

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE INDIGENOUS EDUCATION CIRCLE**

**March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

Zoom online meeting

Melanie Gray, Superintendent, Teaching and Learning  
Melanie Lanois, Nipissing University  
Romeo Fournier, Nipissing University  
Mike Kalfus, Wasauksing First Nation  
Dave McDougall, Wasauksing First Nation  
Sarah Spence, Principal of Student Achievement and Wellbeing  
Amanda Mathias, Coordinator Indigenous Education Lead  
Kelly Nootchtai Huston, Coordinator Indigenous Education Lead  
Louise Sargent, Trustee  
Chantal Phillips, Trustee  
Julie Bertram, Trustee  
Jo-Anne Groulx, Mattawa Metis Council  
Gerry Goulais, Nipissing First Nation  
Lisa Wabegijig, Anishinabek Educational System KEB Region 3 Coordinator  
Michael Schneider, Acting principal of parry sound intermediate and secondary school  
Caroline Labrecque, Nipissing First Nation  
Trina Rickard, North Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre  
Genevieve Solomon-Dubois, Henvey Inlet First Nation  
Ashley St. Pierre, Moose Deer Point First Nation  
Melanie Allard, Executive Assistant

### **Land Acknowledgement by Principal Spence.**

#### **Opening Circle**

- Principal Spence welcomed everyone, and introductions were made around the circle.
- The group accepted the January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, minutes.

#### **Board Action Plan Mid Term Report**

##### **Supporting Students**

- This report overview is from a system wide perspective however there are also many dedicated teams at both elementary and secondary doing school level activities to help make schools more welcome and safe environments for our Indigenous students.
- Indigenous education is under the four pillars for the Board Action Plan but also woven on these roots are two consistent focuses.
  - Supporting student success and wellbeing directly for Indigenous Learners, families, and communities
  - Increase knowledge, understanding and awareness of Indigenous culture, world view, historical and contemporary issues, and perspectives for all members of school communities throughout the board.
- The Indigenous youth circle is led by Indigenous student trustee Albany Benson. Each school has an IYC group, and their discussions bring issues forward from the school level. They are

working on many school-based initiatives such as the necessities drive with the support of George Couchie. Details on these initiatives are posted on their Facebook page.

- A poster was created around the Canadian anthem and students sitting verses standing. This has gone out to schools with admin support, so educators are aware students have the option of sitting or standing.
- They continue to work on ensuring students in grades 7 and 9 are aware of the supports available to Indigenous students as well as the dedicated spaces and school-based youth groups.
- The IYC May retreat is upcoming, and they are in the process of electing a new Indigenous student trustee. They have already had three names put forward which is a testament to the goal of developing leadership.
- Four out of six high schools have dedicated space for Indigenous students. Although Almaguin and FJ McElligott do not, they do have dedicated contact individuals.
- The grade 11 NBE is in the second year of implementation. Teacher feedback received from the 2022-2023 survey helped direct the academic and resource support needed. All NBE teachers met and worked for a full day on the August PD Day with Kelly Brownbill.
- The 7 Stones Learning Centre, through the SAL Centre model allowed for ten openings to students 16 and 17 years of age in order to achieve their OSSD.
- This year the decision was made to increase the gradation coach allocation by .50 each at Chippewa and West Ferris. A pilot project was funded with BAP dollars to have a dedicated .40 grade 7/8 coach position, as secondary teachers can not be taking the position of an elementary teacher.
- The group discussed the Witness Blanket Project and the impact it is made.
- This school year we have been able to provide a 1.0 Indigenous Support and Transition Worker position in the West and one in the North. At PSHS the position works alongside the direction of the graduation coach and in the North alongside Silver Birches and Woodland schools.

### **Supporting Educators**

- Each year, the Indigenous education team provides PD and supports for educators, NBE teachers, Indigenous language teachers and dedicated budgets assigned to schools. Some PD was in the form of presentations and workshops with Dr. Pamela Toulouse, Jessica Shonias and Shane Tabobandung.
- With the Niigaan Gdizhaami Partnership grant, the West schools receive cultural programming and language support from Lisa Ross.
- Requests for funding do still flow through the Indigenous team to ensure they are reflective and accurate.
- 68% of the budget has been accessed and used.

### **Data and Data Analysis/ Administration/Guidelines**

- The Indigenous team recognizes that there is work to be done around the self-identification data. A successful campaign took place prior to COVID, encouraging families to self-ID. Unfortunately, with COVID and a new student information system, the team can clearly see the data is not accurate and will re-focus efforts there.

- Work will continue with the following: administrative guidelines, Indigenous funding and projections review and the REA/ESA working group.

### **Community Engagement and Grants**

- We work with many partners that support school communities in a variety of programs and services.
- The Sway is still available on the Indigenous education website link. The group was encouraged to view Kelly's Facebook page as it highlights what is happening in schools and the great events and initiatives taking place.
- Upcoming is a four board, city wide pow wow, spearheaded by George Couchie. The event will take place at Memorial Gardens on May 30<sup>th</sup>. School Boards agreed to focus on grades 4 and 5 to attend the city-wide pow wow.
- Three Learning Round Dances will take place alongside the learning pow wows.
- The group received a BAP feedback survey link and was asked to share any comments or feedback through this as we value your voice and partnership.

### **Terms of Reference**

- This is deferred to the next meeting.

### **Niigaan Gdizhaami Grant Update**

- We have two Niigaan Gdizhaami grants with AES in partnership with Dokis and Wasauksing First Nations. These funds allow for cultural coordinator Lisa Ross to support elementary schools and PSHS. She has been able to bring community members into schools who are making great connections with students.
- Funds also support learning pow wows, drumming groups, beading, gifts, and honorariums.

### **Community Partner Updates (Circle)**

#### **Nipissing University**

They are always working on programming and partnerships with the Board, alongside Canadore College. The Witness Blanket Project exhibit went well and allowed students to tour the University. They welcomed Chippewa's visit and was able to take part in Indigenous discussions. Volunteer hours are attainable for any students that help at events.

### **NNDSB Updates – Superintendent Melanie Gray & Indigenous Trustee Ashley St. Pierre**

Trustee St. Pierre confirmed that the initial re-naming of Chippewa school is now moving to re-branding and a focus on the new mascot name. Superintendent Gray confirmed that in consultation with our co-terminus boards the April 26<sup>th</sup> PD Day has now been moved to April 8<sup>th</sup>, due to the solar eclipse. Educators will take part in a literacy and numeracy (K-12) focus PD Day. The Board has approved of next school years calendar and the team will continue to work to support student learning and honour National Indigenous Peoples day. There is a new ministry driven student achievement plan that now replaces the Board improvement plan. The team is engaged alongside ministry supports on this but requires consultation prior to sharing. It is the hope to set up a special meeting with IEC, so principal Walking can present the priorities of this plan for discussion with the group.

Examples of priorities (many dictated by the ministry) are student attendance, graduation rates and literacy and numeracy goals. The group will receive a meeting invite shortly.

**Next Meeting Date** – Principal Spence will put a poll out to the group for feedback on the best dates, but likely being sometime the week of June 10-14.