



# Niigaan Gdizhaami

WE ARE MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

Anishinabek Education System  
Annual Forum Report 2019

# Niigaan Gdizhaami “We are Moving Forward Together” Forum

February 26 and 27, 2019 | Toronto, Ontario

## Acknowledgments

The Kinooaadziwin Education Body acknowledges the following partners, organizations and individuals. Their collaboration and support were essential to the success of the 2019 Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum.

Participating First Nations of the Anishinabek Education System  
Ontario Ministry of Education  
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada  
Union of Ontario Indians  
Wolf Eye Productions  
Laurentian University  
Elder Jeff Monague  
Elder Josh Eshkawkogan

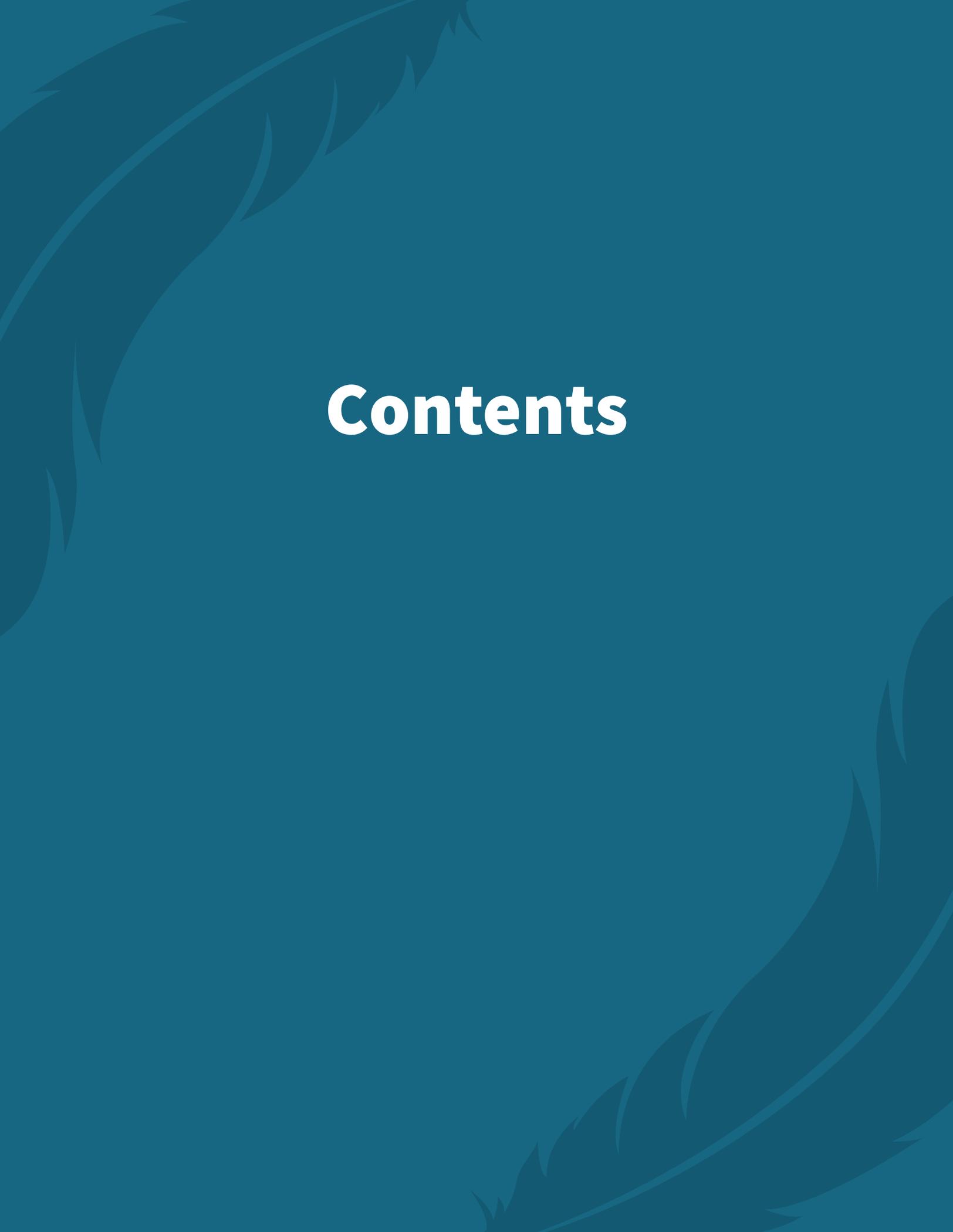
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Kinooaadziwin Education Body  
100 - 132 Osprey Miikan  
North Bay, ON P1B 8G5  
705-845-3634

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ISSN 2562-427X





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## Message from the Kinoomaadziwin Education Body

*Evelyn Ball, Treasurer  
Kinoomaadziwin Education Body*

Aanii Everyone,

On behalf of the Board of Directors for the Kinoomaadziwin Education Body, it is a privilege to welcome all participants to the 4th annual Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum. I truly believe that gatherings like these are allowing us to reclaim our language and our identity. It takes courage for our youth to be able to speak their language, and it's up to us to give them the tools they need to succeed in that journey. Our hope for the Anishinabek Education System is that one day it will enable all of our children to speak their language with ease. This is so important to our communities, to our students, and to our future as Indigenous people.

I am humbled to be part of this collaborative gathering, and I say thank you to our youth, our Elders, our Chiefs and councilors, and our federal and provincial partners for being here with us.

Miigwech!

## Message from Ontario

*Taunya Paquette, Director, Indigenous Education Office  
Ontario Ministry of Education*

Boozhoo!

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work that has been accomplished since the launch of the Anishinabek Education System on April 1, 2018. The Joint Master Education Agreement Committee, together with several sub-committees, working groups and administrative staff, have made significant strides in implementing the 17 projects negotiated and detailed in the Multi-Year Action Plan of the Master Education Agreement.

As Director of the Indigenous Education Office for the Ministry of Education, I want to say that we are committed to our continued partnership as we work together to support the well-being and achievement of Anishinabek students.

We look forward to the Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum each year, and the opportunities it presents for sharing, networking and relationship-building among Ontario District School Boards, Participating First Nations and Anishinabek students.

## Message from Canada

*Ross Pattee, Assistant Deputy Minister  
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada*

Aanii, bonjour and welcome!

I would like to acknowledge the youth and the Elders for being here, and the territory of the Mississaugas of New Credit, on which we have gathered for this annual event.

I also wish to congratulate you for all of the work that has been accomplished so far. The Anishinabek Nation Education Agreement is the largest sectoral arrangement in the country, providing self-determination for 23 First Nations. The Anishinabek Education System's holistic approach to education is setting significant cultural foundations, which create positive impacts and pathways for the youth. This in turn is creating future leaders and closing socio-economic gaps.

As similar agreements may be established with other First Nation partners, the Anishinabek Education System is a leader in self-governance that others will see as a role model. Your successes far outweigh the challenges that will present themselves throughout your journey. Together, through partnership, we look forward to overcoming barriers and participating in the achievements of the Anishinabek Education System.

Thank you!



# Day One

## Introduction

The Kinooamaadziwin Education Body (KEB) hosted the fourth annual Niigaan Gdizhaami “We are Moving Forward Together” Forum on February 26 and 27, 2019, in Toronto, Ontario. With approximately 150 participants in attendance, the event brought together leadership, educators and students from the 23 Participating First Nations (PFNs) with Ontario District School Boards, and federal and provincial representatives. This was the first forum held since the official launch of the Anishinabek Education System (AES) on April 1, 2018, making the event an ideal platform for networking and engagement.

### The objectives of the forum included:

- Sharing information on the implementation of the Anishinabek Nation Education Agreement (ANEA) and the Master Education Agreement (MEA);
- Securing input from forum participants on Master Education Agreement initiatives;
- Providing an opportunity for forum participants to learn about educational initiatives and best practices;
- Hearing from Anishinabek youth on their educational priorities and needs, and their collective plan moving forward; and
- Supporting Anishinabek First Nations and Ontario District School Boards to advance regional educational priorities.

Members from the PFNs and representatives of the Ontario District School Boards worked through a busy two-day agenda, while AES youth attended a separate forum focused specifically on youth topics and priorities.

Kelly Crawford, Director of Education for the KEB, opened the forum by welcoming participants and inviting Biidaamnoose King, a youth representative from Beausoleil First Nation, to recite Ngo Dwe Waangizid Anishinaabe, the preamble to the Anishinabek Nation’s Anishinaabe Chi-Naaknigewin.

### Additional opening remarks were provided by:

- Evelyn Ball, Treasurer for the Kinooamaadziwin Education Body Board of Directors;
- Taunya Paquette, Director, Indigenous Education Office, Ontario Ministry of Education
- Ross Pattee, Assistant Deputy Minister, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada; and
- Jeff Monague, Elder, Beausoleil First Nation.

This report, and its accompanying appendices, provide a summary of events for the 2019 Niigaan Gdizhaami “We are Moving Forward Together” Forum. In addition, the discussions and input provided by participants at the forum resulted in action items and next steps that will be used to guide the work of the AES moving forward.

# Master Education Agreement (MEA): Implementation Progress

*Kelly Crawford and Taunya Paquette*

Following the official launch of the AES in April 2018, the implementation of the Master Education Agreement started with 17 projects outlined in the Multi-Year Action Plan (MYAP). Kelly Crawford and Taunya Paquette provided brief updates on the projects and spoke about the work being accomplished by the following MEA supporting committees:

- Joint Master Education Agreement Committee (JMEAC);
- Data, Research and Evaluation Committee (DREC);
- Special Education Committee (SEC); and
- Transitions Working Group (TWG).

Some of the projects were discussed further in workshops and specific input was collected from forum participants. This feedback will be used to guide the ongoing implementation of the MEA and the MYAP.

## Targeted Initiatives: Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund

The Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund (NG Fund) is an annual grant that allows PFNs, together with Ontario District School Boards (ODSBs) and other organizations to apply for individual and joint project funding. The projects must include one of five yearly priorities, the 2018-2019 priorities are:

1. Enhancing opportunities for the engagement and participation of Anishinabek students, families, and communities to support Anishinabek student success and well-being;
2. Increasing knowledge and understanding of Anishinabek histories, cultures, perspectives, languages, and contributions (“Bimaadziwin”) and traditional Anishinaabe knowledge passed down from one generation to the next through ceremonial teachings (“Kendaaswin”);
3. Facilitating the successful transition of students between Anishinabek First Nations’ schools and schools in the provincially-funded education system;
4. Supporting collaboration between the AES and Ontario District School Boards, including data and information sharing; and
5. Innovating and introducing leading practices in Indigenous education.

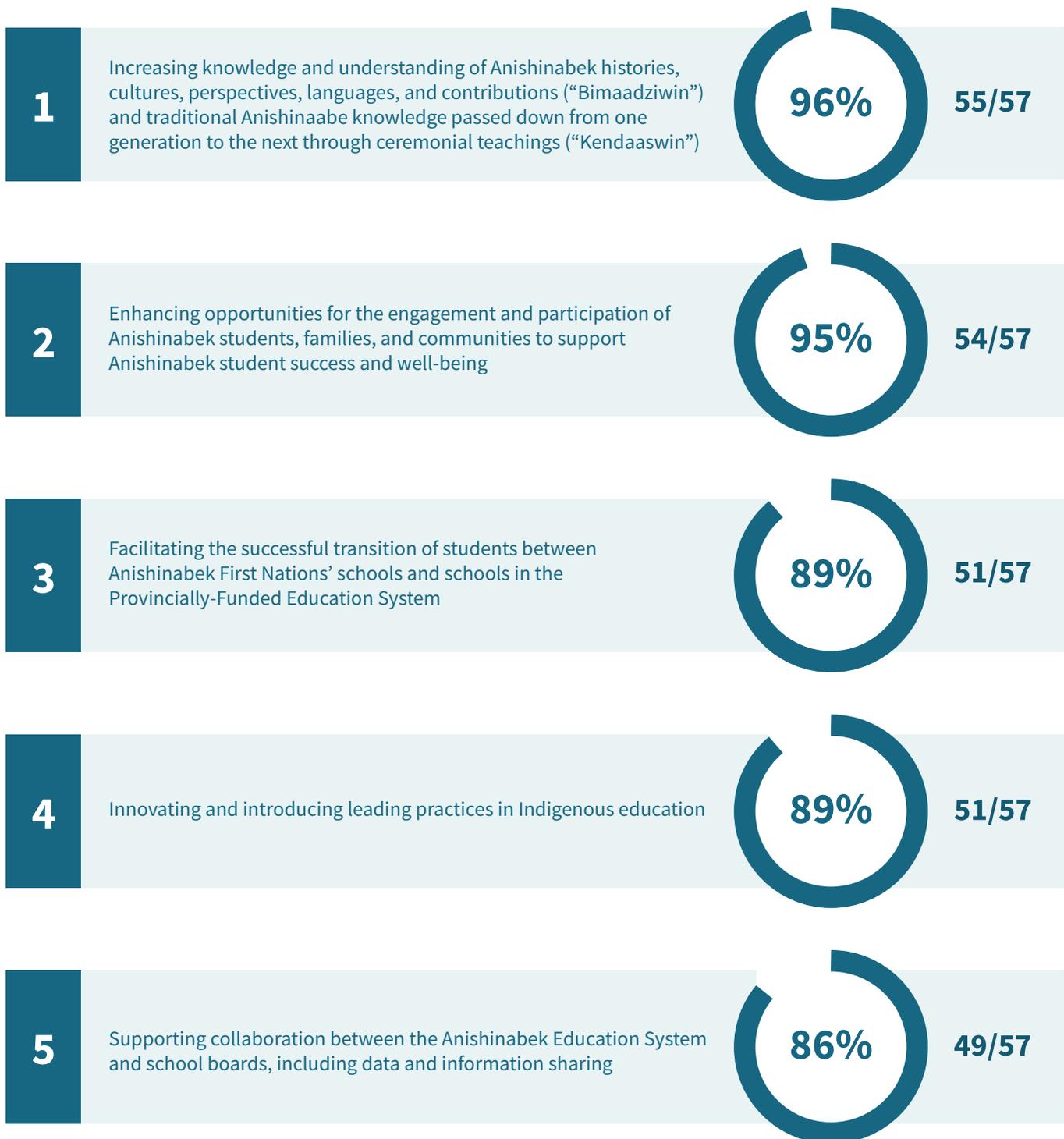
In 2018-2019 the NG Fund supported 20 projects from 23 PFNs and partner organizations. Each of the community-based projects advances the objectives of the MEA in a unique way.

**Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund 2018-2019 Approved Project Summaries:**

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1iHhXkAoE9WyeUjaDY1QEXepBal8yyMkA>

## Targeted Initiatives: Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund

In preparation for the release of the 2019-2020 NG Fund application guidelines, forum participants were asked to review the priorities from 2018-2019 and to identify potential priorities for 2019-2020. The exercise yielded 57 responses. Eighty-two percent of respondents indicated that all five priorities from 2018-2019 should remain as priorities in 2019-2020. See the results below:



# Targeted Initiatives: Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE 2019-2020 FUND PRIORITIES ARE SET OUT BELOW:

- Development of language resources
- Creation of language games, software, etc.
- Formal and informal student leadership
- Building leadership skills and relationships between FN & non-FN school children
- Research
- Land-based curriculum in multiple disciplines
- Resources development
- Elders in our schools to support the students and educate the teachers
- Students who need hands-on training, look at different approaches
- The students are looked at as a whole student, not just mentally, spiritually, physically, emotionally, etc.
- High school well-being
- Ojibwe language
- Sharing of data on initiatives
- Programs that are a success, c/w AES First Nations (unity)
- Student-led projects/students as researchers (StaRs)/students as equal partners
- Stay the course to ensure sustainability
- Second priority should be made mandatory for all students to learn
- Focus on improving audience achievement, in literacy and numeracy specifically, utilizing inclusive design strategies and culturally-relevant Indigenous ways of knowing and learning
- Language development and program implementation increased in all areas
- Collaboration between Participating First Nations and best practices
- Regular AES/PFN school meetings to support access to student needs from First Nations, within the school board, keeping in mind collective agreements that may pose barriers

The Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund is intended to provide the PFNs with resources to support Anishinabek students directly and indirectly whether those students attend school on-reserve or off-reserve. During the negotiation of the MEA, the KEB and the Ministry of Education concluded that it is imperative to review the NG Fund projects to evaluate whether the projects should become strategic initiatives or be implemented system-wide.

## NEXT STEPS:

1. The KEB will update the NG Fund priorities and guidelines for 2019-2020 using the input from the forum participants.
2. The KEB will develop an evaluation tool that will enable the community to provide evidence of success.
3. The KEB will analyze the results of the NG Fund projects and create a bank of exemplary models available to the PFNs, ODSBs and the Ministry of Education.
4. PFNs and Ontario District School Boards will consider collaborative funding to support strategies that are proven to foster student success and well-being.

# Updates on Regional Activities

The AES Regional Education Council Coordinators (RECCs) provided updates on the activities of the four Regional Education Councils (RECs). Updates included reviewing the priorities established at the 2018 Fall REC Meetings, and highlighting efforts, practices and initiatives undertaken over the last year by PFNs, their schools and Ontario District School Boards.

## Regional Education Council Coordinators and Ontario Education Officers (EOs) presentation:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1rUObt1uGQZSIAsVjwI8rb1VyV0q2HzvP>

### REGIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL #1

- Reviewed priorities
- Discussed cultural component – to have school boards go to First Nation meetings
- Culture – to be looked at more closely
- More consultation on Indigenous land-based courses
- Gaps were identified for special education. Communication is required to identify who provides what services
- PFNs and Ontario District School Boards need more focused meetings, quarterly
- Updates on student success and best practices were reviewed

### REGIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL #2

- Increased communications between REC and school boards
- Created an action list and follow up to the next step, develop a system to track progress
- Revitalization of language
- Change and renew the attitude toward the language and culture
- Programs should be reflected on school reports
- Improved special education services
- Teacher recruitment
- Reviewed list of student success and best practices as presented

### REGIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL #3

- Language and culture
- Restore literacy
- Waiting for AES language strategy
- Special education, one-day workshop for special education, more conversations are required
- School board relationships

### REGIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL #4

- Language and culture
- Student transitions support
- Connection with communities
- Student leaders

### TWO OF THE COMMON REGIONAL PRIORITIES ARE:

1. Language and culture; and
2. Specific student supports such as special education and transitions.

### NEXT STEPS:

1. The RECCs will work with the Education Officers (EOs) in their region to identify existing culture and language programs and resources to inform the development of the AES language strategy;
2. The RECCs will work with the EOs in their region to inventory and analyze the existing First Nation and ODSB student resources and services. This inventory will inform the work of the Special Education Committee (SEC) and Transitions Working Group (TWG) in addressing Anishinabek student supports and transitions.

## Keynote: Language and Culture and its Effect on Student Well-Being

*Alan Corbiere*

The keynote address on day one of the forum was presented by Alan Corbiere. Returning as a keynote speaker for the second consecutive year, Alan's return to the forum was highly anticipated by participants. His message focused on the importance of language, history, and culture as the foundation of understanding identity for Anishinabek youth.

Alan encouraged Anishinabek youth, and all participants, to speak their language as much as they can. He believes that by incorporating Anishinaabemowin into his presentations, he is providing an opportunity for participants to hear and learn new words. Using the language, especially in Indigenous storytelling, allows audiences to connect with the words by associating them with history. This form of connection increases the learner's ability to retain the knowledge and understanding of traditional words and sayings.

Alan enhances his presentations with visual elements and often includes images of Indigenous pictographs to relay traditional stories, place names and teachings. He referred to the notion that, "the voice of the land is in our language." In order to learn our traditional language, Alan encourages all learners to connect with the land.



**We need to go through phases of making mistakes. This is part of the learning and revitalization of the language.**

Alan Corbiere



## Cultural Competency Training

*Kelly Crawford, Josh Eshkawkogan and Kimberly Debassige*

Forum participants were introduced to the design strategy being used to develop the AES cultural competency training program (Ezah Wiidoogtaaing Training Program). The program will be available for delivery to the AES, Ontario District School Boards and Ministry of Education staff. The development and implementation of the Ezah Wiidoogtaaing Training Program is a direct deliverable of the MEA and falls under professional and leadership development within the MYAP.

Elder Josh Eshkawkogan and Kimberly Debassige shared their personal experiences in non-Indigenous learning environments. They identified the potential positive effect that the Ezah Wiidoogtaaing Training Program could have in addressing identity complexes, recognizing the needs of Indigenous students in mainstream education, and creating inclusive learning environments.

Kelly Crawford elaborated on the details of the Ezah Wiidoogtaaing Training Program, explaining the development process of the draft guidelines and the consultation process with each of the Regional Education Councils. The draft guidelines, which are comprised of five modules, were reviewed at the 2018 Fall REC Meetings and feedback was collected from Participating First Nations and Ontario District School Boards.

Based on criteria developed by the KEB, five school boards have been selected to pilot the Ezah Wiidoogtaaing Training Program, occurring on a quarterly basis. It is expected that participants in the training program will complete a 360° assessment that identifies their stages of learning, while additional assessments for individuals, families and peers will complement the training evaluation process.



**We need to start teaching the eighth fire to our future generation.**

Josh Eshkawkogan



## Workshops: Main Forum Day One

### MASTER EDUCATION AGREEMENT RESEARCH AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

*Kelly Crawford and Megan Borner*

As the co-chairs of the Data, Research and Evaluation Committee (DREC), Kelly Crawford and Megan Borner (EDU) provided updates to workshop participants on the status of DREC-related projects such as the distribution of Ontario Education Numbers, and longitudinal research and monitoring. A summary of the Research and Evaluation Framework Logic Model (the Logic Model) was also presented.

The Logic Model sets out the anticipated outcomes of the projects of the MEA, as defined in the 2018-2021 MYAP. Participants of the workshop reviewed and critiqued four draft designs of potential visuals to support the understanding of the Logic Model.

### NEXT STEPS:

Feedback collected at the NGF on the Logic Model will guide the DREC in the development of the final logic model visual.

### Four Draft Logic Model Visuals:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1SmZ94-W5V11HjHaW8u1SLJJZlHMti5Uz>



### ENHANCED GRADUATION COACH APPROACH

*Carole Couillard, Monique Sawyer, Kathy Dokis  
and Lisa Michano-Courchene*

The Enhanced Graduation Coach Approach aims to empower Anishinabek students by providing supports and access to resources that assist in establishing and achieving graduation paths. Committed leadership and staff in three pilot schools have implemented the Enhanced Graduation Coach Approach programs, establishing trusting relationships with students and families in their schools. Additionally, the program allows communities to advocate for Anishinabek student well-being and academic achievement by interacting with and assessing students in need of extra support.

The three pilot schools currently initiating the program are:

- Nbisiing Secondary School (Nipissing First Nation);
- Pic River Private High School (Biigtigong Nishnaabeg); and
- Manitoulin Secondary School (Rainbow District School Board).

Education staff from each of the secondary schools presented on the status of the program in their own communities, as well as the challenges, successes, pros, cons, and recommendations for communities moving forward.

The Enhanced Graduation Coach Approach program will continue to support students in any capacity that contributes to student success. Holistic, traditional, and land-based programming will also be included and recognized as a credit for student contributions. The program is moving forward and leadership is working to enhance the student experience and success rate.

### Enhanced Graduation Coach Approach Presentation:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=16osnMjxVJJiYCdHuiGlpn7cuTHmWHWoy>

## Workshops: Main Forum Day One

### ADVANCING ANISHINABEK STUDENT WELL-BEING

*Dr. Nancy Young*

Participants in the Advancing Anishinabek Student Well-Being workshop received a hands-on demonstration of the Aboriginal Children's Health and Well-being Measurement (ACHWM or Anish Naa Gegii) tool. This tool was designed by Wikwemikong Unceded Territory in partnership with Laurentian University, with the intent of creating a culturally-appropriate and reflective resource capable of capturing student well-being data in Indigenous communities across Canada.

Dr. Nancy Young, professor at the School of Rural and Northern Health at Laurentian University, led the hands-on demonstration, which allowed participants to test the mobile application on tablets, and to review the history of the tool and the questions that are used within the measurement tool.

#### NEXT STEPS:

Anish Naa Gegii will be piloted in several AES First Nation schools and participating schools for Anishinabek students off-reserve. This tool will provide enhanced opportunities for PFNs, the AES and the Ministry of Education to provide responsive programs and services to Anishinabek students.

**Aboriginal Children's Health and Well-Being Measure:**  
[www.achwm.ca](http://www.achwm.ca)

### STUDENT TRANSITIONS: PRIORITIES TO CONSIDER

*Renee Restoule and Nancy Petrick*

The Transitions Working Group facilitated a workshop with forum participants to provide updates and to collect feedback related to student transitions. The working group provides advice and recommendations to the Joint Master Education Agreement Committee regarding successful transitions for students moving between schools on-reserve and schools in Ontario District School Boards and other systems.

A work plan for addressing student transitions was shared with participants and five priorities were reviewed. Feedback collected for each of the priorities is set out below and on the following page.

#### **Priority #1: Orientation and support arrangements for parents, caregivers, families and communities to better support student transitions**

- Communication is key
- Produce a Youtube video that shows the transitions process for students, parents and families
- Provide opportunities for ODSB staff to visit students, parents and families in the First Nation communities
- Hold parent-teacher interviews in the First Nation communities
- First Nations and school ODSBs organize and co-present information sessions about ESAs, high school transitions, housing/student accommodations, transitions to post-secondary, budgeting
- ODSBs going to the First Nation communities to seek input on the ODSBs multi-year, strategic plans

## Workshops: Main Forum Day One

### STUDENT TRANSITIONS: PRIORITIES TO CONSIDER (CONTINUED)

#### **Priority #2: Continuity of on-reserve, student-focused health and social services when transitioning to schools in the provincially-funded education system**

- Utilize video conferencing to ensure more consistent, stable access to specialized health care providers through Jordan's Principle
- Need more funding for accessing specialized services including occupational therapists and speech language pathologists
- How do we support Indigenous-focused health services?
- Create safe spaces to foster pride in developing positive Indigenous identities
- Reconciliation pedagogy
- Often Indigenous people are expected to be the experts
- Health and social service providers should be part of orientation sessions
- Build cultural competency within schools
- Create Indigenous spaces in every school where Indigenous language can be taught and cultural programming may be delivered

#### **Priority #3: Coordination and access to community-based social services including child and youth mental health services and addictions support services**

- Provide programming after school along with after school buses
- Coordinate scheduling of services
- Ensure continuum of services from JK to Grade 12
- Familiarize students with services from a young age to help remove stigma

#### **Priority #4: Access, adaptation and development of student success, pathways and well-being programs and initiatives inclusive of Anishinabek perspectives**

- Pass on knowledge, experience through storytelling
- Identify key stories such as how the land is viewed in order to learn who we are and where we are from

#### **Priority #5: Other transition issues related to student success, pathways and well-being programs, in order to identify opportunities to better support Anishinabek student transitions**

- Facilitate teacher awareness by First Nation teachers
- More information feedback to the community
- PD days for curriculum
- Consider needs for lifelong transitions
- How do we integrate our cultural approach, teachings and local history in the classroom with our students?
- Address barriers related to hiring and funding Indigenous language teachers

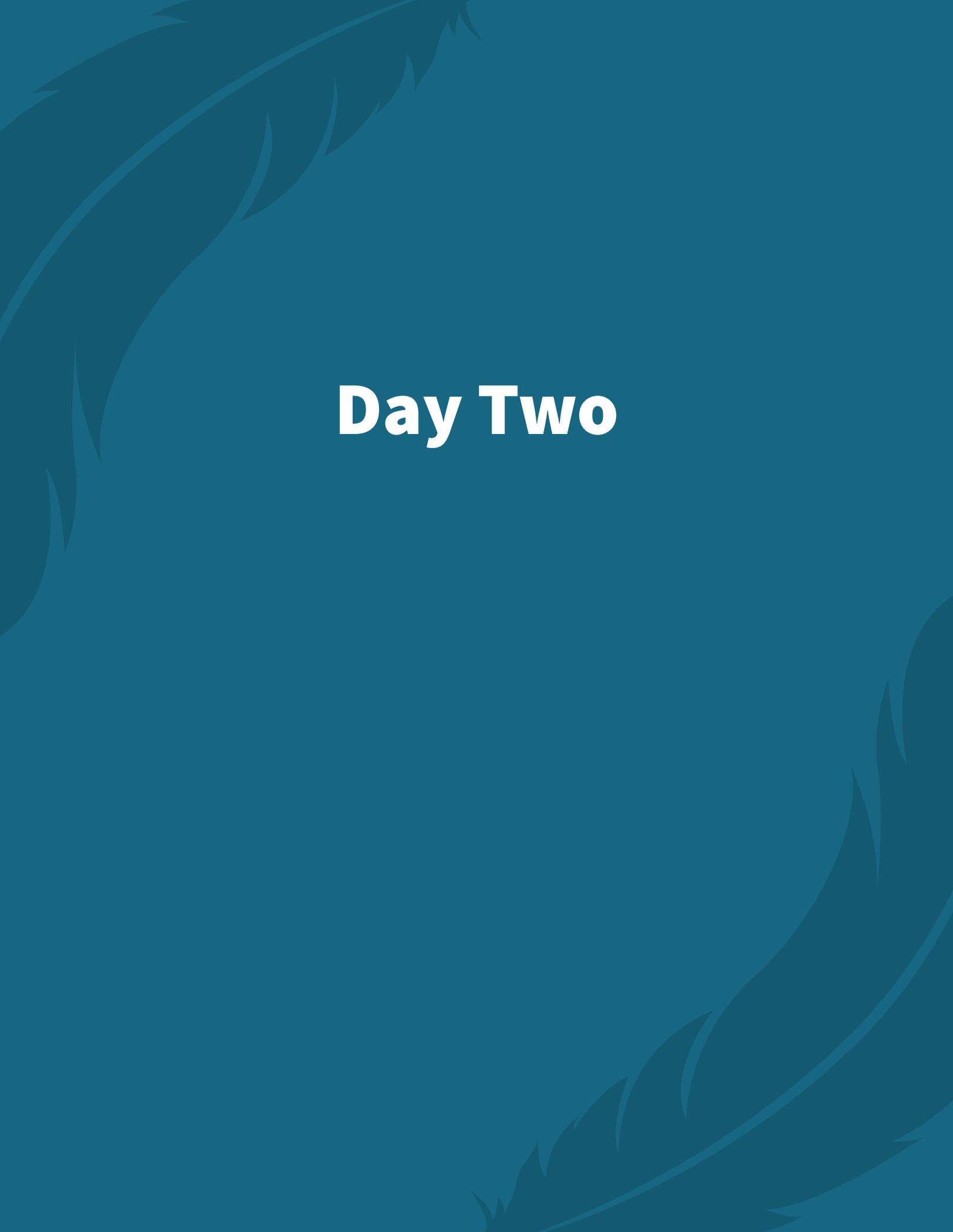
### **NEXT STEPS:**

The TWG will use the input from the forum to complete an action plan and draft protocols on student transitions.

#### **Jordan's Principle:**

<https://www.canada.ca/jordans-principle>





# Day Two

## Confident Learners Program

*Neil Debassige, Owner, LearnFirst Education Consulting  
Dr. J. Douglas Willms, President of the Learning Bar Inc.*

The Confident Learners Program is a unique curriculum specifically-designed to build teaching capacity and enhance student learning in Indigenous education. The program was initially developed in 2013, in partnership with 23 First Nation schools and the University of New Brunswick.

The owner of LearnFirst Education Consulting, Neil Debassige, introduced forum participants to the program and spoke to the vision of Confident Learners, which is to ensure that students are fluent readers and confident learners by the end of the third grade.

Dr. Douglas J. Willms continued the presentation, further explaining how the program works. Willms also shared the successes of the program that have been captured through the Early Years Evaluation.

Some of the Confident Learners Program's benefits include:

- Putting students on a pathway to success;
- Professional development training for teachers;
- Access to learning activities and lessons; and
- Student-guided learning.

**LearnFirst Education Consulting:**  
[www.confidentlearners.com](http://www.confidentlearners.com)

**The Learning Bar:**  
[www.thelearningbar.com](http://www.thelearningbar.com)



**Our language teachers have the biggest struggle. There is no curriculum for what they do. We need to place value on that, and recognize the challenges that they face every day when they walk into a classroom.**

Neil Debassige



# Special Education: Gaps and Alignment of Opportunities

*Kelly Crawford and Elizabeth Bigwin*

The Special Education Committee (SEC) was developed to support the implementation of the MEA. As part of its responsibilities, SEC reviews current education services and practices and makes recommendations to the Joint Master Education Agreement Committee.

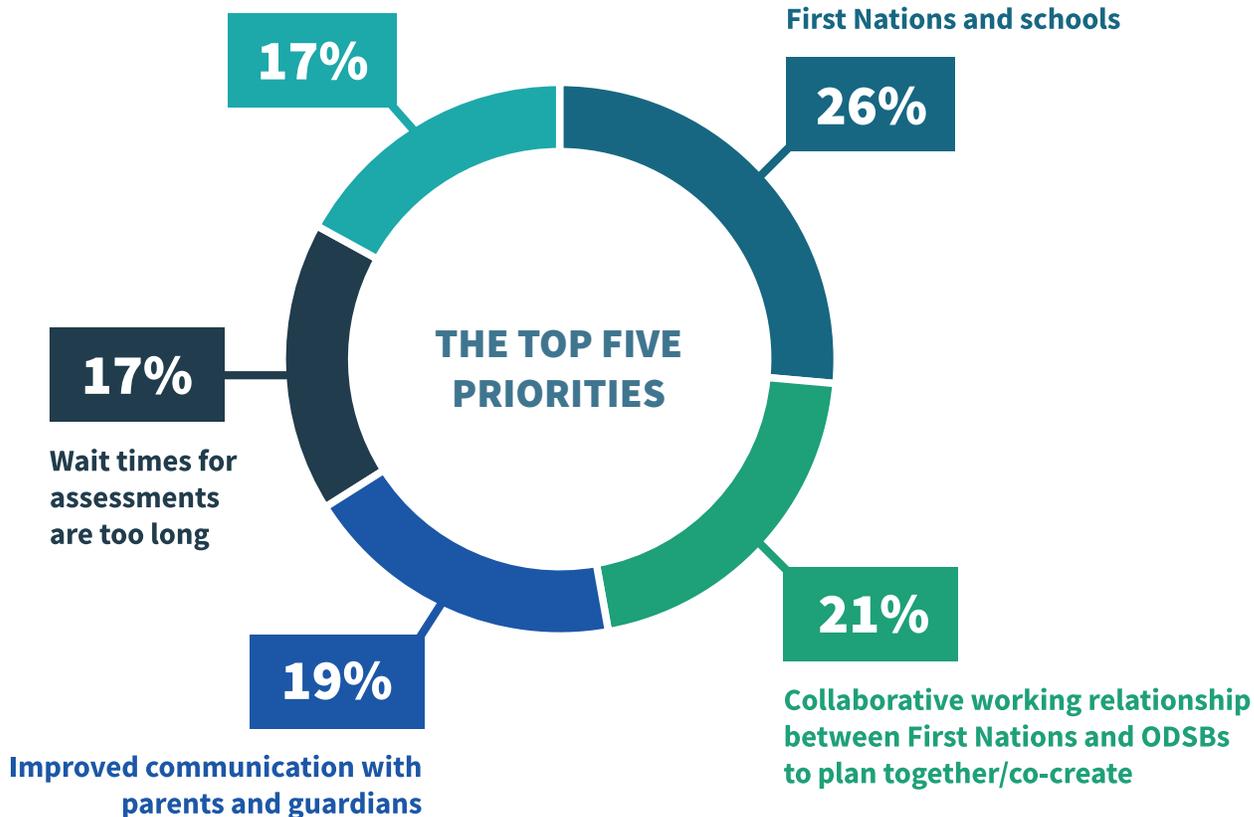
In December 2018 and January 2019, the KEB conducted a special education review of the PFN communities. The results indicated gaps and alignments in special education services and were presented to forum participants for discussion. In an effort to collect feedback, participants were asked to prioritize the list of gaps and alignments, by selecting the three most important topics. The top five priorities are set out below:

## NEXT STEPS:

1. The full results of the AES special education review will be analyzed and presented to the PFNs in the new fiscal year.
2. The results of the review, and the priorities identified at the forum, will contribute to the foundational work of the SEC to identify new opportunities and synergies between AES First Nations and Ontario District School Boards to address special education gaps for Anishinabek students.

**ODSBs to invite First Nations to Board PD sessions to participate or facilitate**

**Increased communication and information sharing between First Nations and schools**



## Anishinabek Youth Presentation

More than 30 AES students participated in the Youth Forum, with representation from 18 of the 23 Participating First Nations. The Youth Forum followed a separate agenda that included:

- A review of the AES, the ANEA and the MEA;
- An introduction to the Anishinabek Nation's Children and Youth Bill of Rights;
- Discussion about the development of the AES Youth Council; and
- Group discussions to identify youth priorities.

## Anishinabek Youth Priorities

### REC 1 YOUTH PRIORITIES

- More Education Assistants, Indigenous support workers, Indigenous transition workers, and Indigenous teachers
- To learn in an environment of peers - students who don't thrive in the typical school environments need more hands-on learning
- Indigenous classes, culture rooms, funding for cultural activities
- Mental health and physical health are equally important in school programming
- Life-preparation programs: cooking classes, home management, financial management, healthy lifestyles
- Transportation to increase participation in after school programs
- Language classes, and more language teachers (must be Indigenous language teachers)
- Summer learning opportunities: mentors and tutors, summer schooling for extra credits
- One-on-one learning for students who need the extra help
- Communications classes

The Youth Forum was led by co-chairs Nathalie Restoule and Quinn Meawasige. As representatives of the Anishinabek Nation Youth Council, Nathalie and Quinn have established valuable relationships with AES students and youth. Their energy and motivational nature as co-chairs enabled youth to work through a vigorous agenda and establish foundations for youth priorities and efforts moving forward. The students presented their statements and priorities to the main forum participants. The youth priorities are captured below and on the following page.

### REC 2 YOUTH PRIORITIES

- Programs for student guidance: transition programs, Indigenous support workers, Elders-in-residence, etc.
- Community involvement and cultural involvement in schools
- Indigenous games and teachings, sports meet ups, and competitions with other First Nation schools
- Language, cultural arts and crafts, music, and expression of art and emotion
- More culture: morning prayers, smudging, feasts, drumming, clan systems, storytelling
- Transportation for extra-curricular activities



# Anishinabek Youth Priorities

## REC 3 YOUTH PRIORITIES

- More support and funding for on-reserve schools, equal pay for on-reserve teachers
- Cultural training for teachers and staff (handling racism and systemic problems)
- More communication between the AES and schools/students
- Updated and accurate Canadian history curriculum
- Indigenous support workers and guidance counselors
- Indigenous student trustee at school boards
- Support for initiatives like orange shirt day, treaty week, Indigenous/Aboriginal day
- Student advisory council – for Indigenous students
- Land and territory recognitions and Ojibwe word of the day in the announcements
- Homework programs, better access to libraries in the community

## REC 4 YOUTH PRIORITIES

- Mental health support and counselors that understand Indigenous backgrounds
- Indigenous support workers and language teachers
- Language classes/Ojibwe immersion programs
- An Indigenous resource room for cultural practices like smudging and drumming
- Elders in the school to provide support and knowledge
- Land-based learning that teaches Indigenous knowledge
- Indigenous history beyond residential schools
- Cultural competency training for teachers to better understand Indigenous backgrounds
- Make cultural competency a mandatory requirement in Teacher's College

The youth priorities were discussed by the First Nations and Ontario District School Board representatives together with the youth. These regional break-out sessions offered the following suggestions as strategies for addressing youth priorities:

- Consider regional youth priorities in the development of Education Services Agreements between PFNs and Ontario District School Boards;
- Provide more communications (from KEB to PFNs) at earlier stages of project implementation;
- Create a student-specific communication that updates students on projects and initiatives (monthly or quarterly distribution);
- Have RECCs visit schools and engage with students throughout the year;
- Get feedback from youth on a more regular basis;
- Share the youth priorities in the schools;
- Appoint student trustees with legitimate role/function;
- Development of Elders-in-Residence programs;
- Implement the Youth Council to ensure youth voice is consistently heard and youth representation is at REC meetings and KEB events

## NEXT STEPS:

1. The RECCs will coordinate REC meetings to work with the First Nations to develop action plans and address the Anishinabek youth priorities for their region.
2. The RECCs and EOs will develop a joint work plan to support the PFNs and the Ontario District School Boards to address Anishinabek youth priorities;
3. The KEB will continue to work with the Anishinabek youth to establish a Youth Council.

## Keynote: Life Promotion

*Harvey Andrew McCue, M.A.*

As a recognized consultant in health, education and self-governance issues, Harvey McCue has been a long-time advocate for Indigenous students and families. In his presentation, tackling the difficult subject of adolescent suicide, McCue introduced forum participants to an innovative curriculum developed to foster life promotion. With suicide rates that are almost four times the national rate, a strategy for addressing the controversial topic of adolescent suicide is critical. The purpose of McCue's curriculum is to promote resiliency among First Nations youth.

The First Nations Suicide Prevention Curriculum was developed over the course of two years by McCue and a team of professionals. It is now being tested in three schools, with positive outcomes expected. While research is ongoing, McCue demonstrated how the program's 24 modules can have constructive effects in First Nation communities. The learning modules cover different topics and carry heavy emphasis on youth involvement and teacher training.

Some of the module topics include:

- Suicide facts;
- Warning signs;
- Coping skills;
- Values;
- Harmony and balance;
- Leadership; and
- Understanding beauty within ourselves, each other, and everything around us.

Final revisions to the program will occur in the summer of 2019 after reviewing feedback from the test schools that are currently undertaking the curriculum. McCue advised forum participants that when the final curriculum is available, it will be rolled out nationally, at no cost to communities and schools. The material will be posted to a number of websites and will be available for download by any interested parties.

For more information about The First Nations Suicide Prevention Program, please contact Harvey McCue by email at [hmccue@sympatico.ca](mailto:hmccue@sympatico.ca).



**With suicide rates that are almost four times the national rate, a strategy for addressing the controversial topic of adolescent suicide is critical.**

Harvey Andrew McCue

# Guidelines for Accessing and Sharing Anishinabek First Nations Education Resources

*Kelly Crawford*

The KEB released the MEA's Education Services Agreement (ESA) Guidelines in October 2018. Within these guidelines, it is recommended that ESAs include sections regarding the shared use of and access to resources and resource people. Resource-sharing enables First Nation communities and Ontario District School Boards to provide enhanced learning experiences for all students.

The draft guidelines for accessing and sharing Anishinabek First Nation education resources were developed by the KEB, with the direct input of the PFNs and the Ontario District School Boards at the Fall Regional Education Council Meetings. The draft document was introduced to participants, focusing on key areas that require mutual understanding. These key areas include:

- Recognizing the difference in world views;
- Recognizing and respecting that the First Nation has the right to refuse the use of their resources within the Ontario District School Board;
- Recognizing and respecting the knowledge held by Elders and knowledge-keepers;
- Developing an agreement with the First Nation on the use of the Anishinabek curriculum resources; and
- Establishing mechanisms for monitoring the use of Anishinabek curriculum resources.

Taking into consideration the unique needs of each region and their traditional practices for sharing resources, the document emphasizes the need to establish foundational working relationships based on mutual respect.

## **NEXT STEPS:**

1. The draft guidelines will be shared again with the PFNs in spring 2019, and feedback will be collected from each region.
2. Input from the PFNs will drive the development of the final guidelines document.

## Next Steps

The next steps to be taken are set out under the various topics covered at the Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum. This section of the report lists all of the next steps following the forum.

### NIIGAAN GDIZHAAMI FUND NEXT STEPS

1. The KEB will update the NG Fund priorities and guidelines for 2019-2020 with the input from the forum participants.
2. The KEB will develop an evaluation tool that will enable the community to provide evidence of success.
3. The KEB will analyze the results of the NG Fund projects and create a bank of exemplary models available to the PFNs, Ontario District School Boards and the Ministry of Education.
4. PFNs and Ontario District School Boards consider linking funding support to certain strategies that are proven to support student success and well-being.

### REGIONAL UPDATES

1. The RECCs will work with the Education Officers (EOs) in their region to identify existing culture and language programs and resources to inform the development of the AES language strategy;
2. The RECCs will work with the EOs in their region to inventory and analyze the existing First Nation and ODSB student resources and services. This inventory will inform the work of the Special Education Committee (SEC) and Transitions Working Group (TWG) in addressing Anishinabek student supports and transitions.

### MASTER EDUCATION AGREEMENT RESEARCH AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

1. Feedback collected at the NGF on the Logic Model will guide the DREC in the development of the final logic model visual.

### ADVANCING ANISHINABEK STUDENT WELL-BEING

1. Anish Naa Gegii will be piloted in several AES First Nation schools and participating schools for Anishinabek students off-reserve. This tool will provide enhanced opportunities for PFNs, the AES and the Ministry of Education to provide responsive programs and services to Anishinabek students.

### SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. The full results of the AES special education review will be analyzed and presented to the PFNs in the new fiscal year.
2. The results of the review, and the priorities identified at the forum, will contribute to the foundational work of the SEC to identify new opportunities and synergies between AES First Nations and Ontario District School Boards to address special education gaps for Anishinabek students.

### ANISHINABEK YOUTH PRIORITIES

1. The RECCs will coordinate REC meetings to work with the First Nations to develop action plans and address the Anishinabek youth priorities for their region.
2. The RECCs and EOs will develop a joint work plan to support the PFNs and the Ontario District School Boards to address Anishinabek youth priorities;
3. The KEB will continue to work with the Anishinabek youth to establish a Youth Council.

### GUIDELINES FOR ACCESSING AND SHARING ANISHINABEK FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION RESOURCES

1. The draft guidelines will be shared again with the PFNs in spring 2019, and feedback will be collected from each region.
2. Input from the PFNs will drive the development of the final guidelines document.

## Forum Reflections

The Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum provides a unique platform for sharing knowledge, experiences, goals, and priorities between the PFNs, the KEB, the Ministry of Education and Canada. The collaboration that occurs throughout the event is evidence of the commitment and effort that each party puts forward in the development and implementation of the Anishinabek Education System.

Every time our youth are engaged and provided an opportunity for advocacy, they reciprocate with motivation, understanding and strength. What is harvested from their presence and from their sharing at this event is meaningful. Their contributions to their own education system carry positive and lasting impacts that drive the continued work of each party.

As a final note, the Kinoomaadziwin Education Body and the Ministry of Education offer sincere appreciation to everyone who has supported and influenced the successful delivery of the fourth annual Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum.

Chi-Miigwech!

# Appendices

## Glossary

AES	Anishinabek Education System
ACHWM	Aboriginal Children’s Health and Well Being Measure
AN	Anishinabek Nation
ANEA	Anishinabek Nation Education Agreement
BSID	Board School Identification Number
CCT	Cultural Competency Training
DREC	Data, Research and Evaluation Committee
EDI	Early Development Instrument
EDU	Ministry of Education
EFA	Electronic Fiscal Transfer Agreement
ESA	Education Services Agreement
EO	Education Officer
FN	First Nation
KEB	Kinoomaadziwin Education Body
MEA	Master Education Agreement
MYAP	Multi-Year Action Plan
NGF	Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum
NG Fund	Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund
ODSB	Ontario District School Board
PFN	Participating First Nation
REC	Regional Education Council
RECC	Regional Education Council Coordinator
SEC	Special Education Committee
TWG	Transitions Working Group

## Supporting Documents and Links

### **Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund 2018-2019 Approved Project Summaries**

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1iHhXkAoE9WyeUjaDY1QEXepBal8yyMkA>

### **Regional Education Council Coordinators and Ontario Education Officers Presentation**

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1rUObt1uGQZSlAsVjwI8rb1VyV0q2HzvP>

### **Four Draft Logic Model Visuals**

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1SmZ94-W5V11HjHaW8u1SLJJZlHMti5Uz>

### **Enhanced Graduation Coach Approach Presentation**

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=16osnMjxVJJiYCdHuiGlpn7cuTHmWHWoy>

### **Aboriginal Children's Health and Well Being Measure**

[www.achwm.ca](http://www.achwm.ca)

### **LearnFirst Education Consulting**

[www.confidentlearners.com](http://www.confidentlearners.com)

### **The Learning Bar**

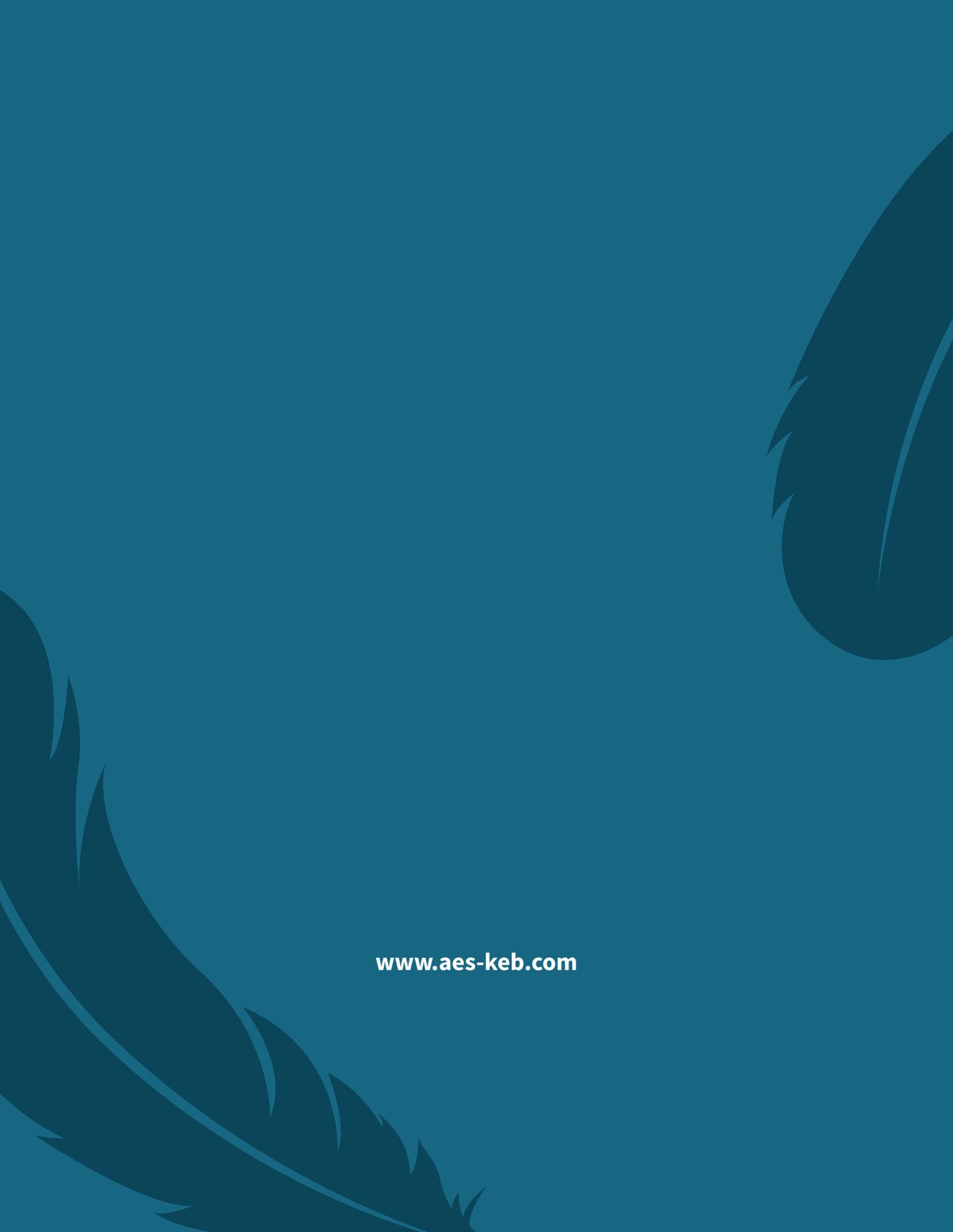
[www.thelearningbar.com](http://www.thelearningbar.com)

### **Jordan's Principle**

<https://www.canada.ca/jordans-principle>

### **2019 Niigaan Gdizhaami Forum Materials**

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1G4GrSUjg7rmIXUHMxajiHzl\\_LeBsH5br](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1G4GrSUjg7rmIXUHMxajiHzl_LeBsH5br)

The background is a solid teal color. There are two large, stylized feather silhouettes. One is in the bottom-left corner, pointing towards the center. The other is in the top-right corner, pointing towards the center. Both are in a darker shade of teal than the background.

[www.aes-keb.com](http://www.aes-keb.com)