

Gaa-izhi-gikendamaan noongom

What I've learned today - First Nation, Métis and Inuit education highlights



Truth and Reconciliation Week and Orange Shirt Day

The Rainy River District School Board is so proud of all students and schools for respectfully participating in Orange Shirt Day activities, in recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Students have been engaged in curriculum that is strengthening their learning of the residential school system and fostering a greater understanding of the contributions of First Nation, Métis and Inuit individuals, communities, and nations.



FNMI Student Support - An Update from The TELL Room

This year, Room 136 at Fort Frances High School received a name and logo. Seeing as this is a space for students, we felt that it was important that they had a say and we held two different competitions, one for our name, and one for our logo. There were many submissions, but we like “The TELL (Talk, Eat, Learn, Laugh) Room”. The students thought that this encompassed what we do well here, and we all agreed.

We actually liked two of our students logos and couldn't choose between the two, so we asked them if they could work together and incorporate both of their ideas into one (right). The students thought it was important to have the 7 Grandfather teachings incorporated in our logo as we try to abide by them in our space. Our name in English and in Anishinaabemowin is also represented, and they felt the Goose should be in the logo as well as this is Mr. McMahon's nickname and he is the FNMI Graduation Coach who works in The TELL room.



The TELL Room has been busy this past year. We offered daily smudging for staff and students, made a fire pit for our school to enjoy, offered Elder support for students, and organized support programs and visits from local service providers and community workers. We also held our own Fall Harvest and hosted the FFHS powwow with over 800 people in attendance and 6 drums. We helped build a sweat lodge and teaching lodge, enjoyed fantastic events during Indigenous Education Week, made ribbon skirts, daily, provided a food support program, as well as cultural programming, seasonal programs, and other events for staff and students to enjoy.

Ground Blessing in Rainy River



A few photos of the Ground Blessing Ceremony for the Rainy River K-12 School, Childcare & Child Family Centre. Miigwech to Elder Laura Horton, for guiding our students and staff in blessing the land for their future school.

Anishinaabemodaa



This beginner-level Anishinaabemowin app has 120 modules, each approximately 1 hour in length. Through the app, language learners gain an understanding of how to use various types of vocabulary and basic Anishinaabemowin grammatical patterns.

For more information on how to access this amazing program, visit the WakingUpOjibwe.ca website:

<https://anishinaabemodaa.app/Identity/Account/Login>

Mentor Learner Program

As part of Anishinaabemodaa, the Rainy River District School Board supports the Mentor-Learner program, with high school students completing 120 hours of Anishinaabemowin learning independently before being paired with a fluent first speaker from their home community. During this pairing, the students are immersed in their language as only Anishinaabemowin is allowed to be spoken. To date, there have been four cohorts, with 19 students participating. Applications for a fifth cohort will be accepted in the spring of 2024.



JW Walker School gives a very special thank you to Mooshkina Wassigek (Darcy Jones) for sharing her language and the Waking Up Ojibwe program with the students. Through technology, songs, movement, games, and hands-on activities, our kindergarten students made a connection to the Ojibwe language.

Around the Schools

Gagwe-gikendamaawiziwin/Quest for Knowledge

In April, Crossroads School, Mine Centre School, FFHS 7/8 School, Donald Young School, Robert Moore School, and J.W. Walker School all competed in Gagwe-gikendamaawiziwin – “trying to seek knowledge” hosted by Seven Generations Education Institute. Gagwe, or Quest for Knowledge, engages students in a variety of team-based Ojibwe language activities that use problem-solving skills and allows them to communicate in fun and engaging ways. Here is a picture of the Crossroads School team, supported by Mrs. Boshey and Mrs. Vanderaa.



Boys Drum Group at Robert Moore School

If you visit the school at 12:30pm on a Tuesday or Thursday, you may hear the sound of a drum. Jay Morrison, Cultural Coordinator for Couchiching First Nation, and his son Ryland are leading a boys’ drum group. The group is open to all boys in the school and they have been busy learning to drum and sing. Last year, Jay helped repair the Robert Moore Drum which was ceremoniously woken up and named Timmy. It has now become a fixture within the school. The boys cannot wait for Jay to show up and ask daily when he is coming. They are learning how to be leaders, take risks, and have self-confidence. We cannot thank Jay and Ryland enough for taking the time to be part of our school.

Art with Connie Kulhavy

At Fort Frances High School, Mrs. Baird's Grade 11 Indigenous Voices class participated in a two-day workshop with Métis artist, Connie Kulhavy. This project was a great way for students to focus on stress relief as they prepare for exams.



Métis Nation of Ontario School Visits

Maarsii to Anne-Marie Armstrong and Deb Hebert from the Métis Nation of Ontario for visiting all elementary schools to share their knowledge, language, traditions, and history with our students! Here are some pictures of their visit to Sturgeon Creek School and Crossroads School.



Your Voice is Power

80 students at Fort Frances High School participated in a Hackathon event for Your Voice is Power, an educational program and remix competition that teaches coding skills to students using music from Indigenous artists. Organized in partnership with RRDSB, Amazon Future Engineer, Fair Chance Learning and TakingITGlobal, students spent the day learning the basics of computer science and coding while also engaging in discussions on the First Nations, Inuit and Métis experiences in Canada.

Students were joined by Indigenous music artists Dakota Bear, YB Nakota, and Piisim. Dakota Bear also performed his song, "Freedom", for students.

Indigenous Education Week - May 2023

Many activities for Indigenous Education Week took place last May at FFHS:

- Presentation by Olympian Brigitte Lacquette for Grades 7-12
- Presentation on *Introduction to Anishinaabe Instruments* for Music students
- Residential School Presentation for the Ontario Literacy Course students
- Lacrosse for students in Grades 7-10
- Virtual Reality presentations about the Seven Grandfather Teachings & Medicine Wheel Teachings for Grades 7-12
- Career Symposium for Grades 7-12
- Showing of *The Grizzlies* movie
- Fish Fry lunch for all students & staff (with the help of Mr. Connor's classes)

Fall Harvest 2023



Every fall, near the signing of the Treaty Day on October 3rd, Seven Generations Education Institute invites local students to learn about Treaty #3 and food sovereignty and participate in traditional harvesting practices.



This year's event featured 14 stations:

- Treaty Knowledge
- Fish Preparation
- Geese and Bear Grease
- Bannock Making
- Wild Rice Parching
- Wild Rice Winnowing
- Wild Rice Dancing
- Wild Rice Finishing
- Deer Preparation
- Grandfather Drum
- Anishinaabemowin Teepee
- Honouring our Children (Residential School Survivors)
- Bannock on a Stick
- Métis Games

Miigwech to everyone that helped make Fall Harvest special; Elders, station helpers, staff, students, and teachers.

Connected North



The Ontario government recently announced that they will be investing \$900,000 in virtual learning experiences and educational resources for Indigenous students and educators in remote Indigenous communities from Kindergarten to Grade 12. This funding will be used to support the Connected North program, which is expected to offer at least 1,100 learning sessions to 55 schools throughout the province.

Some of the highlights of the Connected North program include virtual field trips to museums and aquariums, interactions with Indigenous role models to share culture and career journeys, curriculum-enhancing expert sessions in STEM, arts, and languages, and connections between students across regions for educational and cultural celebrations. Additionally, over 100 learning resources, including digital science kits, books, and author talks will be available in English, French, and Ojibwe.

“We are excited to deliver new expanded educational programs to Indigenous students across the province,” shared Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education. “By bridging the digital divide, we are connecting all students across Ontario with access to learning opportunities that build essential skills in reading, writing, math, and STEM to prepare for the jobs of the future.”



THE ALTERNATIVE SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAM

The vision of the Alternative Secondary School Program is to create a comfortable and educational environment that is sensitive to the needs of our students. Since 2003 we have been providing a culturally-aware learning environment, focusing on holistic wellness through students' emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual well-being. Students can work toward obtaining their Ontario Secondary School Diploma, and we can also assist them in upgrading courses for further educational and training opportunities. As of 2022 we have had the pleasure of working with 258 graduates of the ASSP program!

Intellectual/Mental Well-Being

- Full- and part-time study options working toward OSSD or upgrading for post-secondary
- 2 full-time teachers on staff/site as well as 2 full-time UNFC program staff
- Individualized programming for student needs/interests
- Special education services available
- Up-to-date technological equipment for students
- Principal on site
- Potential Co-op opportunities within UNFC
- Dual Credit Courses with Confederation College
- Wide variety of courses



Spiritual Well-Being

- Traditional crafts
- Anishinaabemowin language worker
- Student involvement with community feasts
- Outdoor activities/teachings
- Student involvement with Veterans' Day pow wow
- Cultural teachings, ceremonies, activities & events
- Medicine teachings and access to traditional medicines
- Access to Kiizhaay Anishinaabe Niin Program
- Bi-weekly drum group
- Elder-led sharing circles
- Fall and spring drum ceremonies

Physical Well-Being

- Providing daily healthy breakfast, lunch, and snacks
- Outdoor activities consist of: snowshoeing, ice fishing, golfing, baseball, cross country skiing, trapping, hiking, berry picking, etc.
- Providing smoke-free and drug-free learning environment
- Safe space for all students
- Gender inclusive, LGBTQ2S+ friendly
- Access to Food Bank
- Access to Gym facilities

Emotional Well-Being

- Caring adults and exposure to positive role models
- Program integration with other UNFC programs
- Elder-led sharing circles
- Assistance applying for post-secondary planning, grants, and scholarships
- Staff trained in/by ASIST, EGALE, Mental Health First Aid, and Restorative Justice
- Regular contact with parents/caregivers, and/or guardians
- Access to childcare/family programming
- Links to school activities and other organization activities
- Referrals and coordination with external agencies



Our success continues to grow every year!

- June of every year we have a graduation and success ceremony partnered with our Aboriginal Headstart Program
- Increasing number of graduates yearly
- Increasing number of credits yearly
- Increasing number of full-time, part-time and independent students

Open daily Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Able to offer education and programming to students ages 16 and up

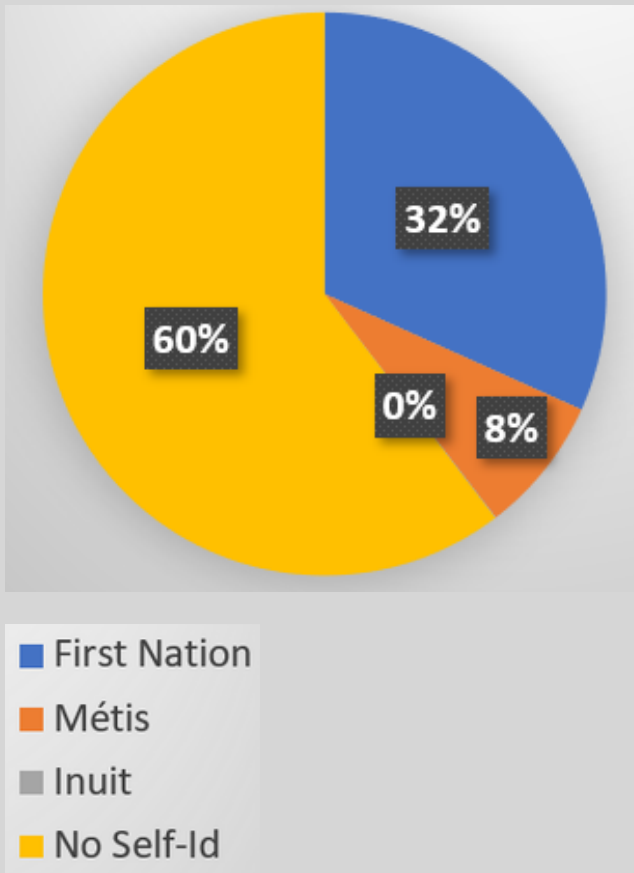
Excellent partnership with local school board and host high school

And so much more!

For more information, contact Tracy Jensen, ASSP Program Coordinator (807)274-8541 tjensen@unfc.org

FNMI Self Identification

Currently, the RRDSB voluntary student self-identification rate is approximately 40%. This data is used to help identify trends in achievement at schools and within programs, and to provide further supports where necessary.



Indigenous Students of the Month 2022-2023 Fort Frances High School



September 2022
Jailyne Taylor



October 2022
Reed McKinnon



November 2022
Maverick Morrisseau



December 2022
Brookelynn Marchuk



January 2023
Samuel Penagin



February 2023
Noah McPherson



March 2023
Cade Beck



April 2023
Mickenna Ryll



May 2023
Kade-Evan Bruyere

RRDSB Indigenous Education Website

For more information on Rainy River District School Board Indigenous Education Initiatives, please visit our website at: rrdsb.com/indigenous-education

CONTACT US

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