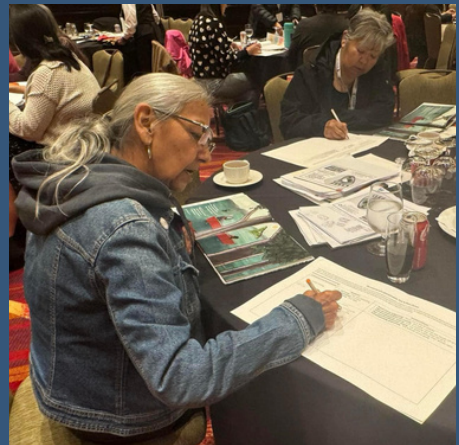




# DIBAAJMOWIN

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# Message from the Director of Education

As Manidoo Giizisoons (December) is coming to an end, we express gratitude for the past two months for the opportunity to participate in several in-person meetings with the First Nations through Fall Regional meetings held across the four regions and the 23 PFN Gathering held in November in Baawaating.

At the 23 PFN Gathering, we received direction from the First Nation leadership on the AES Funding Formula, the 10-year AES Language Strategy, and enhancing the relationship with Koganaawsawin.

We continue to learn from each other as we implement the goals of the AES Strategic Plan, with a strong focus on incorporating Anishinabek knowledge and language into the education of Anishinabek youth. We hope this season brings an opportunity to rest and rejuvenate, and we look forward to continued partnerships in education in 2025.



**Nancy O'Donnell, Director of Education**



Throughout October and November, education representatives from the 23 Participating First Nations in the Anishinabek Education System (AES), our partner District School Boards and the Ministry of Education participated in the Fall Regional Education Council (REC) meetings.

These meetings are an opportunity for education planning, sharing ideas and participating in cultural activities. The next round of REC meetings will be held in May, 2025.

# Regional Education Council Highlights



## Region 1

On October 24th and 25th, the Kinoomaadzwin Education Body and Anishinabek Employment and Training Services collaborated to host a Mashkiki Gathering. **Raphael and Garland Moses**, brothers from Biigtigong Nishinaabeg, were there to teach us about mashkiki.

We spent a lot of our time learning outdoors. Teachings given to us about the importance of mnaadendiwin towards the animal and plant mashkiki were made all the more impactful by our connection to Aki.

It was an excellent opportunity to spend time with each other, laugh, and tell stories all while learning by doing. Chi miigwech to Raphael and Garland Moses and to all those who took the time to be present.

## Region 2

"Sheshegwaning First Nation is delighted to hear about Indigenous Services Canada's commitment in principle to advancing the construction phase of the Sheshegwaning School project," said **Chief Alana Endanawas**. "This initiative is part of their investment of \$525.1 million over the next three years, aimed at enhancing K-12 infrastructure to create safe and healthy learning environments for First Nation students," she added.

This new school will serve the children of Sheshegwaning and Zhiibaahaasing First Nation. The current school, St. Joseph's Anishinabek, will be repurposed into an Early Years Learning Centre upon completion of the new school.

Congratulations to Chief Endanawas and the community of Sheshegwaning and to the the students of both Zhiibaahaasing and Sheshegwaning.







## Region 3

- Wahnapiatae First Nation (WFN) has installed a new yurt at the Centre of Excellence for cultural and land-based outdoor teaching. The yurt has a wood stove, which makes it ideal for year-round gatherings and workshops. WFN has invited local schools to visit for lessons on cultural practices, land stewardship, and sustainable living.
- In partnership with Technica Mining, Wahnapiatae First Nation will offer a post-secondary sponsorship, every year for the next five years, to one student who is pursuing a career in the mining industry.

## Region 4

The community of **Georgina Island First Nation** is observing the construction of their new community school with excitement. We look forward to hearing more updates in the future!

**Aamjiwnaang First Nation** has released an Anishinaabemowin language app called, Aamjiwnaang Da-Anishinaabemying (Aamjiwnaang, Let's Speak Ojibwe!). The app, available to both iPhone and Android users, features 23 categories with audio recordings from community speakers and songs.





## 23 PFN Fall Gathering



On November 21st, the Kinooaadziwin Education Body hosted the Gathering of the 23 Participating First Nations of the Anishinabek Education System. The meeting began with a heartfelt opening prayer and song led by Ann Cada (Sheshegwaning First Nation).

It was a successful event with a quorum of community education representatives in attendance. All resolutions presented were approved, and updates on topics such as the AES Youth Council and the AES system standards were well received.

### *“Rock your Mocs”*



Whether handmade, passed down through generations, or a fresh new pair, moccasins represent a deep connection to our history and tradition. Staff at the Kinooaadziwin Education Body enjoyed participating in your “Rock your Mocs” week in November.



# The AES Reporting Racism Tool

Sharing our Learning Journey

## CONCERNS INVOLVING:

- **Students**
- **Adults**
- **Policies**
- **Practices**



While reports usually refer to a specific incident, the conversations may lead us to discover areas of broader practice to be addressed through further conversation and collaboration



## REASONS FOR REPORTING USING THE AES ON-LINE TOOL

- User friendly
- Support offered
- Timely response
- Safety in reporting to someone outside of the place where the harm has occurred
- Need to be seen, heard and respected

## WHO HAS REACHED OUT?

- **Students**
- **Families**
- **Community Members**
- **Education Staff**



## SUPPORT & RESOLUTION

- Advocacy honours individual choice
- Quick response from partnering school boards
- Acknowledgement of harm and impacts on students, families, and communities
- Interest in seeking collaborative resolution
- Restorative practices
- Planned changes to policy and practice
- Professional learning

## AES REPORTING RACISM TOOL FOR FAMILIES

The QR code and link below can be used to report an incident of racism.

If you are more comfortable reporting an incident over the phone, please call us at:

**705-542-6332**

[https://forms.office.com/r/yi\\_sB26k6ZC](https://forms.office.com/r/yi_sB26k6ZC)





# Language Updates



## Tabahon Challenge

The Tabahon is a fun traditional Indigenous game that brings people together. The goal is to swing it away from you and hook as many bone pieces with your long needle piece for points. Initially crafted with bone and sinew, it was a way to entertain and teach coordination, patience, and focus.

The Tabahon Challenge kicks off our fun and games language initiative to encourage students to speak more Anishinaabemowin.

This December, classrooms throughout the AES and our partnering District School Boards participated in the Tabahon Challenge. We thank all the students who joined us in this fun learning activity. Look for the Challenge results in January.

## Language & Culture

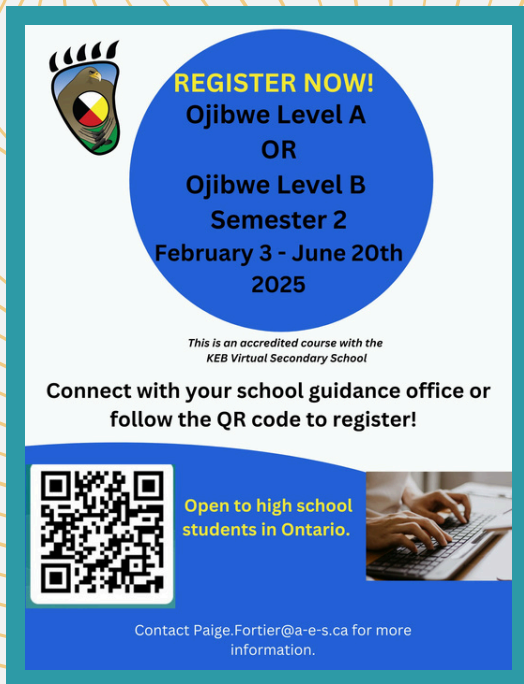
In November, Cynthia Wemigwans hosted an Indigenous Language Teacher Professional Learning Circle in North Bay.


Participants learned how to make moccasins and were provided detailed explanations of Anishinaabemowin words. Participants told us that it made them feel more confident about teaching their students. It was a happy, teachable moment praised by those who attended.

Everyone also received a booklet to take back to their classrooms to engage young learners.





# Multi-Year Action Plan



 **REGISTER NOW!**  
**Ojibwe Level A**  
**OR**  
**Ojibwe Level B**  
**Semester 2**  
**February 3 - June 20th**  
**2025**

This is an accredited course with the  
KEB Virtual Secondary School

**Connect with your school guidance office or  
follow the QR code to register!**

 **Open to high school  
students in Ontario.** 

Contact Paige.Fortier@a-e-s.ca for more  
information.

Are you a student in grade 9 to grade 12? Do you know a student in grade 9 to grade 12?

Registration for LNOAO (Level 1 Ojibwe) and LNOBO (Level 2 Ojibwe) is open for semester two!

Connect with your school guidance office or to register, visit:

<https://shorturl.at/4oiqC>

## AES System Standards

We've engaged with our Participating First Nations to create a group of guiding documents to support ongoing policy development, rooting in Anishinabek values, in each community:

- Transition Protocol
- Special Education Handbook
- School Closure Guiding Document
- Education Services Agreement Template
- Parent/Caregiver Special Education Modules
- Student Success and Bimaadziwin

We reported on this work at meetings throughout the fall. In December, we posted the documents under the "Our Priorities" Tab at <https://aes-keb.com/>.



# Special Education

## Lunch and Learn Series on Integrating Indigenous Knowledge in Special Education

We are in the midst of an insightful three-part Lunch and Learn series on Integrating Indigenous Knowledge in Special Education, facilitated by the knowledgeable **Dr. Pamela Toulouse**. Here are highlights from the first two sessions:

In the **first session** on November 12th, titled Learning Needs and Honouring the Gifts of Our Children, participants engaged in various mini lessons and activities that provided actionable tools and strategies for immediate implementation in educational settings.

"I loved Dr. Pam's energy," read one participant's Feedback Form. "Content-wise, I most appreciated looking at how we can further nurture students' strengths that exist outside the colonial box."

The **second session**, held on December 10th, focused on Creating Culturally Respectful Individual Education Plans (IEPs), guiding participants in co-creating IEPs that center the lives and experiences of First Nations children, youth, families, and communities.



Dr. Pamela Rose Toulouse

"It was all very informative and gave our school an idea of how we can further improve our IEPs with our students," wrote a participant from the second session.

A third Lunch and Learn with Dr. Toulouse will be announced in the new year.

The presentations have been recorded and uploaded to the Virtual Learning Environment for those who could not attend the live sessions.

Please contact [Danya.Skworchinski@a-e-s.ca](mailto:Danya.Skworchinski@a-e-s.ca) to register for an account.



## YOUTH COUNCIL

The AES Youth Council has created the Virtual Speaker Series to showcase resilient Indigenous youth across our 23 Participating First Nations. The series is an opportunity for a featured special guest to share their journey and accomplishments and answer questions submitted by participants.

Our first session was on November 27th with Ocean Cherneski, who shared her journey and inspiration as a young Indigenous female designer, the development of her brand, Ocean Kiana, and her current work in the fashion industry.

The AES Youth Council will host the next session in the new year.

## \$20M in New Federal Funding

On October 25th, the Honourable Gary Anandasangaree, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, announced new funding of more than \$20 million per year to support education infrastructure and governance.

This funding will help ensure that the 23 communities served by the Anishinabek Education System, including about 2,000 students, have the resources they need to succeed while remaining connected to Anishinabek culture and language.

In this photo (L-R): Nancy O'Donnell (KEB Director of Education), Lisa Kwekkeboom (KEB Vice-Chairperson), Hon. Gary Andasangaree, Daryle Gardipy (KEB Finance Manager) and Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Linda Debassige.





# Educator Spotlight

## **Madison Noganosh**

Eshki-anishnaabemod at  
Waasa Enaabijig Immersion  
Nest Chippewas of Rama  
First Nation



Madison is an Early Childhood Educator student who is working full-time while completing her certification. She is extremely hardworking, and she is always taking initiative in language development.

Madison holds a lot of love for the little ones in her care and infuses language and culture in everything she does.

At only 21 years of age, Madison demonstrates natural leadership abilities that reflect how deeply she cares for the children and her workplace.

***Miigwech for your dedication  
and hard work!***

# New Staff

**Roxanne Mandamin**

**Education Data Analyst**

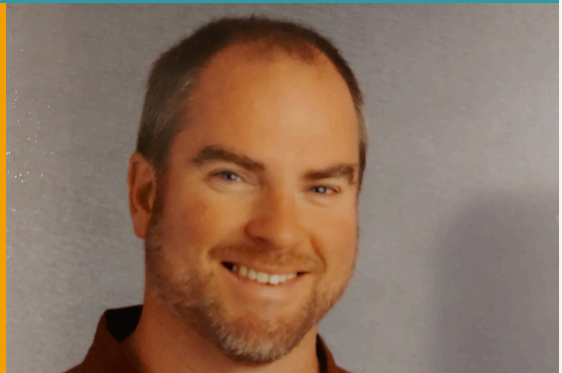


**Reid Istvan**

**IT Coordinator**

**Kris Skworchinski**

**Region 1 Education Initiatives  
Coordinator**



**Deb Mishibinijima**

**Communications Officer**



# Job Opportunities



## Early Childhood Educator

Posted until filled

The Early Childhood Educator will create and lead programs that support children's development, fostering creativity, ensuring their well-being, monitoring progress, and collaborating with parents, staff, and community partners.

To learn more, visit:

<https://aes-keb.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/ECE-posting-Mat-Leave-oct-2024.pdf>

**Miigwech** to our contributors to this issue of Dibaajmowin:

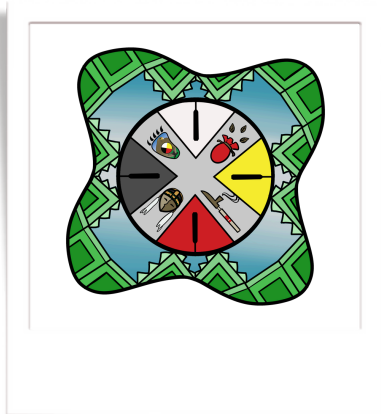
Deb Mishibiniijima, Jessica Paul, Hannah O'Donnell,  
Bonnie Nahwegahbow, Lisa Wabegijig, Eva Brown,  
Sarah MacLeod-Beaver, Nancy O'Donnell,  
Kristin Kewaquom, Cynthia Wemigwans, Paige Fortier,  
Danya Skworchinski, Kaelyn Pizzale, Walter Quinlan  
and Jacqueline Paquette.

Photo of Chief Alana Endanawas courtesy of the Manitoulin Expositor.  
Photo of the Yurt courtesy of Wahnapiatae First Nation.

Be sure to check <https://aes-keb.com/employment-opportunities/>  
to see the latest employment opportunities!

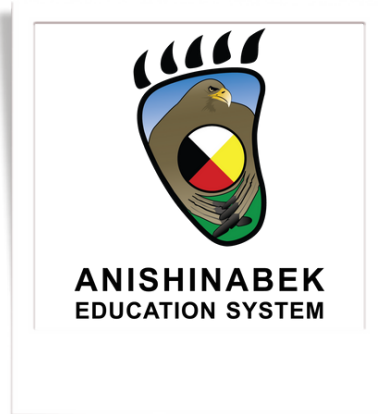
# UPCOMING EVENTS

## ***AES Winter Youth Gathering***



January 16-17, 2025  
North Bay  
Contact:  
kaelyn.pizzale@a-e-s.ca

## ***Building Relationships Through Pedagogy***



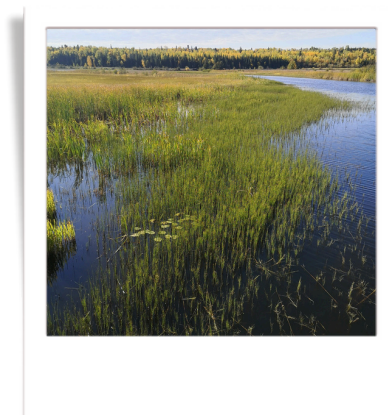
January 25, 2025  
On-line event  
"Re-imagining our Classrooms"  
Contact:  
sarah.macleod.beaver@a-e-s.ca

## ***Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum***



April 8 - 9, 2025  
"Building Future Leaders"  
Event details to follow

## ***Regional Education Council Meetings***



REC 4: May 7, 2025  
REC 3: May 14, 2025  
REC 2: May 21, 2025  
REC 1: May 28, 2025



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