

Indigenous Education Council (IEC) Minutes  
Wednesday, October 15, 2025 | 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM  
The Log Cabin Parry Sound / TEAMS

**Present:**

Amanda Mathias, Indigenous Lead  
Ashley St. Pierre, Indigenous Trustee & Director of Education - Moose Deer Point First Nation  
Melanie Gray, Superintendent, Teaching and Learning  
Chris Walkling, Principal K-12 SAWB  
Lisa Lamoureux, Principal of Student Well-being, and Equity  
Kelly Nootchtai Huston, Indigenous Teacher Lead  
Louise Sargent, NNDSB Trustee  
Daniel Stevens, Director of Education - Nipissing First Nation. (TEAMS)  
Heather Howald, Principal Parry Sound High  
Lisa Wabegijig, Regional Coordinator, KEB. (TEAMS)  
Lois Lambert, Director of Education, Dokis First Nation  
Mike Kalfus, Education Counsellor, Wasauksing First Nation  
Riley Trudeau, Indigenous Student Trustee. (TEAMS)  
Heidi McMillan, Executive Assistant  
Carol Nesbitt, North Bay Metis Council (TEAMS)

**Regrets:**

Carol Stevens, Magnetawan First Nation  
Chantal Larocque, Anishnabek Police  
Lauree Pizzale, Executive Director North Bay Indigenous Hub  
Lynn Mongrain, Temagami First Nation  
Rose Jawbone, Kebaowek First Nation  
Sylvia Rhee, Henvey Inlet  
Kathy Fortin, Director, NBIFC  
Sherrill Judge, Shawanaga First Nation  
Stephanie Bergman  
Sarah Julian, Director First Peoples' Centre Canadore College  
Emily Couchie, Indigenous Student Success Manager, Nipissing University  
Dave McDougall, Wasauksing First Nation  
Delores McKay, Parry Sound Friendship Centre  
Noodinong-Bemosed Christianson, Biidaaban Community Service-Learning Officer Nipissing University  
Genevieve Solomon Dubois, Henvey Inlet First Nation  
Geralddeana Goulais, Nipissing First Nation  
Cheryl Partridge, Wasauksing First Nation

**Welcome**

**a) Land Acknowledgement by Superintendent Gray**

**b) Opening Circle**

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m., opening with a circle that emphasized connection, purpose, and shared responsibility among members.

**c) Approval of Agenda**

*Motioned by Ashley St. Pierre, seconded by Heather Howald. Carried.*

**d) Approval of the Minutes of the June 18, 2025 meeting:**

*Motioned by Ashley St. Pierre, seconded by Mike Kaulfus. Carried.*

## **Indigenous Student Trustee Report - Riley Trudeau**

- Indigenous Student Trustee Riley Trudeau reported that the September Indigenous Youth Circle (IYC) meeting was held online. The group discussed their tradition of giving back, IYC merchandise and the election this year. IYC holds its first in-person meeting this month at Northern, at which a vote will be held on the art to be put on IYC merchandise.
- Initiatives taking place throughout the board included an Orange Shirt Day event and fundraisers at Parry Sound High School to support the Drop or Georgian Bay Anishinabek Youth.
- At Almaguin Highlands, IYC meets Monday for beading and event planning, which includes Truth and Reconciliation Week events and a Walk for Wenjack taking place this month.
- At West Ferris, students attended a welcome powwow at Canadore College/Nipissing University. Announcements were made leading up to Orange Shirt Day, and the Walk for Wenjack event took place Oct. 16.
- Northern students also attended the powwow and are making plans for the year. IYC will hold a group art activity next week, and is trying to recruit new members. The group wants to support the Wenjack Foundation, Friendship Centre and the NFN food bank, as well as work with Anishinabek Police Service again.
- Focus remains on promoting student voice and inclusion.

## **Indigenous Trustee Report**

- Over the summer, an interview was held for an Indigenous language teacher at Nobel; Lisa Ross was hired.
- Grant funds are being managed collaboratively among five First Nations, allowing shared decision-making and direct support for classrooms.
- The grant has significantly enhanced support and enabled new accomplishments.
- Ongoing professional development for the Indigenous team.
- Continued success of local graduates from the Indigenous Language Teacher Program.
- Discussion on multiple learning pathways and flexible routes to teaching.
- MDPFN is holding this year's Cultural Advisor Grant, fostering collaboration and language revitalization efforts.

## **Community Updates**

### **MDPFN**

- Migawami fund grant held for JK-12; recent Thanksgiving celebration supported by Ashley.
- High school students engaged in online learning setup.
- Gift cards distributed to families for lunches; cafeteria cash program restarted for MDP students to have access to CAFECASH.
- Food insecurity addressed through partnerships with the Health Unit and Friendship Centre; food pantry and breakfast/lunch programs established for students with food insecurities to access.
- Daily engagement with students and strong collaboration with local schools and teachers.

### **NFN**

- School and daycare at capacity; expansion plans underway.
- Formalizing aftercare programs with MOE; licensed daycare.
- Increased enrollment as more members return to the community.
- Ongoing work with Ministry to address capacity issues and resource gaps.

### **DFN**

- Currently have twenty students; with families moving back home.
- New daycare planned, with groundbreaking expected in the new year.
- Noted increased student success and return of families to community schools.

### **MAGFN**

- Teaching manual distributed; ongoing efforts to support education.

### **WFN**

- School build supported; space provided at WFN for students during pivot.
- Resilience of FN students highlighted; support for students facing challenges with zero tolerance policies.
- Addressing challenges such as the use of offensive language, and promoting cultural teachings.

- Communication sent to primary school principals to promote use of Seven Grandfathers Teachings; emphasis on safe spaces and cultural appreciation.
- Growth in student enrollment and positive school partnerships.
- Highlighted the importance of creating safe spaces for indigenous students in schools and ongoing communication with administrators.

### **Board update**

- Upcoming PD day (Oct 20) focused on Anti-Racism, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, featuring Chris D'Souza with sessions planned for all staff, equity coaches, and secondary teachers to support inclusive education.
- The day is framed as the beginning of ongoing work to address challenges and take action.
- Region-wide meetings and professional learning circles planned; development of books on language, culture, and treaties.
- Call for board submissions for the 2026 calendar; art work contributions to be recognized with honorarium.
- Ongoing professional development opportunities on racism and special education.

### **Director/Superintendent Report – Superintendent Gray**

- Recognition of the Indigenous Education Team's dedication and leadership.
- Continued growth and adaptation to change; strong partnerships with First Nations and Métis Councils.
- Focus on expanding programming and supports, ensuring resources and culturally relevant materials are accessible.
- NNDSB Team attended Indigenous Education Leads Gathering in Toronto, participating in workshops and land-based learning activities gaining insights and building connections.
- Preparation for developing a new three-year Board Action Plan, with emphasis on collaboration and shared priorities.

### **Indigenous Education Board Action Plan Discussion and Consultation Activity**

- The meeting included a comprehensive consultation activity focusing on the development of a new three-year Indigenous Education Board Action Plan to be completed by January 31, 2026. Four key ministry-defined themes guided the discussions:
  - **Supporting Students** (well-being, belonging, land-based learning)
  - **Supporting Staff** (professional development, cultural confidence)
  - **System Supports** (governance, recruitment, reporting)
  - **Engagement and Awareness Building** (community collaboration, cultural respect)
- Participants reflected on current initiatives, challenges, and opportunities for growth. Highlights included:
  - The importance of Indigenous student support roles such as grad coaches, transition workers, and mental health clinicians, with ongoing recruitment challenges.
  - Student feedback advocating for cultural activities to count toward credits and stronger responses to racism in schools.
  - Efforts to indigenize curriculum and integrate experiential learning, such as including land-based activities and photo essays. Teachers are encouraged to recognize and incorporate these experiences into their teachings. The goal is to make curriculum more culturally responsive and relevant to Indigenous students, while also educating non-Indigenous staff on the importance of these approaches.
  - The value of Indigenous Youth Circle input in shaping the action plan and ensuring student voices are heard and acted upon.
  - Need for consistent communication and partnership with families and communities to enhance engagement and support.
  - Succession planning and recruitment as critical system supports to sustain Indigenous education initiatives. These discussions were supported by breakout sessions focusing on regional priorities such as grants, knowledge keepers, and anti-racism initiatives.
  - Regular communication among staff, principals, and community partners is encouraged to share resources, strategies, and best practices. Staff leads are recognized for their sustained commitment and familiarity with Indigenous education priorities.
  - The use of SharePoint for Truth and Reconciliation resources and the development of community books for digital publication are examples of resource sharing
  - Recruitment challenges persist, value of local Indigenous staff in schools.

- Team includes approximately thirty-five individuals: growth in HR and language teachers.
- Student support transition workers and mental health clinicians in place, with some vacancies.
- Over thirty secondary teachers now teach Indigenous Studies.
- Governance and guidance through IEC; FNAC and IYC play critical roles.
- Board action plan development underway, aiming for completion by January 3, 2026.

### **Supporting Students**

- Grad Coaches provide strong support.
- IYC offers space for student voices.
- Indigenous student support and transition work ongoing.
- Need for boundaries as non-Indigenous students use Indigenous spaces.
- Increased awareness of cultural experiences for all.
- Efforts to ensure all First Nations are represented at meetings.
- Family engagement remains a challenge; more involvement needed.

### **Supporting Staff**

- There is a recognized need for ongoing professional learning, responsive investments, and intentional planning to sustain and expand initiatives. Staff are encouraged to reflect on what is working well, identify challenges, and propose improvements for future growth.
- Persistent challenges include recruitment and retention of Indigenous staff, ensuring consistent roles and partnerships, and building system capacity.

### **System Supports**

- Powwows and curriculum reflect lived experiences and cultural values.
- Regular communication with principals and official community letters.
- Strategic plans, grants, and partnerships support Indigenous youth.
- Succession planning and recruitment remain challenges.
- Reporting to MOE and students is a priority; visual representation of work is important.
- Consistent roles and partnerships benefit stability.
- Addressing racism and fostering welcoming environments for students.
- Ongoing efforts to build system capacity and streamline priorities.

### **Engagement & Awareness Building**

- Indigenous Student Trustee advocates for student voices and supports IYC.
- IYC consultation produced tangible action items; accountability emphasized.
- Importance of regular communication, trust, and sustained relationships.
- Ongoing efforts to improve family engagement and hold the board accountable.
- Responsive action and consistent staff leads are key.

**Next Meeting:** January 21, 2026.

### **Closing Circle**

- The meeting concluded with a closing circle recognizing the positive progress and areas for continued learning.
- Trustees expressed willingness to engage further with the IYC to maintain open dialogue and support student leadership.