



Our Gifted Children

Kiiniwi Miini-goowizjik Binoojiinhyik



HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

- Return to School
- Hear from Teachers
- Elder's Corner, Joe Endanawas
- Bear Grease Teaching
- Student Success Story

Message from Chiefs of Ontario Director of Education

Shé:kon
sewakwé:kon. Ayá:wenhs
sewakwé:kon sewata'karí:te
nok sewatshennón:ni



Hello everyone

I hope this greeting finds you well and happy. As we continue through this challenging time of learning to live with an ever-evolving health threat I find myself very thankful for the collective resiliency of our people. I strongly believe that our strength is our families, communities, nations, and our profound connection and relationship with the land. It brings me much joy to see our people put forth their best efforts to protect and care for each other. Top of mind for me is the strong ongoing work taking place through the Ontario Technical Table on the Interim Funding Approach (OTTIFA), especially the Special Education Task Team. The OTTIFA Special Education Task Team is made up of dedicated people from across Ontario that have experience and expertise in Special Education and policy development. To date, this Task Team has developed recommendations on improving the way special education is funded within a holistic education model. Although policy change is always slower than we would like it to be, it is encouraging to see some changes on the horizon that will begin addressing chronic challenges in this area. We will keep you apprised of opportunities to provide input as this work progresses.

E'tho nikawén:nake,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julia Candlish'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Julia Candlish.
Director of Education
Chiefs of Ontario

WHO WE ARE

The **Chiefs of Ontario** is a political forum and secretariat for collective decision-making, action, and advocacy for the 133 First Nations communities located in Ontario.

Guided by the Chiefs in Assembly, we uphold self-determination efforts of the Anishinaabek, Mushkegowuk, Onkwehon:we, and Lenape Peoples in protecting and exercising their inherent and Treaty Rights.

Keeping in mind the wisdom of our Elders, traditional knowledge keepers, and the future for our youth, we continue to create the path forward in building our Nations as strong, healthy Peoples respectful of ourselves, each other, and all creation.



RETURN TO SCHOOL

As we are returning to school this fall, the health, safety, and well-being of students, families, and staff is of utmost importance. The Ministry of Education has released the *COVID-19: Health, safety, and operational guidance for schools (2021-2022)* document (<https://www.ontario.ca/document/covid-19-health-safety-and-operational-guidance-schools-2021-2022>), which provides health and safety measures to support in-person learning. The document also provides guidance and recommendations for students with special education needs.



Supporting Special Needs Learners

It is recommended that schools review and update Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to reflect changes that may have occurred over the past year. To further support special needs students and all learners, the Ministry of Education recommends focusing on health and safety protocols, mental health and well-being training for staff before the school year starts. The safety of

medically fragile students should also be considered, and collaboration between schools and local health clinics/units and parents is encouraged.

Mental Health

Children will often have many feelings and emotions returning to school in the fall, which may intensify even more during the pandemic. Parents may also be worried about their child's mental health as they have to navigate the many

rules and restrictions implemented at schools due to the pandemic.

Open communication is one of the most powerful tools to assist children and parents. Listening, talking, and validating your child's feelings go a long way when helping them transition back to school.

Children's Mental Health Ontario

<https://cmho.org> suggests the following strategies:

- Accept and validate your child's emotions. Have conversations with your child before and after the start of the school year.
- Accept the fact that things are likely to be uncertain for a while.
- Look for opportunities to address your child's specific worries and concerns in an age-appropriate way.

Chiefs of Ontario also has a designated Covid-19 Education and Resource web page that can be accessed at <https://www.coo-covid19.com/education>. We wish everyone a safe and happy return to school.



Return to School for Parents, Students, and Special Education Teachers

Teachers, here we are again, beginning a new school year with students who come with their own unique and distinctive skill sets. As many students and teachers are transitioning back from virtual learning platforms it is important to learn about your students, and allow them to learn more about you. During the first few weeks have some fun and create some positive connections with your students and their families.

Parents, a new school year means new teachers, support staff, goals, and relationships. You want your child to have a prosperous school year, therefore a successful transition back to school is essential. Get involved, take advantage of “Back to School” events, parent/teacher conferences, numeracy, and literacy events, as well as extra-curricular activities. All events provide the student and family with exposure to activities and the staff involved in the school environment.

Tips for Student Success Communication

Arrange a meet and greet prior to the start of the first day of school that includes the student, parents, the teacher, and support staff. This would be a great time to have discussions about the class, activities, and events of the school year.

Decide on a successful communication methodology that works for all parties as a means of information sharing. Keep the lines of communication open regarding the Individual Education Plan (IEP) development, school/home schedules, routines, and changes to medications/health as necessary.

Advocacy

Being knowledgeable about the IEP process, special needs legislation and the needs of the student/child will prepare everyone involved and make everyone a more successful advocate. Always ask questions for clarification of new information as necessary.

Elder's Corner



Joseph Clarence Endanawas

Ratification Vote Manager, UOI

Joe Endanawas is a strong advocate for our Language and Culture. Joe graduated from Gore Bay High School, George Brown College, and completed the Justice of the Peace training in Sudbury. Joe is also a veteran of the US Army, 1968-1974.

In his earlier years, he was a Band Manager and served as Chief in his First Nation. Joe was a volunteer firefighter, a softball coach, a driver for school trips, and volunteered for fundraisers and various powwows. He has been on many committees and boards for our First Nations.

Joe is regarded as a leader/ champion in the Anishinabek community; highly respected and valued for his wisdom and kind words. For most of his life, he has made it his goal to work towards the betterment of our people. Joe is very committed to moving our people forward and shares his knowledge freely.

As a child, I attended the Sheshegwaning Catholic Indian Day school. This school had religious teachings throughout the day and I attended mass several times a week. To me, it seemed like a punishing God; they scared us into believing that if you did something wrong, you would go to

hell. After finishing High School in the Provincial system, I left the reserve, and I worked at various jobs in Canada and the United States. During this time, I did not go to church or any religious functions, it didn't appeal to me. It wasn't until much later in life that I found, in Alcoholics Anonymous that it was not a punishing God. Later on, I found traditional teachings and it was like a light was turned on, this is where I should have been at the beginning.

Back in the early days, it was common to see broken families and relatively normalized to get intoxicated every weekend. In adulthood, I finally understood why this was happening. It was one of the consequences of the residential school system.

It was a way for people to try and escape from the trauma. Now we realize that you can't just get over the trauma, healing is individual and the process takes time. They wanted to assimilate the Indians through Indian Day Schools and Residential Schools.



I think in order to live harmoniously and in balance in today's modern world we have to learn to adapt to their education system, however, it has to be in addition to our own. The traditional way of teaching starts before you are even born, in the womb, and keeps on going. It is a lifelong thing. School was out on the land, not in a building. Traditionally it was about survival, and we learned by observation, parents didn't just tell us the teachings they showed us. For example, we learned to respect all life, you didn't shoot a squirrel or bird if you were not going to eat it or use it for something, and you didn't cut down a tree for no reason. If you had a lot of fish, you would share it with your community or trade it. In the Three Fire Confederacy, the Odawa are known as traders, the Potawatomi are the fire keepers, and the Ojibway are the hunter and gatherers. A fundamental part of the Anishinabek Education System should be to learn about Anishinabe culture, language, history, knowledge, and values. The Anishinaabe language must be included in the curriculum. Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) is a very descriptive language, even some fluent speakers don't know the literal translation behind some words. We must be looking at the structure of the word and understand what it means.

My mom encouraged me to go to high school. I think I would have quit in grade eight and probably taken a job as a logger. She also encouraged me to take typing which was part of the curriculum; at the time, I didn't think it was important, but years later, it did come in handy. In 1968 when I was in the US Army, I realized my typing skills were a definite asset. In this computer age, I think typing is essential.

I was Chief of Sheshegwaning First Nation for a few terms. We have a school on the Reserve which I have supported 100% and made many improvements over the years. I have always fully supported all the people who lobbied for Indigenous rights and education, such as Lewis Debassige, who co-authored the 1972 red paper, "Indian Control of Indian Education," along with a few others.



I was also a part of the United Chiefs and Councils of Mnídoo Mnising Alternative Justice Program staff, where we would take the individual out of the court system and bring them into the healing circle. The focus was on healing, not punishment. All the people, the offender, and the victim were invited to participate. An Elder opened in prayer and we smudged. Most of our clients were younger people and they had to agree to come, they didn't have to speak if they didn't want, but they listened, you can not close your ears. The clients had to make amends in some way. The circles provided a space for both parties to have a voice, understand and ultimately to heal. If the young person was not in school, part of their amendment plan included going back to school or attending some form of training to better themselves.

My advice for students today is; don't focus on obstacles or what you can't do, rather focus on your goals and what you can do, and don't be afraid to talk to somebody if you need help, whether that is a dedicated school advisor, family member, or elder.

There is a role for all in this society, and a good education in your chosen field will go a long way in achieving that goal.



Brittany Baxter

Native Child and Family Services Program

"There may be days when you'll say to yourself, "I can't, I literally can't even." But you can! You can even!"

- Katie Couric

Growing up I knew I always wanted to work with children. Throughout high school I was told to start thinking about what I would do after I graduate. In 2014 I went straight to Confederation College where I was enrolled in the Pre-Health Sciences program; I wanted to become a paramedic. However, being young and just starting my post secondary education, I really didn't give it my all. I ended up dropping out two months into the semester. This was not one of my greatest or proudest moments. So, I just started working and was couch surfing because I didn't have my own place to live. Two years later I obtained employment at Tim Hortons, and was promptly promoted to Assistant Manager.

It wasn't until I became pregnant with my daughter I decided that I really needed to start working towards a career. After she was born, (and while I was on my maternity leave), I decided to take a program from Confederation College online. I enrolled in the general Arts and Sciences program to try to figure out what I wanted to do moving forward. As a consequence of dropping out three years prior, I messed up my funding. Luckily for me, I have a Band that is very supportive of education, so they paid for my first semester. Thankfully, I secured my regular funding for my second semester from Northern Nishnawbe Education Council (NNEC).

I am a band member of Kingfisher Lake First Nation. I am currently living in Thunder Bay, and have been since I started high school at Sir Winston Churchill C.V.I. in 2010. I am also a mother of two children, a 3 year old and a 15 month old.

In my last semester, I had to decide what I wanted to do next. I knew it would be something working with children as that is where my interest was. I came across the Native Child and Family Services Program and made up my mind to enroll; this was what I consider to be the starting point of my career. It was a 2-year program, completed all online and through distance education which allowed me to work full time and be the best possible parent to my daughter who was just over a year old at the time.

In 2019, during my second semester, I became pregnant with my son. So, I was juggling working full time, going to school, and being a mom. When my son was born I took a maternity leave from my job; this provided the opportunity for me to focus on my schooling. One month ago I graduated from the program.

I intend to continue my educational journey. I have applied and been accepted into the Honours Bachelor of Social Work (Concentration in Indigenous Learning) at Lakehead University for the 2021/2022 school year. Presently, I am enrolled in the Children's Mental Health Certificate program through Durham College.

I worked hard to get where I am today! I pushed through every bump in the road, took things day by day, and tried

not to stress about the future. I focused on what I could control (and I could only control so much).

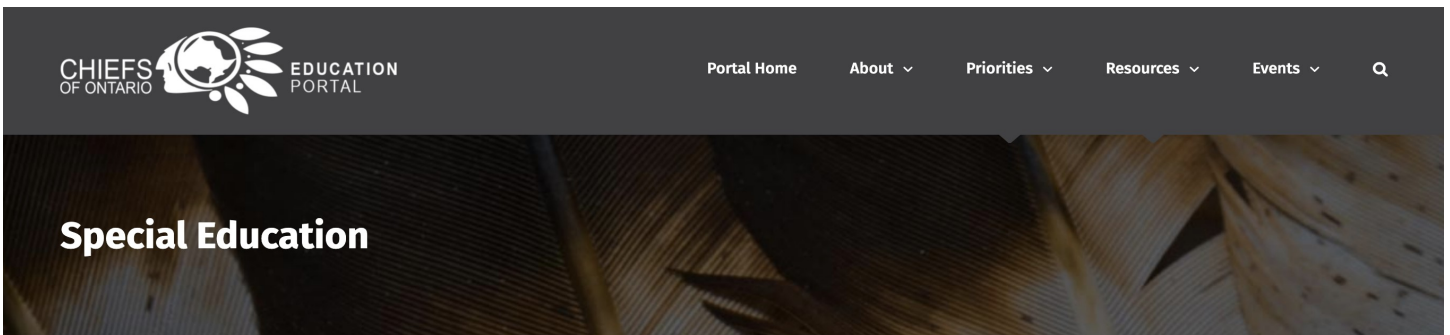
My biggest motivation throughout this journey has been my children. I want to give them the best life that I can and model to them that you can achieve whatever you want. With a positive mind set and hard work, the sky's the limit!

I've had a lot of help during my time in school; my significant other was one of my biggest supporters. My mother backed me extensively and I hope to give back to her some day as well. My band was also very supportive and helped me pay for school; not once, but twice.

Looking back, if I didn't have all of the encouragement from everyone that I did, I might not have even attended post-secondary schooling at all.

I am now on my path trying to figure out who I am and what I am supposed to be doing on this journey we call life.

I'm looking forward to finishing school, becoming a Social Worker, and supporting Indigenous children, youth and families in the future. Being aware of the various issues that Indigenous youth have to face today is my motivator. I want to contribute to making their world a better place, as young people are our future. What we do today effects the seven generations before us, in the present-day world, and the seven generations that come after us.



Latest Updates

- 
Ontario's Return to School Plan: COVID-19: Health, safety a...
September 2, 2021
- 
Job Opportunity – Education Coordinator
August 25, 2021
- 
Request for Proposals: COO Education Sector – Economic Anal...
August 18, 2021



Upcoming Events

Ontario First Nations use an intervention-based approach to high-cost Special Education, whereby funding is determined by formula. A benefit of this approach is that formal assessments are not required before intervention strategies are introduced.

REPLIES TO THE ASK A TEACHER CONTEST !

We want to send a big thank you to everyone who participated in our “Ask the Teacher” contest and helped make it a success! And a special congratulations to **Connie Freeman**, the winner of the \$50 Gift Card.

Please see our favourite responses below!

What is your favourite part of your job?

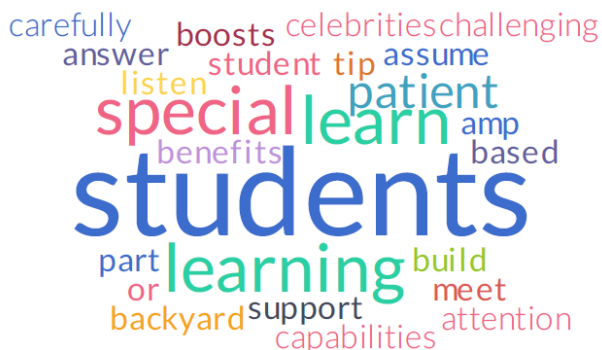
Speaking my Oneida language daily

I love listening and learning from everyone in this community - especially the young people I am honoured to support because they teach me how to learn and support them. I also love unlearning, challenging and disrupting ideas about people, relating and what is education.



What is one tip on how to support students with special needs in a classroom?

Set them up for success everyday. This goes for all my students but especially for my special needs students. Give them an opportunity to answer questions or do a task you know they can do. Then praise them like crazy, it really boosts their self esteem and they are more likely to take part in any situation if they know I am cheering them on.



What is an effective teaching strategy that you often use?



Book clubs allow students to understand text at a deeper level and collaborate with their peers. It is an important strategy that helps students be more prepared for secondary school.

Allowing students to discover the answers in their own way. Especially with math. You present the problem and give them time to try and figure out an answer. Sometimes I am surprised and they come to the answer in an entirely different way that you never thought of. This strategy also give you insight to how they think.

What is a good teaching tool (technology, textbook, assessment etc.) that you would recommend?

Two effective tools used in our Resource Room are Reading Simplified by Marnie Ginsbery and the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness program.



I enjoy using screencastify (google extension) with my students as it allows me to create videos to walk through instructions with my voice and my screen and they can re-watch the video if they need or want to.

RAZ kids

Bear Grease Teaching

Elders Daniel and Maggie Magiskan

Boozhoo and greetings from the Ojibway homelands. To welcome autumn and the cold seasons it was time to make the bear grease. The bear fat we used was donated by a neighboring bear hunting camp owned and operated by First Nations. Bear grease salve can be used as a natural medicine for many ailments, such as ligament pain, skin care and hair conditioner.



The first custom we did was to offer tobacco for the life we have taken within the bear. In our local culture, the bear is known as grandfather “Mishoomis” and when you handle the fat of the bear, you never just toss it around, you handle it with great care and respect. If a woman is on her time she will not handle it directly; only the ones who are not on their time will directly handle the bear grease.



While the bear is being cleaned and prepared for use, the men of the camp go and collect wood for the fire. There are certain types of woods used for specific tasks. For example to make a tikinagan or cradleboard you use cedar or black ash, poplar is used to cook food, and birch is used to heat. Again, there are teachings when you go and take from the land. We never take more than we need. As Nishinawbe people, we always give praise and thanks. The tree, the rock, the plant, the tiny insect, the animals big and small, the water, the air, the sun, all of these things gives us life through their life, and without them, we would not survive.



The area in which you use to prepare the bear grease must be cleaned and free from any contaminants. The bear fat is cut into small chunks and slowly boiled over an open fire. It is important to ensure there is no meat mixed into the bear fat. You render the fat to a tender boil, and once the fluid starts making bubbles, you will see the bear chunks turn into chips. Eventually there will be a large amount of grease, and within two to two and half hours the bear grease is complete. At this point you can strain the fat to ensure you only have the clear fluid of bear grease. You may have to strain a few times or use a smaller sieve. This process requires a lot of patience and care. In our learning session we had approximately 500 lbs and produced about twelve gallons of bear grease. The left over bear grease chips can be used for fire starter or used as another offering.



Bear grease is a traditional medicine and only to be gifted or traded. The preparation process is filled with good teachings, love, stories of life and great laughter, as it is a time shared with family and friends. One special directive is to never interrupt an Elder while they are teaching, you must wait until they are done the teaching and then you may ask questions.

Miigwetch!



Ontario First Nation Special Education Working Group

In 2005, the Ontario First Nations Special Education Working group (OFNSEWG) was formed as a subcommittee to the First Nations Education Coordination Unit (FNECU). It is a joint technical and advisory body mandated by the FNECU to provide recommendations on issues and specific strategies for political review and/or approval for action. The OFNSEWG is made up of representatives from the First Nations Education Coordination Unit and Indigenous Service Canada.

Ontario First Nation Special Education Working Group	
Name	Organization
Julia Candlish	Chiefs of Ontario
Sherry Britton	Nishnawbe Aski Nation
Mindy Taylor	Anishinabek Nation
Kyla Stonefish	Association of Iroquois Allied Indians
Yolanda Fobister	Grand Council Treaty #3
Debbie Terrance	Independent First Nations
Shelley Knott-Fife	Indigenous Services Canada

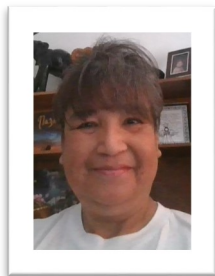
The Special Education Technicians

What is a Special Education Support Technician (SEST)?

There are three SESTs providing support to the First Nations in Ontario. They are based out of the Kenora, Thunder Bay, and Southern Ontario. The role of the SESTs is to support and assist First Nations with:

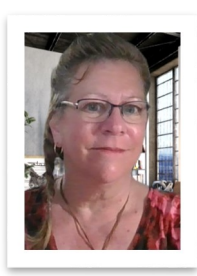
- effective use of HCSEP funding;
- understanding and addressing capacity issues around Special Education;
- collection and analysis of information related to improving the First Nations Special Education programs;
- liaise and strengthen relationships with First Nations, Tribal Councils, Chiefs of Ontario, school boards and other organizations;
- identifying and addressing barriers and challenges in the delivery of Special Education services;
- support with policy development, and tuition service agreements;
- organize Special Education Sharing Forums across Ontario.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT TECHNICIAN COMMUNITY LISTING



North Eastern Region
Patricia Magiskan
416-970-0521
Patricia.magiskan@coo.org

Aroland First Nation
 Attawapiskat First Nation
 Bearskin Lake First Nation
 Cat Lake First Nation
 Constance Lake First Nation
 Eabametoong First Nation
 Fort Albany First Nation
 Fort Severn First Nation
 Fort William First Nation
 Ginoogaming - Long Lac #77
 Kasabonika First Nation
 Kashechewan First Nation
 Kiashke Zaaging Anishinaabek
 Kingfisher Lake First Nation
 Marten Falls First Nation
 Moose Cree First Nation
 Muskrat Dam First Nation
 Nibinamik First Nation
 Neskantaga - Lansdowne House
 North Caribou Lake
 Ojibways of Saugeen #258
 Pays Plat First Nation
 Red Rock First Nation
 Sachigo First Nation
 Sandy Lake First Nation
 Shibogama First Nations Council
 Taykwa Tagamou Nation (New Post)
 Wawakapewin First Nation
 Webequie First Nation
 Weenusk First Nation
 Wahgoshig - Abitibi #70
 Whitesand First Nation
 Keewaytinook Okimakanak Tribal
 Council
 Independent First Nations Alliance
 Northern Nishnawbe Ed Council
 Mattagami First Nation



North Western Region
Susan Deley
807-407-6233
Susan.deley@coo.org

Anishnaabe of Naongashing
 Big Grassy First Nation
 Couchiching First Nation
 Deer Lake First Nation
 Eagle Lake First Nation
 Grassy Narrows First Nation
 Iskatewizaagegan #39
 Lac La Croix First Nation
 Lac Seul First Nation
 Keewaytinook Okimakanak
 Keewaywin First Nation
 Kitchenuhmaykoosib
 Mishkeegogamang
 Mitaanjigaming First Nation
 Naicatchewenin First Nation
 Naotkamegwaning
 Nicickousemenecaning Nigigoo
 siminikaaning
 North Spirit Lake First Nation
 Northwest Angle #33 First Nation
 Animakee Wa Zhing
 Obashkaandagang
 Ochiichagwe'babigo'ining
 Ojibways of Onigaming
 Pikangikum First Nation
 Poplar Hill First Nation
 Rainy River First Nation
 Seine River First Nation
 Shoal Lake #40
 Slate Falls First Nation
 Wabaseemoong First Nation
 Wabauskang First Nation
 Wabigoon Lake Ojibway
 Wapekeka First Nation
 Washagamis Bay
 Wauzhushk Onigum
 Wunnumin First Nation



South Central Region
Patrik Lowen
519-717-0161
patrik.lowen@coo.org

Alderville First Nation
 Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation
 Batchewana First Nation
 Bkejwanong
 Chippewas of Kettle & Stony Point
 Chippewas of Nawash - Cape Croker
 Chippewas of Saugeen First Nation
 Chippewas of the Thames
 Curve Lake First Nation
 Hiawatha First Nation
 Ketegaunseebee
 Mattagami First Nation
 Mississauga #8
 Mississaugas of New Credit
 M'Chigeeng First Nation
 Mohawks of Akwesasne
 Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte
 Moravian of the Thames - Delaware
 Nation
 Oneida Nation of the Thames
 Sagamok First Nation
 Serpent River First Nation
 Shawanaga First Nation
 Sheguiandah First Nation
 Six Nations of the Grand River
 Temagami First Nation
 Thessalon First Nation
 Wahta Mohawk Territory
 Wikwemikong Unceded
 United Chiefs and Councils of Mnidoo
 Mnising/KTEI
 Brunswick House First Nation
 Chappleau Cree First Nation
 Chappleau Ojibway
 Matachewan First Nation



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