

Indigenous Education Circle (IEC) Minutes

Wednesday, January 22, 2025 | 1:00 – 3:00 PM

TEAMS

Present:

Melanie Gray, Superintendent, Teaching and Learning
Amanda Mathias, Indigenous Lead
Louise Sargent, NNDSB Trustee
Ashley St. Pierre, Indigenous Trustee & Director of Education - Moose Deer Point First Nation
Lois Lambert, Director of Education - Dokis First Nation
Mike Kalfus, Education Counsellor - Wasauksing First Nation
Riley Trudeau, Indigenous Student Trustee
Noodinong-Bemosed Christianson, Biidaaban Community Service-Learning Officer Nipissing University
Carol Stevens, Magnetawan First Nation
Daniel Stevens, Director of Education - Nipissing First Nation
Chris Walkling – Principal K-12 SAWB
Kim Pauli – Assistant Superintendent/Math Lead
Heidi McMillan, Executive Assistant

Regrets:

Sarah Spence, Principal of Student Achievement and Wellbeing
Kelly Nootchtai Huston, Indigenous Teacher Lead
Emily Couchie, Nipissing University
Genevieve Solomon Dubois, Henvey Inlet First Nation
Chantal Phillips, Trustee
Geraldiana Goulais, Nipissing First Nation
Cheryl Partridge, Wasauksing First Nation
Michael Schneider, Acting Principal of Parry Sound Intermediate and High School
Dave McDougall, Wasauksing First Nation
Joanne Groulx, Mattawa Metis Council
Lynn Mongrain, Temagami First Nation
Sherrill Judge, Shawanaga First Nation
Rose Jawbone, Kebaowek First Nation
Jennifer Ford – Niijcsf

1. Welcome

a) Land Acknowledgement by Principal Spence

b) Opening Circle

Meeting called to order at 12:43 pm.

c) Approval of Agenda

Motioned by Carol Stevens, seconded by Trustee Sargent. Carried.
AGENDA – a place for the Trustee report to be added to the agenda.

d) Approval of the Minutes of the October 23, 2024 meeting:

Motioned by Lois Lambert, seconded by Carol Stevens. Carried.

- The question was asked if there are any plans to hire additional Grad Coaches. Carol Lambert - referenced Page 2 – Grad Coaches.
- It was explained that IEC and FNAC are involved in the consultation process and all of the findings and feedback will be presented to determine how we move forward.

2. Indigenous Student Trustee Report - Riley Trudeau

- A successful cruiser event was held with additional police presence and a generous \$1,000 donation.
- Local support was highlighted as a key factor in community partnerships, reinforcing IYC's commitment to the community.
- A December event to collect monetary donations and toys for children and families during the holidays was well-received, with plans to continue this as an annual initiative.
- Northern Secondary struggles to find a location for their school TV but continues working on art projects using existing materials. Time constraints are challenging, but the goal remains a priority.
- FJ McElligott plans to create a community garden and feature Indigenous foods weekly while teaching students about gardening and community building.
- West Ferris is focusing on medicine teachings, water teachings, dance, and cultural teachings this semester.
- Each school has set individual goals that will be discussed in future meetings to support their growth.
- Upcoming events - May 30, 2025, will include activities specific to each school's goals.
- The IYC will attend an event at West Ferris on May 6, with Ted Nolan as a guest.
- Efforts are being made to engage younger youth in teachings about IYC and Indigenous culture, with a focus on schools like White Woods and others with grade 7 and 8 students.
- IYC is committed to fostering cultural teachings across all schools.

3. Trustee Report

- The board passed a resolution to send a letter to the Ontario Public School Board Association (OPSBA) and the Ministry of Education to request the initiation of a study and consultation regarding efficiencies within the school board system.
- The aim is to modernize education while maintaining its core values. The letter has already been sent to OPSBA and the Ministry.
- The issue of cybersecurity is being actively worked on by staff and we are hoping for an update on this matter at the next board meeting.
- The board recently passed a budget with a deficit. There will be a closer review of the upcoming budget, with attention to ensuring better financial planning.

4. Community Reports

• MDPFN

- The Early Learning Center offers an after-school "snow day" program, where kids can spend their day engaging in activities rather than just being idle.
- There are fewer high school students this year, making it easier to track their progress.
- The deadline for post-secondary applications is at the end of February, but no updates have been received yet regarding whether high school students are planning to attend college.

• NFN

- A successful cultural identity workshop was held for youth and their parents in the Garden River community. Participants had the opportunity to meet a cultural leader, and at the end of the workshop, everyone received a gift of a straight-out, which was well-received.
- The community council expressed interest in inviting the leader back for future workshops.
- Approval was given to hire a mental health organization called "Abilities" to support students and parents with life challenges, including mental health issues, assessments, and psychological services.
- "Abilities" has been visiting the community and will continue to support the community through June.
- The community was approached about creating a Baby Eagle Staff, and although unable to

attend personally, staff took over the initiative. This project will involve children in the community and is progressing well.

- The participation rate in the school program has been low due to widespread illness affecting many families for the past 2.5 weeks.
- Language classes are resuming this Friday with a new OCT teacher from the Rainbow School Board. She will be helping in the evenings, and the community is looking forward to the classes.

- **DFN**

- Currently operating an unlicensed daycare in one of the community buildings with five children and staff. Awaiting Ministry approval for a license to build a new daycare attached to the school.
- Funds were offered for the Baby Eagle project.
- The daycare is leading this project and has invited kindergarten kids, especially JK students, to join due to the small number of daycare students.
- Parents have been invited to assist taking 23 school students ice fishing, weather permitting for a community event for the kids.

- **WFN**

- With the prolonged absence of NSL teachers, grad coaches are particularly busy. This workload is expected to decrease when the teacher returns.
- Significant loss in the community is affecting program consistency.
- Funeral in the building is impacting operations.
- Upcoming election for new Chief and Council adding to the flux.
- The existing Chief is not running, new Chief to be elected in February.
- Community state of flux is reflected in students' energy.
- It is important to have regular communication with Parry Sound High admin team.
- Big thank you to Dan Stevens and his team for supporting a student with online learning.
- Seamless transition for the student unable to attend Parry Sound High.

- **NFN**

- 2 projects with NNDSB
- Reopening the teaching kitchen for revitalizing food and hospitality.
- The current initiative involves a cultural camp focusing on non-traditional courses with traditional knowledge approaches. Provides great opportunities and experiences.
- Land Learning Program is a new secondary program that focuses on high school students learning and sharing experiences, reconnecting with nature and traditional ways, spearheaded by Corey Fisher.
- Renovating the science lab next year with state-of-the-art chemistry and physics teaching approaches.

- **Magnetawan FN**

- Indigenous Grad coach from Garden River did a workshop for parents.
- Approval for hiring mental health support was granted, and the new services are already making a positive impact in the community.

5. Indigenous Education Team Update – Amanda Mathias

- NG funding from partnerships with education bodies has been very successful.
- Special thanks to Lois for managing the North Dokis Grant, supporting various student events like drumming, dancing, language arts, guest speakers, and travel costs.
- A presentation will be ready for April, including photographs and timelines to track the progress of the North project.
- Efforts are made to buy ethically and locally, supporting local stations and businesses.

- Partnership with First Nations have been ongoing for many years.
- Lisa Ross supports students with cultural language learning and facilitates community expertise.
- Mike has been a wonderful support, sitting on multiple sub-working committees.
- Cultural programs have a significant impact on student well-being, honoring identity and spirit.
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous students benefit from these programs, fostering positive community relationships.
- Positive outlook for additional funding from KEV due to the need.
- Tammy at KEV has been an amazing partner, always open to community needs.
- Visits from Indigenous elders, knowledge carriers, artists, and mentors make a difference in student well-being.
- Programs help reduce issues faced in the past through anti-racism pedagogy.
- The Seven Grandfathers Teaching Project is making a difference across the system through language initiatives.
- Culture and Traditional Learning Projects around deer hide camps, trapping camps, and reciprocal relationships emphasize respect for the land and the environment. Awareness of the lands among non-Indigenous students participating in NFN activities.
- Learning Revitalization Grant – prioritizing retention, recruitment and expansion for language learning. Challenges in finding qualified language teachers. Mentorship program and associated funding.
- Collaboration with Indigenous staff through IEC, FNAC and IYC
- Successful year-end conference at Nipissing University
- Youth engagement and their contributions, including Robinson Huron treaty flags for schools.

Questions & Answers

Q: Inquiry around the new build completion date.

A: Expected completion by September 2025, currently on track.

Q: Inquiry about larger Indigenous space in the new school.

A: Office space was included in the conversation. The blueprint of the new school's floorplan is showing cultural space available on the board website.

7. **Student Achievement Plan: Math – Assistant Superintendent Kim Pauli**

- SO/Math Lead Kim Pauli shared some background information about the Ministry's Math Achievement Action Plan, which was introduced in the 2023-24 school year. The presentation highlighted some new strategies and approaches to support Math learning in our district such as precise professional learning, the use of digital tools, math interventions, and the focus on curriculum and planning. The Math Lead explained the current model for professional learning through the use of the updated SharePoint Site, NNDSB Long-Range plans, and staff development slide decks shared at monthly staff meetings. The role of the School-Based Math Facilitator was described, and the key part they play in supporting students and educators was highlighted as a key part of improving student achievement in Math. Finally, some family and community events were shared that continue to build positive mindsets around Math. These include Family Math Night events, updates to the Math for Families webpage, and Parent Information sessions.

8. **Director/SO Report - Superintendent Gray**

- Important to share all of the various projects we have working with students and utilization of the tools.
- Our board is heavily invested in the Early Reading initiatives and ERS Early Reading Strategies. Every school has a literacy intervention focus on K-2. Ministry funding is in support of K-2.
- Providing targeted interventions for these students. Proud of the progress and positive

impact. Continue to build using the screeners. Principal Krause to share the next round of screening and the successes in the Early Reading Initiatives.

- Enriched learning opportunities being offered for secondary summer school and elementary summer learning programs. Specifically for secondary students who may not have earned a credit in the first semester – if there is a need to pick up a course to help support them in grad – reach out to grad coach or guidance.
- Summer school offers a wide range of summer programs across the region for grades 1 –12.
- Summer learning is a camp like experience with power reading and power math camps to continue to develop.
- Summer School has a wide range of online courses, and the calendar is quite rich. The calendar will be available shortly.

9. **Next Meeting: TBD**

10. Closing Circle

Motion to adjourn at 2:55 PM.