



PARTNERSHIPS

Niigaan Gdzhaami Forum

The 10th annual Niigaan Gdzhaami Forum took place on April 8th and 9th at the Delta Hotel in Sault Ste. Marie. Despite heavy snowfall through the North Bay–Sudbury corridor, the main plenary was filled with Anishinabek youth, members of Participating First Nations, partnering District School Boards, KEB staff, and representatives from the Ministry of Education. A YouTube live link allowed participants to join virtually.

The first day began with a keynote panel on “Building Future Leaders.” Aligned with the Forum’s theme, the panel highlighted the incredible work taking place across the AES to support youth in connecting with their language and culture, while also developing leadership skills and wellness strategies.

Over the two days, the main plenary provided opportunities for regional networking and discussions on important topics such as land-based learning, language and student well-being, as well as small-group sessions on de-streaming.

The main plenary featured presentations from Niigaan Gdzhaami Fund projects on the impact of their work, culturally relevant curriculum developed by Biigtigong Nishnaabeg, and language work taking place across the AES.

At the Forum, youth participants joined the main plenary to take part in the event opening, share updates, and watch presentations, while also following their own agenda. They were supported by Gary Dokis, Chop Waindubence, and Elder Dot Beaucage-Kennedy, who shared cultural teachings and helped prepare the youth for the stand-up election for the AES Youth Council.

**Miigwech/ Anushiik to everyone who was able to
join the Niigaan Gdzhaami Forum this year!**

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

**DISA Student Achievement Infographic
Finalized**
April 4, 2025

Niigaan Gdzhaami Forum

April 8-9, 2025

**Niigaan Gdzhaami Fund Call For
Proposals released**

April 8, 2025

Spring Regional Meetings

May 7, 2025: Region 4

May 14, 2025: Region 3

May 21, 2025: Region 2

May 28, 2025 Region 1

**Language Teacher Professional
Learning Circle**

May 15, 2025

**Trauma-Informed Teaching:
Understanding Trauma and Its
Impact on Learning**

May 20, 2025

**Trauma- Informed Teaching:
Reflecting Within to Support Beyond**
May 23 2025

**Virtual Speaker Series: Brooklyn
Sawyer**

May 26, 2025

**Ezhi Kendmang Anishinaabe
Naadziwin (EKAN) Call Out
Released**

May 28, 2025

**Kweji-Kinoomaagzidaa: Let's Learn
with Elder Tom Borg**

May 30, 2025

**Virtual Speaker Series: Elaine
D'Agostino**

June 24, 2025

LOOKING FORWARD

Gathering of Colleagues

September 10, 2025

KEB Education Gathering

October 28, 2025

Fall Regional Meetings

October 8-9, 2025: Region 4

October 15-16, 2025: Region 2

October 22-23, 2025: Region 3

October 29-30, 2025 Region 1



REGIONAL HIGHLIGHT

Seven Grandfathers First and Parry Sound High School Powwow

The Seven Grandfathers First is a Niigaan Gdzaami Fund project that supports the Seven Grandfathers First Student Alliance at Parry Sound High School. The Alliance consists of students from Shawanaga First Nation, Wasauksing First Nation, Henvey Inlet First Nation, Magnetawan First Nation and Garden River First Nation. The Alliance works to address issues of anti-Indigenous racism and launched a campaign on the importance of following the Seven Grandfather teachings. The group created a line of merchandise to promote the Grandfather Teachings, and were showcased at the Parry Sound High School Powwow.

"It was truly exciting to see the overwhelming response to the items available at the 7 Grandfathers First booth while at the Parry Sound High School Powwow on May 30th. It's clear that the teachings are resonating deeply with people, both Anishinaabe and non-Anishinaabe, and that the intent of the campaign is being realized. We must give credit to the artist Joshua Pawis who has created beautiful images that represent the teachings. It was so nice to see so many people wearing the "official" pow wow t-shirt with the Seven Grandfathers featured prominently.

This campaign, supported by the KEB, is first and foremost a bridge-building initiative. We hope it will foster honest and open discussions about the daily experiences of our students, including the racism they face. It's powerful to witness how these teachings bring people together rather than divide them each time the booth is set up. They start the discussion in a good way."

Chi Miigwech to the students and supports of this project for the incredible leadership, advocacy and creativity taking place in this initiative.

July 2025 - Communique





WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT
THE EDUCATIONAL JOURNEYS
OF ANISHINABEK STUDENTS

The Multi-Year Action Plan is a three-year work plan supporting the implementation of the Master Education Agreement. The Journey Map visual illustrates the relationship between the Multi-Year Action Plan and the traditional Anishinabek governance Dodemaag system. Each project in the Multi-Year Action Plan plays a role within this system.

At the center of the visual, an infinite sweetgrass braid symbolizes the relationship between the Participating First Nations of the Anishinabek Education System, the Kinooaadziwin Education Body, and the Ministry of Education. This relationship is the driving force behind the Master Education Agreement and the Multi-Year Action Plan. For students of the Anishinabek Education System, collaboration among these parties is integral to supporting their educational journeys and promoting their overall success and well-being.



To learn more about the 6 projects of the Multi-Year Action Plan, please click on the project titles or visit www.aes-keb.ca/MYAP

Relationships

Enhancing the collaboration among the parties to identify successful practices in education program and service delivery, promoting opportunities to foster family and community engagement, and continually developing the relationship between the Anishinabek Education System and Ontario.

Niigaan Gdzhaami Fund

The Niigaan Gdzhaami Fund supports and invests in community and joint projects and initiatives that are locally developed and advance the objectives of the Master Education Agreement.

Student Success & Wellness

The Master Education Agreement outlines a shared vision for student success and well-being, addressing physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. The project focuses on adapting and developing pathways and programs for student success and well-being that incorporate Anishinabek perspectives.

Data, Research and Evaluation

Establishing processes to align standards, collaborate with all parties, and monitor Anishinabek student achievement through data, research, and evaluation.



Special Education

The Special Education Program focuses on building and adapting existing guidelines, directives, and resources to address gaps and ensure alignment between the AES and the provincially funded education system. This is achieved through the development of culturally appropriate approaches, ongoing engagement, and collaborative professional development with partnering District School Boards.

Leadership & Professional Development

Professional development and leadership at all levels of the education system are foundational to student success and school effectiveness. This project works to develop collaborative learning opportunities that increase knowledge and understanding of bimaadziwin, kendaaswin, and the Anishinaabe language in Anishinabek First Nation and provincially funded schools.

TRADITIONAL ANISHINABEK GOVERNANCE CLAN SYSTEM



TURTLE CLAN: LAW MAKERS

The Turtle Clan are the healers, possessing knowledge of medicine and providing guidance. They also assist in resolving disagreements between the clans.



LOON CLAN: INTERNAL

The loon dives and observes the events beneath the water. The Loon Clan is known as the Inside Chief, as they are responsible for settling disputes and issues within their community.



CRANE CLAN: EXTERNAL

The crane stands in the water, observing the world above the waterline. The crane watches the outside world and is known as the Outside Chief. The Outside Chief is responsible for negotiations with people from other communities (Nation-to-Nation).



DEER CLAN: SOCIAL

The Deer/Hoof Clan is known for its kindness, gentleness, and soft-spoken nature. The Deer/Hoof Clan is responsible for the social aspects of the community, including ceremonies and celebrations.



BEAR CLAN: HEALTH

The Bear Clan is responsible for protecting their people and ensuring the safety of the gentler clans within the community. The Bear Clan is also known as the medicine people, possessing knowledge of the healing properties of plants.



EAGLE CLAN: EDUCATION

The Eagle Clan, also known as the Bird Clan, is considered the closest to the Creator, as they are part of the sky world. The Eagle Clan is the keeper of knowledge and is responsible for spreading seeds of wisdom.



MARTEN CLAN: ECONOMIC DEV.

The Marten Clan is known as the warriors and builders within their community, as well as skilled hunters and providers. The Marten Clan became renowned as master strategists in planning the defense of their people, and they also adopt individuals who do not know which clan they belong to.



Key Messaging from the Joint Master Education Agreement Committee

Quarterly Report for the period ending June 30, 2025.

Spring Regional Meetings

Spring Regional Meetings are held every year to bring together members of the Participating First Nations, District School Board partners, KEB staff and representatives from the Ministry of Education to discuss current educational priorities and direct next steps in collaborative work.

This year Spring Meetings were held as a one-day hybrid event every Wednesday throughout May. The morning of each meeting provided an opportunity for the Participating First Nations and KEB staff to discuss community priorities, and the afternoon was spent alongside partners to review collaborative work.

Following Regional Networking Sessions and presentations at the Niigaan Gdzhaami Forum in April, the Spring Meeting agenda was built to continue the rich discussions that had taken place the previous month. De-streaming feedback was reviewed and ideas on how to support the implementation through data sharing, professional development, resources and student supports were shared. The release of an Operational Bulletin by Jordan's Principle prompted in-depth discussions on student supports, special education services and the Reciprocal Education Approach. The compiled discussion topics and requests tabulated from the Regional Networking Sessions at the Forum were reviewed and each region determined which areas they would like to develop in the upcoming school year.

The Spring Meetings are a collaborative event that brings together a group passionate about supporting Anishinabek student success.

Ezhi Kendmang Anishinaabe Naadziwin (EKAN)

Ezhi Kendmang Anishinababe Naadziwin (EKAN) translates to 'Sharing the Knowledge of the People'. It is a series of modules that have been developed to support cultural competency training and can be a valuable tool for building understanding and strengthening relationships with partnering District School Boards. EKAN consists of 5 modules to support the learning of participants:

- Anishinabek 101
- History of Indigenous Education
- Learning From Indigenous Worldviews
- Understanding Through Connection to Land and Story
- Respectful Relationships

A call-out was released on May 28th inviting prospective participants to submit an expression of interest for EKAN projects beginning in the 2025-2026 school year. There will be two District School Boards engaging in an EKAN project this year with the support of Anishinabek community partners and knowledge keepers.

This model is more than a framework—it's a way of being. I'll apply it by approaching my work with intention and respect, making space for reflection and connection. Whether it's through thoughtful planning, building relationships, or honoring different ways of knowing, I want to ensure my actions reflect these teachings.

-EKAN participant, 2024-2025 school year