

Our Gifted Children

Kiiniwi Miini-goowizjik Binoojiinhyik



Highlights

In This Issue

Community Success Stories

Elder's Corner

Special Education in the School:
Behavioural Exceptionalities



*“Education, culture,
traditions, and language
are all very important”*

Juliette Blackhawk, Elder



A **Snoezelen Room** provides stimulation and relaxation through the use of smell, touch, sound, colour, and light.

Reciprocal Education Approach Update

Deputy Minister, Nancy Naylor, announced on Aug 9, 2019 that starting Sept 1, 2019, the Ontario Ministry of Education will implement the Reciprocal Education Approach with the intentions of improving access to funding and education for First Nations students in Ontario.

The Reciprocal Education Approach is intended to improve access and reduce barriers for First Nation students who wish to attend First Nation schools or provincially funded schools, and/or students transitioning between school systems.

Impact on Special Education

The base fee is derived from the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) and therefore will be unique to each school board (REA Tuition Fees Per Pupil). The parties may negotiate an agreement for specific additional services and supports not included in the base fee. School boards may provide additional funding to First Nation entities and vice versa. These fees may include additional special education staffing required (not exceed the amount that the board is entitled to receive under SIP from the Ministry of Education) to support the health or safety of a student, special education equipment required the deductible per claim, will be an amount of \$800, or less) to support a student transportation services provided to the student. These additional charges may only be invoiced to the First Nation if the school board and First Nation enter into an agreement that sets out the additional fees to be paid. The Written Notice for Eligible Students that triggers a request for a REA also includes a section that allow information regarding a students special education needs to be shared with the intent that students with special education needs will continue to receive necessary support at the new school.

Existing Education Agreements

Existing educational agreements that were in place before September 1, 2019 are still honored. However an agreement between a school board and a First Nation entity will no longer be required to ensure that the base fee is charged and paid for eligible students. Student admission should not be delayed if the parties are negotiating amounts in addition to the base fee.

Communications from Chiefs of Ontario is ongoing in regards of the implementation process of the REA.

Patrik Lowen

Senior Special Education Support Technician 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.

2019-2020 Special Education Sharing Forums

The education team at the Chiefs of Ontario are continuously planning future Special Education Sharing Forums. These sharing forums consist of a combination of keynote speakers, case studies, workshops, developments in research and training sessions. The forums are meant to leave educators with newfound knowledge, skills and tools that can be utilized when working with students. Furthermore, the forums provide excellent opportunities for communities to network with other communities. If you have any ideas for possible topics that you and your community would like to see featured at future Sharing Forums **please contact Senior Special Education Support Technician Patrik Lowen at Patrik.lowen@coo.org**

Chiefs of Ontario new Director of Education



My name is Denise Lofstrom and I am a member of Mississauga First Nation #8. I hold a Bachelor of Business Administration (Honours) from Laurentian University. I began my 10 year career as a public servant with Indigenous Programs with the Federal Government directly supporting communities and the organizations that serve them. More recently, as Manager for Ontario Region Indigenous Labour Market Programs, I have provided leadership and support for my team as they continue to deliver these important programs. As the Director of Education for the Chiefs of Ontario, I look forward to supporting and advancing education priorities on behalf of First Nations.

Regards, Denise Lofstrom

To contact Denis Lofstrom; Denise.lofstrom@coo.org | 416-597-1266 (ext 242) | Direct cell – 647-227-9400











Throughout the 2019-20 school year, Chiefs of Ontario will host a number of webinars to further build capacity in your community. These webinars will focus on a variety of special education topics and will be free of charge and accessible for all First Nations. Invitations will be emailed out to all Education Directors/Managers throughout the year.

Special Education in the School

Supporting the transition to post-secondary for students with learning disabilities

Students with learning disabilities can have great success at the post-secondary level. It is important that these students are provided support at the high school level and from home when they decide to make the transition to post-secondary studies. The **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** can follow the student from high school into college or university. The IEP must include a section called the **Transition Plan**. The transition plan will take into account the student's strengths, needs, and interest and outline goals, action items, responsible personnel and timelines. Guidance counsellors and community post-secondary counsellors can often be of great support to both the student and parents/guardians.

General guidelines that will help making the transition successful

-  Start having a conversation with the child/student early about possible careers and post-secondary opportunities.
-  Visit a post-secondary campus and take a tour. Exposing the child/student to the post-secondary environment will help ease some of the anxieties a student may have.
-  Make sure the student takes the appropriate courses during high school to meet the requirements of their desired program of study.
-  Explore support resources by contacting your First Nation's education department and high school guidance department.
-  Contact the post-secondary student support service department or Indigenous support service department to find out how they can assist in the transition.
-  Teach self-advocacy skills.
-  Update assessment information if needed.
-  Involve the child/student in the process.

Sources: Bennett, S., Weber, K. J., & Dworet, D. (2013). *Special education in Ontario schools*. Toronto: Highland Press & Special Education in Ontario, Autism Ontario, & Autism Canada.



Elder's Corner

Juliette Blackhawk, Lac Seul First Nation

What is the importance of education?

Today's society is encouraging a push for a higher level of education for all students, both native and non-native. I believe that those students who have regular attendance and success in school should be honored. An award plaque should be placed within schools outlining their successes as an incentive/goal for other students to see.

How important is the connection to success in education and your culture, traditions, and language?

Education, culture, traditions, and language are all very important. Our youth need to make connections with the past in order to thrive in the future. They need to close the gap between residential school students and the more modern families of today.

How can we support and promote Special Education and its' success in our First Nation territories?

I have worked as a teacher, childcare worker, as a traditional teacher, and as an elder for a friendship center. In my experiences, all children are special and the focus needs to be on their abilities and successes to promote a high level of self-esteem.

What would you say/do for a student who is struggling with a class, fellow student, or personal conflict?

I would involve students, staff, and school administration in a sharing circle so that the conflict could be resolved at once, all involved would be included, with the outcome of a written resolution that would have to be adhered to.

Final thoughts: What advice would you give someone that wants to achieve their educational goals?

I have always enjoyed learning! Find someone you admire in a profession that interests you, get to know them, and question how they got to where they are, what to expect, and be career oriented.



Sharing Circles are a unique small-group discussion process in which participants (including the leader) share their feelings, experiences, and insights in response to specific, assigned topics

HONOUR YOUR TRADITIONS AND YOURSELF.

Special Education in the School

Behavioural Exceptionalities

In brief, behavioural exceptionalities are marked by behaviours that are seen as different from the accepted norm in a specific setting. While what is considered accepted behaviour can of course be debated, social and cultural influences are definitely influencing factors. Parental, teacher, and school behavioural expectations further adds to the conversation.

The Ministry of Education's definition of behavioural exceptionalities is *A learning disorder characterized by specific behaviour problems over such a period of time, and to such a marked degree, and of such a nature, as to adversely affect educational performance, and that may be accompanied by one or more of the following:*

- *an inability to build or to maintain interpersonal relationships;*
- *excessive fears or anxieties;*
- *a tendency to compulsive reaction;*
- *an inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or other health factors, or any combination thereof.*

Paradigm shift

Recently there has been a paradigm shift when it comes to working with students that are identified as having behavioural issues at school. In the past, the focus was often solely on the student and their unwanted behaviours. However, increasingly a more holistic approach is being used, which includes looking at the teachers practices in the classroom, parental support systems and how it impact positive and negative student behaviours.



Underlying reasons

The reasons why students may have behavioural problems can vary greatly and therefore possible intervention strategies to reduce negative behaviours will also vary. Biophysical, psychosocial factors and environmental influences may contribute to behavioural exceptionalities. Speech and language difficulties have also been linked to higher incidents of behavioural exceptionalities under the assumption that students that have a hard time expressing themselves may act out. In addition, student behaviour problems may be associated with or aggravated by other developmental or mental health problems such as ADHD, FASD, substance use problems, anxiety, and mood disorders.

Multi-disciplinary team approach

It is generally accepted that a multi-disciplinary team approach can be effective when supporting students with behavioural exceptionalities. Careful evaluation of the behaviour (what, when, frequency, time, intensity, and impact) along with collaboration between school, home, and possible support from appropriate community services can assist when formatting a plan to help support a student.

Class-wide prevention strategies to reduce problematic behaviours:

- a focus on building students' social and problem-solving skills, ability to regulate their emotions and control anger, and ability to see another person's perspective and feel empathy
- the use of consistent classroom routines so that students have a clear understanding of the expectations for behaviour
- the use of a range of instructional methods, learning opportunities, and learning settings to give students opportunities to apply new skills in a variety of situations and environments
- the use of flexible groupings and a focus on group outcomes for small-group activities to enable high-risk students to interact with different groups of peers, improve their social and academic skills, and build positive relationships and support networks
- for students demonstrating disruptive behaviour: avoidance of harsh discipline for negative behaviour, coupled with positive reinforcement for desired and prosocial behaviour
- for students demonstrating disruptive behaviour: establishing regular communication with parents/caregivers to develop a coordinated approach to help the student achieve positive educational and behavioural goals.



Sources: Supporting Minds: An Educator's Guide to Promoting Students' Mental Health and Well-being 2013 Bennett, S., Weber, K. J., & Dworet, D. (2013). *Special education in Ontario schools*.

Community Stories

Providing a Multi-Sensory Environment

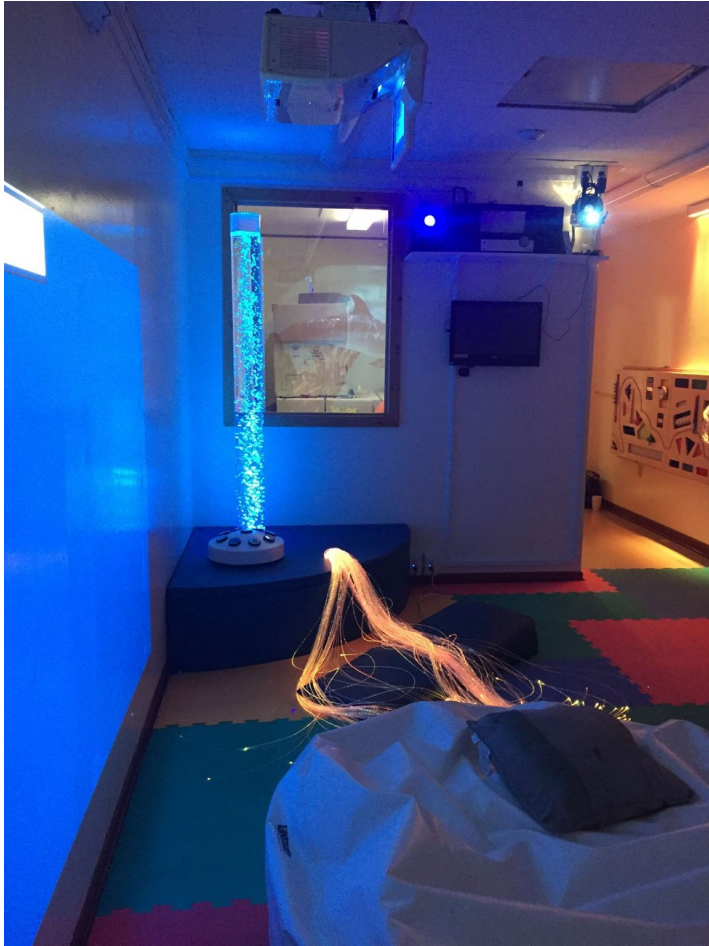
The Wikwemikong Board of Education is located on the Wikwemikong Unceded Territory on the northeastern part of Manitoulin Island which is located on Lake Huron. The board has four schools; The Hub Centre (18 mths – 3 yrs), Junior School (JK -Grade 3), Pontiac School (Grade 4-8) and the Wikwemikong High School.



School staff in Wikwemikong were noticing an increasing number of times Psychoeducational Assessments and Occupational Therapy Assessments were recommending sensory tools as accommodations for students. Sensory resources such as fidget objects, weighted blankets, and tactile items were purchased to support students with their focus, participation, and regulation. However, remember the old adage *'Go big or go home?'* well we were dreaming for big, something to meet a greater number of students to support students wanting to come to school, feel comfortable there and wanting to come back the next day.



Special Education staff started researching, asking professionals at other schools and visiting neighbouring school boards. What was found that sparked an initiative to *'Go Big'* (Kchi Gshkiwewziwin) was a Snoezelen Room! A snooza-what? A Snoezelen Room is a multi-sensory environment, also called a sensory room, which is a clearly defined and designed space used to calm and decrease anxiety for individuals or small groups. This can be accomplished through soothing sounds or pictures, relaxing essential oils, comfortable seating and soft lighting.



Snoezelen rooms can also be used to engage students, for stimulation purposes and to support communication development. Lighting, colour displays and sounds in the room are all adjustable for the needs of any student. One student describes the Snoezelen room as:

*“Awesome, relaxing and comforting”
and “you feel great and comfortable.”*

Currently our Junior and Pontiac Schools have active Snoezelen rooms. The High School Snoezelen room is in the process of being redesigned as it was our first attempt in developing a welcoming sensory environment.

Submitted by: Tracy Cooper, Special Education Coordinator, Wikwemikong Board of Education



Community Stories

Math is HARD!

I'd venture a guess that for far too many of us this statement reflects our reality, borne of a lifetime spent avoiding and struggling with math. This apprehension can make it hard to work with our own children to improve their skills. We didn't have a good relationship with math when we were growing so how can we help our kids have a better relationship with math? How can we model a good relationship with math when we don't have one ourselves?

That this sentiment is shared by so many of us is unfortunate because our children will be increasingly reliant on having strong numeracy skills as new technologies emerge and the world continues to evolve to value STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) skills more highly. Math is so important- from budgeting to building- it is woven into every facet of our lives. So, having an aversion to, or fear of math can be a roadblock to success. And this is where we started our conversation. We asked ourselves "How do we break down the stigma that exists around math and encourage families to use their math skills and learn new ones together?" "How can we make it easier for families to build a better relationship with math?"

We needed an event that would let families have fun while they flexed their math muscles. And eureka!

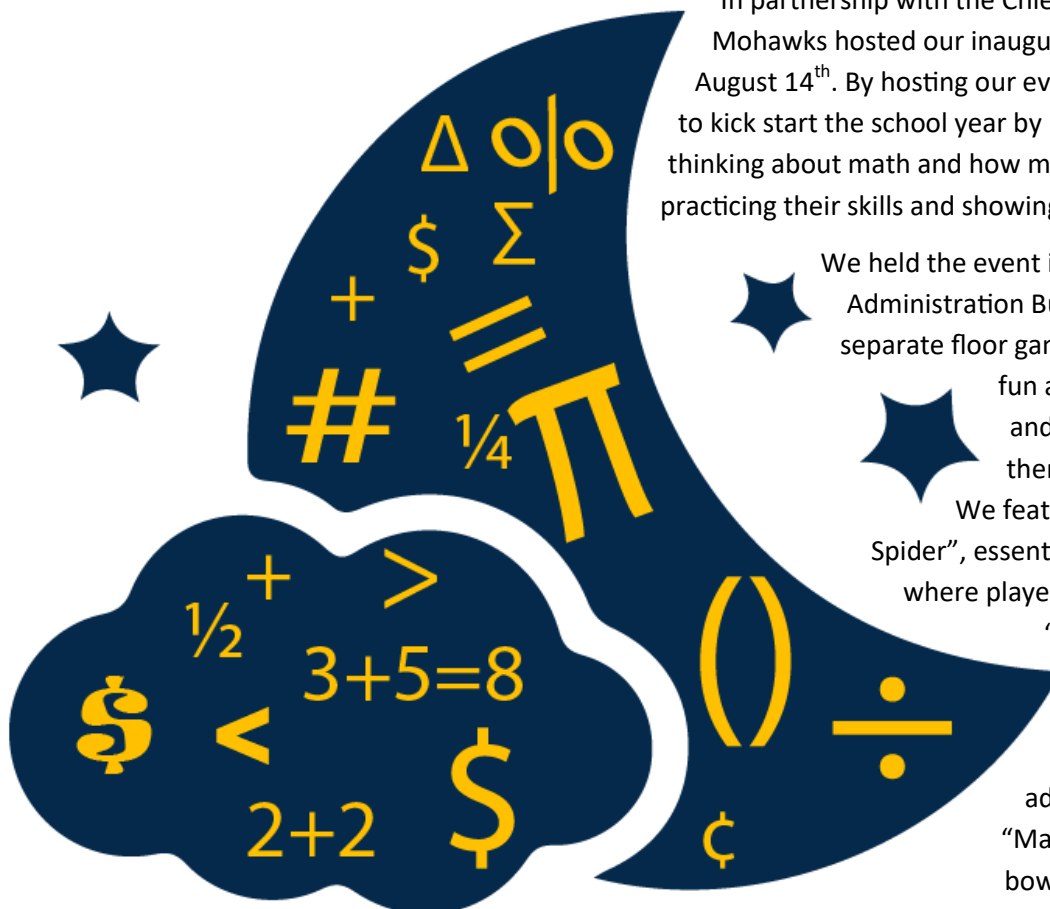


Family Math Night was born!

In partnership with the Chiefs of Ontario, Wahta Mohawks hosted our inaugural Family Math Night on August 14th. By hosting our event in August we were able to kick start the school year by having our students get thinking about math and how much fun they could have practicing their skills and showing off to their relatives.

We held the event in the main hall of our Administration Building and showcased 5 separate floor games. These games prioritized fun and allowed children, parents and caregivers to challenge themselves at their own level.

We featured games like "Space Spider", essentially a Twister-like game where players were asked questions like "place your left foot on 3+4", "Waffle Fractions", where players were asked to match like fractions and add and subtract fractions, "Math and Bowl", where players bowled to knock down pins and then had to answer basic operation



questions, “Hundreds Grid”, where players were asked to challenge their understanding of the relationship between numbers, and “Recycle Round-up”, which combined basic operations questions with concepts of environmental stewardship. Each game board occupied a large space on the gym floor and encouraged a lot of running around with the result that there were lots of laughing and tired children showcasing their knowledge and skills! Utilizing these types of games encouraged our youth to practice traditional learning styles focused on movement and doing instead of stationary rote activities.

These games also allowed for parents and caregivers to demonstrate and model to their children what they knew.

This was welcome as it is not always easy to share with our children our skills when the opportunities that are often presented come in the form of word problems from textbooks or homework. Math Night afforded parents the chance to show off their problem-solving skills and techniques and allowed our volunteers to share tips for at home learning.

The games were each led by youth volunteers ranging from early high school to university aged students. This was done purposefully to allow the younger students to learn from, and aspire to, the level of excellence demonstrated by our volunteers. This also allowed our older students to share their own best practices with families, building their own confidence and demonstrating leadership skills.

At the end of the evening families were encouraged to take a Family Math Night kit home with them. In these kits families found a variety of activities, some focused on Indigenous themes, that would allow them to continue the learning from the comfort of their kitchen table.



Families can spend time together, learn together and work towards forging a new relationship with math.

Our Family Math night sought to break down the stigma around math and create a fun filled environment where families were together and learning so that as our children grow so too does their confidence, their skills, and their love of math! We look forward to hosting our next Family Math Night soon and incorporating more traditional teachings into new floor games.

Submitted by: Simon Sutherland, Education Department Assistant, Wahta Mohawks

Your feedback is important to us!



Our Special Education Sharing Forums have been well received and there have been consistent requests for these to continue. To date we have covered *Policy and Administration, Behaviour and Exceptionalities, Trauma, Mental Health, Drug related issues, Numeracy Strategies, Literacy Strategies, Learning Disabilities, Land-based programming, Dyslexia, Transition to Post-Secondary and much more.*

We are currently looking for suggestions and recommendations for future Special Education Sharing Information Forums and Webinars. Do you have an idea you want to share? Is there a practitioner or expert you would recommend? Is there a specific topic or theme that you would like to see featured?

Please send these recommendations to Patrik Lowen at patrik.lowen@coo.org

Resources and tools

You can find many great resources on our **Education Portal**

<http://education.chiefs-of-ontario.org>

A screenshot of the Chiefs of Ontario Education Portal website. The header is green and features the Chiefs of Ontario logo on the left, a "Member Login" section with email and password fields and a "Login" button in the center, and a search bar on the right. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for "ABOUT US", "PRIORITIES", "RESOURCES", "NEWS", "EVENTS", and "SHARE". The main content area has a large image of children in a gymnasium on the left and a "Welcome to the Chiefs of Ontario Education Portal" section on the right. At the bottom, there are three colored boxes: a green "Resource Bank" box, a blue "Interactive Maps" box, and an orange "Member Forums" box, each with a brief description of its function.

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

Name	Organization
Denise Lofstorm	Chiefs of Ontario
Cherity Calder	Nishnawbe Aski Nation
Murray Waboose	Union of Ontario Indians
Kelly Maracle	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

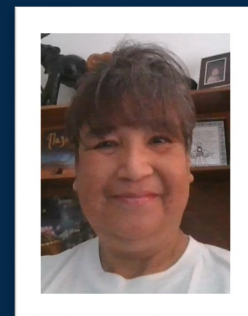
Aroland First Nation
 Attawapiskat First Nation
 Bearskin Lake First Nation
 Cat Lake First Nation
 Constance Lake First Nation
 Eabametoong First Nation
 Fort Albany First Nation
 Fort Severn First Nation
 Fort William First Nation
 Ginoogaming - Long Lac #77
 Kasabonika First Nation
 Kashechewan First Nation
 Kiashke Zaaging Anishinaabek - Gull Bay
 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

North Eastern Region

Patricia Magiskan

416-970-0521

Patricia.magiskan@coo.org



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-IFNA
 Northern Nishnawbe Ed Council (NNEC)
 Mattagami First Nation

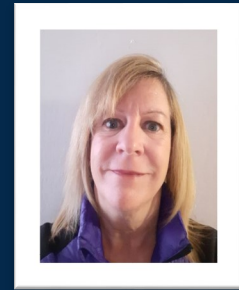
Anishnaabe of Naongashing - Big Island
 Big Grassy First Nation
 Couchiching First Nation
 Deer Lake First Nation
 Eagle Lake First Nation
 Grassy Narrows First Nation
 Iskatewizaagegan #39
 Lac La Croix First Nation
 Lac Seul First Nation
 Keewaytinook Okimakanak
 Keewaywin First Nation
 Kitchenuhmaykoosib - Big Trout Lake
 Keewaywin First Nation
 Mishkeegogamang
 Mitaanjigaming First Nation
 Naicatchewenin First Nation
 Naotkamegwanning - Whitefish Bay
 Nibinamik First Nation
 Nicickousemenecaning Nigigoonsiminikaaning
 North Spirit Lake First Nation
 Northwest Angle #33 First Nation
 Northwest Angle #37 - Animakee Wa Zhing

North Western Region

Susan Deley

807-407-6233

Susan.deley@coo.org



Obashkaandagang - Washagamis Bay
 Ochiichagwe'babigo'ining – Dalles
 Ojibways of Onigaming – Sabaskong
 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
 Wauzhushk Onigum– Rat Portage

Alderville First Nation
 Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation
 Batchewana First Nation
 Bkejwanong - Walpole Island
 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 - Ojibways of Garden River
 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

South Central Region

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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
 Chapleau Cree First Nation
 Chapleau Ojibway
 Matachewan First Nation



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