively with our partners• Ensure support workers are aware of all that is in the protocol• Ensure support is part of transition plan• Facilitate community meetings with schools/ community• Identify activities – create opportunities to meet and discuss with partners what are best practices, how we are helping to gather the info/data, what is going well and what our challenges are• Engage in anti-racism work• Develop relationships with teachers, schools, and with the board
<p>What is going well?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents know who to identify for help within the system, they know who is working with their students in grad coach or transition coordinator roles• Formal and informal discussions that occur between school/communities are important to plan forward• Working on the protocols together, community/board and bring others in conversation – want to dig in more	<p>What could be improved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Orientation and support• Speech therapy• Transgender – could have more support - how to handle? What are their needs? Have teaching/knowledge keepers on transgender and bring these forward• There is a change of administration, school, etc.• Have a lot of work to do around mental health for the kids• Special education support for Anishinaabemowin starting in elementary – what is required? There isn't enough support in classrooms – need to look at hiring Indigenous Education Assistants to support the programs

Reach Ahead Discussion

Participants in Region 4 reviewed the call for interest for the Reach Ahead Pilot program and shared what different communities were doing and what plans they had for future programs. Beausoleil First Nation started a Reach Ahead program for Grade 8 in the previous year that saw 11 students reach their credits. The community worked in partnership with a local DSB for eight weeks, teaching about land. The program had lots of community participation.

Chippewas of Rama First Nation plans to offer a Reach Ahead program in Summer 2022. The course will be three weeks of learning about things connected to self and sustainability.

Simcoe County District School Board shared that it was continuing to work with Beausoleil First Nation on their partnership Reach Ahead program. They are currently working with Chippewas of Rama First Nation as well. By collaborating closely with grade 8 teachers, conducting school visits to learn and look at building a teaching lodge, they worked on joint curriculum. The school board is also looking at an urban program for the summer that would offer an extended trip to learn on the land while achieving a reach ahead credit or a recovery credit. This program would be held in partnership with Springwater Park (Beausoleil/Ontario Parks partnership).

The York Region District School Board (YRDSB) is looking to build a Chippewa Tri-Council (Beausoleil, Rama, Georgina Island) language credit. They asked participants how they can partner in offering language? The YRDSB is currently looking at summer learning focused on geography, land-based learning, math, science, culture, and holistic ways of learning. They are also looking to focus on literacy and numeracy to continue improving and retaining learnings during the summer. There is a need to explore these opportunities to pull people together.

Lambton Kent District School Board shared that it ran a program for grade 8 students recently which included 11 First Nation students. Every one of the students loved the program. Giving youth the opportunity to learn outside the box is so important. Reach Ahead credits are an opportunity for students to learn about creative art, community change-makers with speakers, community events, classes with Elders, and culture (medicine wheels, sweat lodges, and fire teachings). We can fit any of these in the curriculum to support students in finding their identity.

Discussion

- Reach Ahead credits should not stop in Grade 8 – could this be extended?
- What about credit recovery pieces?
- The maturity transition to grade 11 is hard
- Start working on career path in grade 11 & 12

Language

Goals and challenges specific to the Lenape language were discussed by the group. This language is unique to Region 4. Teachers are needed in all school boards and some have been hired on letters of permission. In these situations, the rate of pay is a challenge. Participants discussed potential solutions for these challenges, such as using satellite classes. There is a model in the Ottawa region adopted by the Inuit Elders Circle, where the Ontario College of Teachers, the school board, and the Inuit Elders Circle are working in tandem to certify speakers in the Inuktitut language. Inuit Elders stand up for them and the OCT certifies them.

Moving Forward

6. Create space for continued Reach Ahead discussions at the REC Spring Meeting in May 2022.

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Alan Corbiere



Alan Ojig Corbiere, Bne doodemid (Ruffed Grouse clan), is an Anishinaabe from M'Chigeeng First Nation on Manitoulin Island. He was educated on the reserve and then attended the University of Toronto for a Bachelor of Science; he then entered York University and earned his Masters of Environmental Studies. During his master's studies, where he focused on Anishinaabe narrative and Anishinaabe language revitalization.

Alan's keynote address closed out the first day of the forum. He shared stories through local context and humour, speaking Anishinaabemowin, and reminding us of Gechi-Piitzigig

Gikinoomaagewag – we are slowly going back, even though it may be tomorrow, the day after tomorrow or next year, it does not seem that way. Alan's advice is always to continue learning the language so that we can look after the new generation, so they will know, and so they too can see the richness of what we let go.



Moving Forward

7. Continue learning and sharing our history with Anishinabek youth, through our language.

Day Two Summary

AES Strategic Plan

KEB Board Directors Lise Kwekkeboom, Robert Beaudin, and Nancy Assance

The development of a five-year strategic plan was initiated in the Spring of 2021. After several months of community engagement and detailed drafting with the KEB Board of Directors, a draft of the AES Strategic Plan was shared with participants. Centred around new vision and mission statements, the strategic plan includes four main goals:

1. Support Anishinaabe Student Success and Bimaadziwin
2. Incorporate Anishinaabe Aadziwin, Anishinaabe Bimaadziwin, Anishinaabemowin, and Ngo Dwe Waangizid Anishinaabe into the Anishinabek Education System
3. Enhance Existing Partnerships and Develop New Partnerships to Support Anishinabek Education System Educational Goals
4. Enhance Organizational Effectiveness of the Kinoomaadziwin Education Body

VISION

All of our students are confident, successful, and strong in their language, culture, and traditional knowledge.

MISSION

We support our students in following an Anishinaabe Aadziwin learning path.



Questions from the group included:

- In the language of the strategic plan can we start to move away from language saying we'll "integrate our knowledge into the plan" vs. "centering the plan around our knowledge"?
- Who can we have come in and evaluate our schools?
- One of the strategic goals is partnerships - starting at community relationships between education and early years that exist in the communities. There are also post-secondary institutes where there is a lot of relationship work going on. Those partnerships can help us. Why aren't we including those partnerships in the strategic plan?

Moving Forward

8. Prioritize language and culture in AES programming and strategic planning.
9. Enhance post-secondary relationships.
10. Centre the work of the strategic plan around our knowledge.
11. Identify who can assist with evaluation of AES schools, develop a list of consultants.
12. Build community relationships between education and Early Years that exist in the communities.
13. Move towards being more inclusive of life-long learning continuum within the AES.

Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund

Tammy Desmoulin, Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund Coordinator

The Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund (NG Fund) is an annual grant established by the KEB and EDU to invest in community-based and joint school board projects that advance the objectives of the MEA. This session highlighted several exceptional NG Fund projects that have been taking place across the AES over the 2020-2021 school year.

Chippewas of Georgina Island

This project focused on using outdoor courtyard space to learn Anishinaabemowin, which tied into the Specialist High Skills Major at the high school. There was also a medicine garden in the courtyard. Having Elders and mentors participate with the students, along with Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff, was a benefit to the project. This project had a good success rate for students.

Nipissing Parry Sound DSB Outdoor Learning Space

This project supported collaboration between the DSB and Nipissing First Nation. PHASE II of the project included experiential learning (both in class and remote learning) inclusive of Elder visits, ceremonies, and the use of sacred medicines based on the region and the community. Outcomes included better use of technology (use of Chrome Books for learning and research) and an increase in utilizing outdoor space.

Atikameksheng Anishnawbek

This language-focused project included the integration of a Teaching Lodge, which moved to a virtual venue, and used language immersion instead of language teaching/learning. The community created Learning Nests and invited more speakers to meet with youth. The project included four main speakers plus guest speakers, which allowed the students to learn a variety of sounds. They also used music, conversation, stories, and skits to finish with a check-in rather than having a test. Participants were encouraged to use as little English as possible.

Whitefish River FN

This project included the addition of a cultural educator at the school who worked with the staff to incorporate Indigenous learning to the classroom. They were able to hire a member of the community who graduated from the Indigenous Teaching Program at Queen's University.

Areas of focus for this project included reaching out to community members, reviewing and creating a list of resources and websites to use; and planning and scheduling events. Community members contributed their own gifts, such as trapping and beading knowledge. The school began a community-based Fall Harvest during 'Every Child Matters Week'. In addition, the project saw the development of many resources that are shared with students and teachers.



Beausoleil First Nation

The “Across the Bay” program was developed for Beausoleil First Nation to implement programming with various partners focusing on credit accumulation and Reach Ahead credits. Two co-op students were hired and are now on track to graduate. This program creates pathways to environmental studies, and to create caregivers for the land.

Land-based curriculum is the focus, and through partnering with DSBs, there have been many guest speakers including an activist, a beekeeper, a gardner, a fisherman, Right to Play, Water First, Simcoe Muskoka Health Unit, and Simcoe County DSB.

Some of the activities included: Beach sampling, water sampling, exploring a bee farm, visiting a wind station, conducting a Water Walk, learning GPS and mapping, visiting a water plant, and learning about phragmites removal. The curriculum is based on the project instead of the project being based on the curriculum. Student success, through elementary to post-secondary, was evident.

Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek

This project created space within the school for students to be able to drop in and have access to a couch, fridge, and microwave. There was an Every Child Matters activity that included community activities such as a moose heart dissection, outdoor activities, and a Kindness Wall.

There is also a land-based learning project at Spirit Bay School that helped to strengthen relationships between community and students by providing opportunity to go out on the land and bring Elders together with students. A Learning Lodge enabled the sharing of language and the creation of learning templates to celebrate local knowledge and instill local pride within the students.

Each year, the NG Fund provides an important opportunity for the PFNs to pursue innovative projects that directly benefit Anishinabek students, as a community or in partnership with local DSBs. There is immense value in sharing and highlighting these projects as they exemplify successful best practices in Anishinabek education, shedding light on the potential for future core programming, possible application in other locations, or serving to inspire educators who are looking for ways to increase student success.

Moving Forward

14. Continue sharing highlights and best practices of NG Fund projects with all partners.
15. Analyze annual trends in projects to identify opportunities for new pilots and core programs.
16. Share the analytical report widely with all parties to the MEA.



Curriculum and Pedagogy

Greer Atkinson, REC Coordinator

Maheengun Shawanda and Bernadette Shawanda, Great Lakes Cultural Camp

On the land learning looks different and feels different, since the land is all around. It's easy to fit course content into the curriculum, but that's not what land-based learning is about. It is the Spirituality of what we're doing - every time we start with laying tobacco. Residential school students lost cultural practices, but with the work being done over generations, the youth can have traditional foods as their first foods. It is important when doing activities with students, to get them to feel everything they're doing and remind young minds of who they are as Anishinaabe. They are experts - they have so much knowledge that's been passed down.



Moving Forward

17. Continue building partnerships with DSBs and PFNs to strengthen learning opportunities for students

18. Keep spiritual connection to the land at the centre of land-based learning.



Language Resources

Romaine Mitchell, Indigenous Education Office, EDU

This session was a presentation from Romaine Mitchell on the Inuit Elder's Endorsement Model which began about eight years ago. It was built from a need for skilled language instructors, and the recognition that many skilled instructors are out there, without Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) qualifications. After establishing a Steering Committee, the members supported the vetting of Inuit language teachers with the Ottawa region School Boards. A call out was sent to Elders/Knowledge Keepers, presented in English, syllabics, and Inuktitut.

There was a stand-up ceremony with communities, regional DSBs, and representation with OCT. There are now mechanisms to put forth language instructors' names for review to the Elders Circle. This teacher pool is cross-referenced with OCT and determining equivalencies. Candidates who applied through the Elders Circle, went through two processes to get vetted.

This same model is used for Mohawk. Now that the framework is set up and there is an established process, it is transferable to other languages. This process is prescriptive because it is already approved by the OCT.

Moving Forward

19. Other presentations with the Anishinabek Nation will be shared by Romaine and the KEB's Language and Culture Lead.

20. KEB and the Anishinabek Nation language committee, Enkiitmajig Wii-aabiziitoong Anishinaabemowin, will work together on any steps forward.

AES Student Transitions

Nancy O'Donnell, MYAP Manager

The AES Student Transitions Protocol was initially shared with PFNs and DSBs in the fall of 2021. In addition to being a guiding document that supports Anishinabek students through various stages of transitions, the protocol can be used to support other work such as Education Service Agreements, special education supports, youth engagement, etc. All regions can use the document as needed, according to their priorities.

Fifteen percent of participants were learning about the protocol for the first time at the session, but many others are beginning to use the document.

Shy-Anne Bartlett, Indigenous Education Manager from the Superior Greenstone DSB, shared how their school board has used the protocol to align with their own local transitions planning. They took some time to digest the document, to understand it, and to include all others who will connect with the document in their school board. The Superior Greenstone DSB worked on aligning with the document and creating goals at each transition level and asked themselves...what's next? Where are we going with this?

Transitions are the foundation to student experience at all levels. It was important to take the alignment work to principals and teachers so that all staff can benefit.

Participants in the session felt that it would be beneficial if EDU offered paid professional development for Indigenous focused education to address these systematic issues.

Moving Forward

21. Compile the youth priorities that came out of the previous Niigaan Ghidzhaami Forums.
22. Identify what has been done to address their expressed needs for success.
23. Determine how the AES Student Transitions Protocol can be used to support committed action in schools or communities.



Youth Presentation

AES Youth Forum Participants

Nathalie Restoule, Dokis First Nation

Joshua LeClair, REC Coordinator

As the forum's Youth Ambassadors, Nathalie Restoule and Joshua LeClair introduced the youth who participated in activities over two days. They worked collaboratively to inspire the youth to work in groups to create Tik Tok videos based on their discussions about student success. The Tik Tok videos were shared with the larger forum audience on the final day of the gathering. The messages from each group's video are outlined below.



Group 1

- The focus was on things we can do to reconnect with our culture
- Things you can do: talk to Elders, storytelling, learning the language
- Our take aways from the conference: inspired to take part in cultural activities
- Important to address stereotypes and racism we face at school
- Schools need to become more inclusive
- Looking for a sense of belonging
- We want to see more Indigenous youth sharing their experiences

Group 2

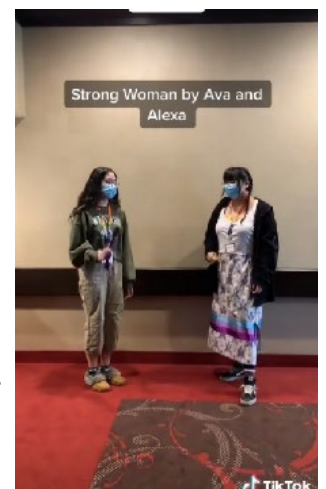
- You can use cultural medicines in your everyday lives
- If you are stressed, then cultural medicines can make your day better

Group 3

- Indigenous education would help get youth to want to go to school, to graduate. Indigenous education is more effective that way because youth have a place where they belong
- The current education system is built for very specific people and Indigenous youth do not fit into the colonial system. (I need to learn my culture in school and when I don't it pushes me far behind)
- A lot of our Indigenous youth don't connect with their culture, we need to keep our culture alive and Indigenous youth education is so important
- Happy to see that Indigenous youth are here to show you what we are going to try to be and what our goals are. We need help from adults to become the things we want to be.
- Education isn't just about colonial settings; we need to Indigenize the space and get crucial knowledge like sustainable ways of living to protect the environment

Group 4

- Our main thing that we wanted to get across was getting culture into everyday
- In schools we need time and space for Indigenous culture and experiences
- It is great being here and so great to see everyone participate in decolonizing and rebuilding traditions in education

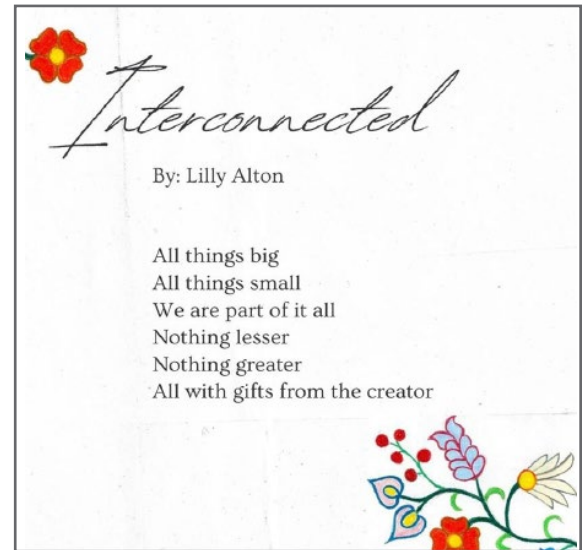


Group 5:

- Laughter is medicine
- We traditionally learn in the bush and on the trap line
- As we were talking about the different ways of learning, I thought about the classroom
- What we are trying to do is create an Anishinaabe education system
- Rebuilding and strengthening our circle
- This was inspired by the information that youth shared from their ideas

Group 6:

- One thing that our group told us is that youth are faced with preconceived notions of who they are
- The point of this TikTok is to raise awareness and to show the lack of education about Indigenous Peoples history and culture
- The ideas in the video happened to us and they are from personal experiences



One youth participant who joined the gathering online, was able to submit her contribution to the youth activity through a poem.

To view all the youth videos created at the Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum, please search for [aeskeb](#) on Tik Tok!

Moving Forward

24. Address stereotypes and racism that youth face at school.
25. Create opportunities for youth to connect with their culture.
26. Opportunities to hear from Indigenous youth more often.
27. Create opportunities to learn Indigenous knowledge, ex. knowledge like sustainable ways of living to protect the environment.
28. Advocate for the time and space in schools for Indigenous culture and experiences.

Youth Speaker

Notorius Cree

Notorious Cree is a traditional hoop dance artist who has performed and traveled across Europe, China, Australia, and North America. He is ranked among the top five hoop dancers in the world.

As the invited youth speaker for the forum, Notorious Cree spoke about his personal life journey, the obstacles he faced growing up, and how he connected with community to overcome those challenges. He closed out the 2022 Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum with a hoop dance demonstration for all participants. It was truly a testimony to the power of healing through dance.



Closing Ceremony

The 2022 Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum was closed in prayer, offered by Knowledge Keeper Mary Otakwadjiwan.

The KEB, and its partners at EDU, offer a heartfelt miigwech to everyone who participated in another successful forum - *Moving Forward Together*.

Moving Forward: A Summary of Next Steps

The following chart provides a summary of the Next Steps that have been noted throughout this report for focused attention over the next year.

Action Items	
1.	Implementation and progress of the newly-signed MYAP will be communicated through various products.
2.	Project Leads will continue the implementation of the projects of the MYAP, with monthly updates provided to the RECs. Both KEB and IEO engage in an evaluation framework titled “Learning as We Go”.
3.	Bring updates to Region 1 representatives and partners on AES Youth Council implementation and the opportunities associated with it.
4.	Proceed with the development of a regional workplan that focuses on the priorities identified by Region 2, partnerships with school boards, and student transitions.
5.	More discussion held with the REC and DSBs on what an Engagement Framework consultation process will entail.
6.	Create space for continued Reach Ahead discussions at the REC Spring Meeting in May 2022.
7.	Continue learning and sharing our history with Anishinabek youth, through our language.
8.	Prioritize language and culture in AES programming and strategic planning.
9.	Enhance post-secondary relationships.
10.	Centre the work of the strategic plan around our knowledge.
11.	Identify who can assist with evaluation of AES schools, develop a list of consultants.
12.	Build community relationships between education and Early Years that exist in the communities.
13.	Move towards being more inclusive of life-long learning continuum within the AES.
14.	Continue sharing highlights and best practices of NG Fund projects with all partners.
15.	Analyze annual trends in projects to identify opportunities for new pilots and core programs.
16.	Share the analytical report widely with all parties to the MEA.
17.	Continue building partnerships with DSBs and PFNs to strengthen learning opportunities for students.
18.	Keep spiritual connection to the land at the centre of land-based learning.
19.	Other presentations with the Anishinabek Nation will be shared by Romaine and the KEB’s Language and Culture Lead.
20.	KEB and the Anishinabek Nation language committee, Enkiitmajig Wii-aabiziitoong Anishinaabemowin, will work together on any steps forward.
21.	Compile the youth priorities that came out of the previous Niigaan Ghidzhaami Forums.
22.	Identify what has been done to address their expressed needs for success.
23.	Determine how the AES Student Transitions Protocol can be used to support committed action in schools or communities.
24.	Address stereotypes and racism that youth face at school.
25.	Create opportunities for youth to connect with their culture.
26.	Create opportunities to hear from Indigenous youth more often.
27.	Create opportunities to learn Indigenous knowledge, ex. knowledge like sustainable ways of living to protect the environment.
28.	Advocate for the time and space in schools for Indigenous culture and experiences.

Supporting Documents and Links

The following documents and links are provided as additional reference materials to support the content and the findings of this report.

A. Anishinabek Education System/Kinoomaadziwin Education Body Website

<https://aes-keb.com/>

B. Anishinabek Education System Wellness Portal

<https://aeswellnessportal.ca/>

C. AES Student Transitions Protocol (simplebooklet.com)

<https://simplebooklet.com/studenttransitionsprotocol#page=1>

D. Multi Year Action Plan Scavenger Hunt

<https://sway.office.com/i6V2QZvDtxl9V6BZ?ref=Link>

E. AEA Information Toolkit for DSBs

<https://sway.office.com/drVXFHh52COdfqHd?ref=Link>

