

The Spec-Ed Quarterly

A Special Education Newsletter



Welcome

Welcome to the first **Spec-Ed Quarterly**. It has been a busy and exciting first year since the Special Education Support Technicians (SEST) came on board at the Chiefs of Ontario. We would like to share some of the highlights of what has happened over the last few months and introduce you to the SEST Team. We hope that this and future newsletters will provide you with valuable information, share best practices and celebrate success stories within our communities and organizations.



Introducing:
The Spec-Ed Technicians



Highlights:
High-Cost Special Education Program (HCSEP) Evaluation.



Community Success Stories
Celebrate success stories within our Communities.

ONTARIO FIRST NATION SPECIAL EDUCATION REVIEW REPORT MAY 2017

Learn more about the May 2017 Report

SPECIAL EDUCATION SHARING FORUMS

Learn about the upcoming Sharing Forums - Toronto October 23-24, 2017

NEEDS-BASED APPLICATION PROCESS

Learn more about how to access additional HCSEP funding

THE SPEC-ED FUNDAMENTALS

Learn about Referrals, IEPs and Implementation of support

The Spec-Ed Technicians

What is a Special Education Support Technician (SEST):

There are four SESTs providing support to the First Nations in Ontario. They are based out of the Kenora, Thunder Bay, Central and Southern parts of Ontario. The SEST positions resulted from an All Ontario Chiefs Resolution in 2016 when the High Cost Special Education Program (HCSEP) received a funding increase. The role of the SEST 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 and other organizations;
- identifying and addressing barriers and challenges in the delivery of special education services.



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.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT TECHNICIANS



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HCSEP Highlights:

Evaluation of High-Cost Special Education Program (HCSEP):

A review of the High-Cost Special Education Program was directed by Resolution 12/15 (2015 AOCC).

Ninety-Nine (99 out of 120) HCSEP recipients completed an evaluation tool on the HCSEP. From November 2016 to April 2017 the SESTs conducted a survey on the special education program in First Nations.

The purpose of the evaluation tool was to gather information to form recommendations to the Chiefs on Assembly in June 2017 on special education programs and services.

The evaluation tool identified a wide range of concerns on knowledge development and sharing; communications and partnerships; and implementation barriers resulting from inappropriate policy; and resources to name a few.

The resulting final evaluation report formed the Special Education Position Paper 2017, which was adopted by the Chiefs in Assembly in June 2017 via Resolution 38/17. Our work going forward includes working with the federal and provincial governments to advance these recommendations in the Position Paper.

If you would like more information on the evaluation tool and report, please contact the SEST associated with your community or organization.

More information on the report can be found on the [Chiefs of Ontario - Education Portal](#).



Equality for First Nations Children:

The Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation filed a human rights complaint about the unequal and inadequate special education services in First Nations communities. The case focuses on two First Nations children; the federal government refused to pay for the special education services they needed. The First Nation is asking that First Nation children be guaranteed the same quality of special education supports and services as non-First Nations children.

The Ontario First Nations Special Education Review Report is dedicated to the two young boys who are members of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. The intent of the report is to help bring about improvements to the provision of special education supports, services and programs for the benefit of all First Nation children with special needs across the province.

More information on the report can be found on [Chiefs of Ontario - Education Portal](#).

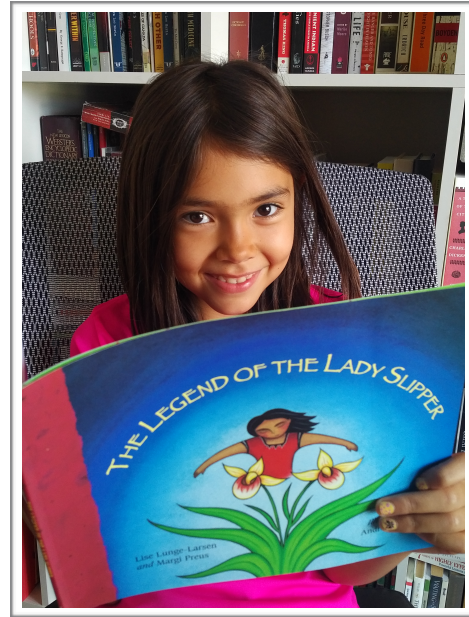
Special Education Sharing Forums

Two Special Education Information Sharing Forums were held in January 2017, with over 100 participants in each forum. Teachers, principals, special education resources teachers, and First Nation Education departments came together to learn, share and discuss common issues on special education programs in their communities.

Based on feedback from communities, this year's Forums are focused on hands-on strategies in Mental Health + Drug related issues, Behaviour and Exceptionalities and Policies pertaining to Special Education.

These sessions will be supplemented with webinar sessions that will be determined based on feedback from participants in each of the sessions.

The sessions will consist of a combination of keynote speakers, case studies, workshops, and training sessions. These sessions are meant to leave spec-ed professionals with the knowledge, skills, and tools to be used in their work.



Special Education Sharing Forum Dates

- **October 24-25, 2017** - Toronto Sheraton Centre - *Mental Health and Drug Related Issues*
- **December 5-6, 2017** - Timmins Ramada Inn - *Administration and Policies related to Special Education*
- **January 23-24, 2018** - Thunder Bay Valhalla Inn - *Behaviour and Exceptionalities.*

For more information on workshops and speakers, please contact your SEST or holly.Golabek@coo.org

Special Education Information Sharing Forum



Dates: October 24 & 25, 2017

Location: Sheraton Centre, 123 Queen West, Toronto

Topic: Supporting Children Affected by Mental Health and Drug-Related Issues

Featuring Workshops by:

- Dr. Jan Addy, SLP Training
- Dr. Kathy Short, School Mental Health ASSIST w/ Dr. Brenda Restoule & Dr. Ian Manion
- CAMH Training Session – CARE
- Marnee Buckles, Behaviour Specialist

For more information please contact: holly.golabek@coo.org

Needs-Based Funding

What is Needs-Based Funding?

The Needs-based application process provides opportunities for communities to obtain additional target funds in Special Education. The funds are based on need and not all applications are guaranteed.

What is the Needs-Based Process?

There have been three rounds of Needs-Based application calls since the additional HCSEP funding was provided in 2016. This application process provides an avenue for HCSEP recipients to apply for additional Special Education funding if required.

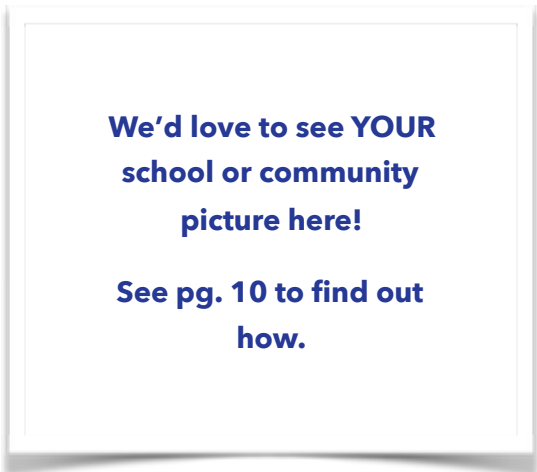
Needs-Based Applications

Due date for next round of applications is October 20, 2017. Confirmation of additional funding will be provided by INAC approximately six weeks after the respective due date.

Contact your SEST or evelisa.genova@coo.org for an application form.

Application Information

Due Dates of Applications	Total # of Applications	Total Funding Provided
October 2017	TBA	TBA
June 2017	39	\$6,185,067.27
October 2016	14	\$977,744.00
June 2016	41	\$5,786,420.12



and here.

Parental Information: The Fundamentals of Special Education

What is Special Education?

A special education program can in general be viewed as an individual plan that includes specific objectives, educational services, and resources that are designed to meet the needs of exceptional students. Special education services in Ontario for the most part follow an inclusionary model where exceptional students are supported in their regular classroom setting. An exceptional student may receive indirect support from the classroom teacher, remedial support from a teacher assistant, or withdrawal services from the Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT). The exceptional student supported by his or her Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be receiving accommodations or modifications to meet their learning needs.

Does my child need a special education program?

If a parent believes that their child needs special education support they should contact their local school and arrange to speak with the child's teacher, SERT, or principal. School staff will explain to parents the ways the school can meet the child's needs including the steps involved in creating special education supports and program.

Schools value parental involvement and to determine if a child needs special educational support. Schools will often invite parents to share information and observations about the child's behaviour and learning outside of the school setting. This collaborative process between the school and home will ensure that the child's

Parents did you know?

- ✓ *Reading to your child for 20 minutes a day will expose your child to 1,800,000 words per year!*
- ✓ *Not only will it help your child's reading skills but it is also a great way of spending some quality time with your child.*

needs will be at the centre of all decisions. The goal is to insure that positive solutions can be found to meet the needs of the child.

What are the differences between accommodations and modifications?

Accommodations can be teaching and assessment strategies or individual equipment support put in place to support a student but they do not alter the curriculum expectations for the grade. *Modifications* are changes to the age and grade-level expectations. For example, the IEP may recommend that a student in grade 4 will work towards meeting grade 2 curriculum expectations in a specific subject area.

**See YOUR school or
community here.**

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Special Education in the School: from referrals to IEP and implementation of support.

The overall process of how a student becomes a recipient of special education services and programming varies to some extent from school to school. In general the process will follow five steps below.

Step One: A student is typically identified by someone in the school but this could also be a parent or guardian that may discover something in regards to their child's development and learning at home and brings that concern to the school.

Step Two: The identified student is brought to the attention of the Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT), he or she will provide guidance and expertise as to next steps.

Step Three: The in-school team (SERT, teacher, principal, EA) will meet and discuss the student's strengths and needs. Teacher(s) will present student work, observations, anecdotal note, and informal assessment results. Further assessments may be recommended which may include informal and formal assessments.

Step Four: If necessary the students may be referred to the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC). If the IPRC identifies a student as exceptional in Individual Education Plan (IEP) must be developed within 30 days and

shared with the parents/guardians of the child (Principal's responsibility).

**please note that some schools and school boards have moved away from the IPRC process and that an IEP can be developed without an IPRC review.*

Step Five:

Implementation of the IEP to support the learning and development of the student. The IEP will be evaluated and adjusted to meet the needs of the student throughout the school year.

Source: Bennet, S., Weber, K. J., & Dworet, D. (2013). *Special education in Ontario schools*. Toronto: Highland Press.

See YOUR school or community here. Send in photos or student artwork of your community or school and have it featured.

See pg.10



Communities Stories

Aamjiwnaang First Nation

Reconciliation through education: raising awareness and building positive relationships.

Building and maintaining positive relationships between communities and school boards are an important part of supporting students and parents. Special educational services should reflect Indigenous pedagogy and meet the unique needs of each individual. In response to the 94 Calls to Action made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Aamjiwnaang First Nation education department organized and held an Indigenous Educators Symposium to assist and support educators in understanding and implementing the Calls to Actions in education. This symposium provided an opportunity for discussion on how reconciliation through education can be used to build positive relationships between various partners in education. Participants from local and neighbouring First Nations communities, along with teachers and administrators from the Lambton Kent District School Board, attended the two-day symposium. Participants received culturally appropriate professional development aimed at building greater knowledge and understanding to better support Indigenous students.



The symposium offered a variety of activities such as the Kairos blanket exercise, which participants reported as eye-opening, along with lively panel discussions. Presentations from language experts, traditional knowledge keepers and local and provincial educational specialists were offered to provide participants with a variety of vantage points. Education Coordinator Vicki Ware of

Aamjiwnaang emphasized that, "Reconciliation is everyone's responsibility, and can be facilitated 'through education'. Respect for Indigenous knowledge and ways of being and knowing are central to reconciliation; increased levels of cultural competencies are needed for all education stakeholders through the establishment of a greater understanding of and appreciation for Indigenous peoples, history, and culture in Canada."

In addition Vicki Ware also believes that, "there needs to be a willingness for collaboration and partnerships with the public-school boards to accomplish the work of reconciliation, and better educational outcomes for Indigenous students." The symposium was a great success as participants learned relevant historical information about Indigenous peoples in Canada and issues that impact today's classroom and contemporary society. Gatherings such as these are of utmost importance as they allow for Indigenous-led engagement processes across the many different local and public educational settings.

For additional information about this initiative and its outcomes contact Aamjiwnaang First Nation, Education Department at (519)-336-8410.

Communities Stories

Aroland First Nation

Moving Students forward with “Empower” Reading

Last February, Johnny Therriault School introduced a new and powerful reading program with the help of Sick Kids hospital in Toronto. After careful consideration, recommendations along with extensive training, the Special Education teacher, Marlo Sobush began working with 15 students in the Empower Reading program. Empower Reading provides the teacher with a year long training and mentorship program so that every aspect is introduced to the students exactly how it was designed to by the doctors.

This specialized program allows the students an opportunity to focus on decoding and spelling techniques to help them move forward in their everyday literacy skills. Each day, the students are provided with one-hour sessions which focus on letter and sound recognition, blending the sounds together and reading familiar and unfamiliar words. As time moves on the students move from reading simple passages to quite extensive stories with confidence and efficiently. The students who are attending the program have improved in their reading levels and have also been able to use the new strategies when writing in their classrooms across all subject areas. Although the program does take an entire year to administer, the benefits to the students is well worth the time.

When asked about the impact of the program Marlo stated, “Empower Reading has changed my own practices on how I introduce letters and sounds to students. It makes me stop and reflect about how I am going to teach each individual sound so that it makes sense to each child within my classroom”. Empower Reading has been a tremendous addition to the Special Education department at Johnny Therriault School and Marlo looks forward to “empowering” the students once again this school year.

For additional information about this program and its outcome contact Marlo Sobush at the Johnny Therriault School at (807-329-5470).



Johnny Therriault School Aroland First Nation

Community Input

Future Stories

The Chiefs of Ontario are looking for community stories and positive initiatives to showcase and share with First Nation communities across Ontario. Each quarter we will feature new photographs, student artwork and stories about First Nation communities and organizations across Ontario.

If you would like to be featured in a newsletter please send photographs, artwork and stories to your Special Education Support Technician.

Naming Contest

To kick off the quarterly Spec-Ed newsletter we are announcing a Name the Newsletter contest. We are looking for schools and communities to submit a creative name for the newsletter. The winning student or school that gets chosen will receive a gift card towards educational supplies. Three runner ups will also receive a \$150 gift card for their favourite educational resource.

The winner of the naming contest will also get two ballots to be entered into a end of the year grand prize draw for a Tablet.

Showcasing Communities Picture

Each quarter will showcase multiple photographs, student art and stories. Each school, and community that sends in a photo that gets chosen gets there name entered into a draw for prizes. This can include gift cards, educational products, and more.

Showcased artwork and photographs are entered into the end of the year grand prize draw for a Tablet.

Send in your photos, student artwork, and community pictures. We will feature them throughout the newsletter. Permission is required to post any photos.

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