



# Our Gifted Children

## Kiiniwi Miini-goowizjik Binoojiinhyik



### HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

- Elder's Corner - Sonny Gagnon
- Understanding Inclusion
- Call out to Elders!
- The Value of Data
- First Nations Education Administrators Association (FNEAA)
- Translation Contest!
- Parental Information



## Message from Chiefs of Ontario Director of Education

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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 in this time of year when we give thanks for our good fortune and a bountiful harvest. We wish everyone all the best in their learning endeavours as many of our learners embark on a new school year. At COO we continue to advocate and coordinate in an inclusive manner ensuring the learning needs along the lifelong learning continuum are being addressed. We are at various stages with several intertwining and overlapping initiatives and are happy to report progress on many fronts. Feel free to reach out to us anytime if you have questions about what we are focusing on in the COO Education Sector. We hope your school and community are planning some exciting activities around Orange Shirt Day on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Enjoy this wonderful season of thanksgiving and remember to share your joy, laughter, knowledge and kindness everyday with those around you. Finally, I will share a quote from First Nation artist, traditional herbalist, poet, and activist Shirley Bear "The first lesson from our creator is to exercise respect, for all creation comes from the spirit."

Skén:nen kénhak (let there be peace). E'tho nikawén:nake, Julia Candlish.

Julia Candlish.

Director of Education, Chiefs of Ontario

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JC' or similar, written in a cursive style.

## 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.



## Elder's Corner Sonny Gagnon



Sonny Gagnon originates from the Anishnawbe homelands of Aroland First Nation where he was born and raised. He currently resides at AFN#242 with his lifelong wife Bella, and is a proud father of six children, and grandfather of 17 grandchildren. His passion is public service to the people of the Anishnawbe territory of Aroland First Nation. His current position as a Band Family Worker provides a connection to the families and ensuring their health and welfare needs are met, as well as general advocacy. His political career spans over decades, which included Education. He was a leading advocate ensuring Nations scholars had access to quality education. He also ensured that the homelands had its first school, Johnny Therriault Memorial School. His vision included an Anishnawbe Immersion program, complete with knowledge keepers to revitalize traditional laws and values of the Anishnawbe People. Sonny holds a seat on boards such as Aroland First Nation Education Authority and Tikinagan Child and Family Services.

### What is the importance of education?

Education is important because our nations must take control and ownership of our First Nation Education. We need to secure adequate funding for our nations to promote the success of First Nation students. Language and culture are crucial for successful development, education, well-being, and overall health of First Nation scholars. Clearly, the families are involved throughout the learning process. We need First Nation graduates to take leading roles in ensuring we get to this point.

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

The connection to success in education and Anishnawbe culture, traditions and the language is important, and you first need a natural foundation. One that is built from a home with your parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Everyone from the nation is involved in providing teachings on language, culture, and traditions; also known as the 7 Grandfather Teachings. The learning begins right away when you are born. All families have an important role to play in ensuring the teachings are passed onto the learner through all stages of life (as a child, youth, adult, and even an elder).

*Continued on page 6*





CHIEFS OF ONTARIO

SPECIAL EDUCATION SECTOR

# CALLING ALL ELDERS

Interview for "Our Gifted Children Newsletter"  
Honourarium Available

MORE INFORMATION CONTACT SPECIAL EDUCATION  
SUPPORT TECHNICIANS:

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The Knowledge and Language Keepers, Medicine Keepers, and community elders oversee the teachings and ensure a natural foundation of who we are as people is instilled within us throughout our lives. The learning cycle of our natural laws is a progression and often helps when we face everyday life challenges. If you have a strong base, you will flourish and have the strength to meet all your educational goals.

### **How can we support and promote Special Education and its' success in our first nation territories?**

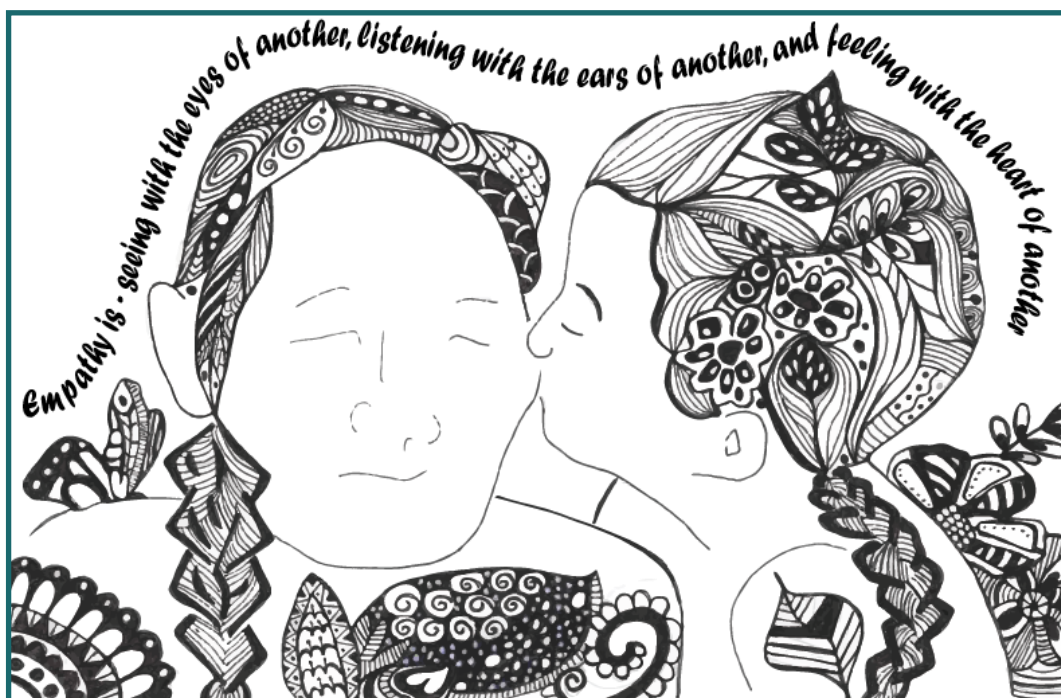
Special Education to our nation is that we focus on the learners' abilities to learn, and focus on the students outcomes rather than inputs. To provide the learner with a wrap-around support where the nation and the front line service providers like Education, Health and Social Services provide collaborative assistance to the learner and their family. To take the time and listen to the needs of the learner and not to separate learning instruction and keep the students together as much as possible "Not to segregate the learner" It is well known that all students are gifted and bring personal qualities to their learning environment. The student and teaching/ support staff ratio must reflect the learners need.

### **What would you say to a student who is struggling with a class, fellow student or personal conflict?**

I would listen to the learner with empathy to get a clear picture of the issues at hand. Then I would acknowledge their emotions. Student emotions are real and need to be addressed and provide a healthy environment for the students to have one to one discussions on "what needs to be talked about." Create talking circles with the learners to prevent incidents or to resolve issues. Create awareness about issues involving the students.

### **Final thought-How I would achieve my education goals**

Achieving educational goals like everything in life, you must plan and manage your time wisely. Understand your time is valuable, and do not to waste it. Be effective in terms of learning and study time. Make good choices regarding your overall health and safety, and create a good educational experience. If you come upon a negative situation, make the changes required and ask for help if necessary. Help is only a phone call away. Additionally keep in contact with family and community resources like your elders.



**Dabasendizowin – Humility**

**Debwewin – Truth**

**Zoongide’iwin – Courage**

**Gwayakwaadiziwin – Honesty**

**Manaaji’idiwin – Respect**

**Zaagi’idiwin – Love**

**Nibwaakaawin – Wisdom**

## The importance of learning the culture, and customs of our Anishnawbe Natural Law and Values

All Anishnawbe people have protocols when learning our Anishnawbe natural law and values. The land can be a natural learning environment as it provides the easiest methods of life’s instruction. For the people of the homelands, our belief system runs deep within us, and in many ways are inconsistent with the teachings from the world beyond our homelands. Our belief that we are spiritual beings is reflected in the way we strive to live in harmony and balance; we seek kinship with all of Creation. Our teachings have accompanied the people from time immemorial and passed on from generation to generation. The teachings never change and what I learned is no different from what my father learned and his father before him. This is consistent with what I teach my children and grandchildren and the teachings are consistent. We hold certain values sacred and endeavor to live by these values at all times. Throughout life, by learning and living these values, we gain knowledge of how we and our nations can walk the good road also called the red road. These cultural values have guided individuals, families, homelands, and our villages.

All of the above can be summarized by a teaching offered by the late “Sam Shabogamik” in his teaching he reflected on the journey of our people and how we were given all the tools and requirements of life and we were given

these tools by the Creator. He went on to tell a story of pre-contact, a time before our lives were disrupted. His grandfather was pulling a handmade sleigh uphill, and that sleigh was his lifeline. On it was food, supplies for shelter and cooking, a fishing net, and his knife. The snow had just fallen, so the work was strenuous. He was struggling to move forward, and things became more difficult as he climbed the hill. But he was determined, because he knew life would be better at the top.

For generations as Indigenous peoples, we have been climbing this hill much like this grandfather. When envisioned once we got to the top of the hill, our lives would change.

But our way of living was interfered, and we were forced to get back on the sleigh. We started sliding down the hill so fast that we forgot everything we left behind.

The late “Sam Shabogamik” explained that in order for us to return to our traditional ways, we need to turn around and pick up what we left behind. We need to go back and gather everything we lost on that other side of the hill. Thankfully, we don’t need to go too far to find it. Prior to contact with our peoples, our lives were like a complete circle. We had everything: our laws, our child care, our land. Through contact and assimilation, we lost parts of culture, language, and traditional ways. Yet as strong, resilient people, we fought our way back, and now we have completed three-quarters of the circle once again. Every day, we are trying to get back to the full circle. When we are there, it will mean thriving communities and healthy families and children.

The way forward is breaking the trail on new paths. It makes us think of all the ways our Elders would care for and teach us as children.

As people if we maintain the teachings and use them as a foundation I strongly believe we can manage a way to get an education of both worlds and create a balance for a healthy you.



## The Value of Data

By Natalie Snow, PhD

People construct their world through the assumptions they hold and the stories they hear and tell. That insight can be very liberating: after all, if our stories create the world, we can also tell other stories, and thus create a different reality. Everyday each one of us become researchers - we observe other people, we ask questions, we organize thoughts - these actions are all part of the research process. The primary difference between you and a researcher is the obligation to report on their data collection in a systemic way. A wealth of data is created everyday, including information about employment, education, demographics, health, social factors, experiences, understanding and response to interests and challenges.

For many years, research has followed an extractive model, with detrimental impacts on First Nation communities, operating in circumstances of unequal power and without regard for community concerns, needs or interests. Research has been undertaken on First Nations but not by First Nations. The colonial structures continue to define social experiences and lived realities for First Nation using colonial variables and constructs. Data has been collected using a variety of methods which fill a pre-determined box, a vanity measure. Mistrust of government institutions deter First Nations people from participating in government collection of data and research activities due to current and historical mistreatment of First Nations. The data has not accurately reflected the values and richness of First Nation knowledge.

In the last 20 years, there is a slow shift in process and framework of the collection and ownership of First Nations data. The First Nations Information Governance

Centre's Research created the OCAP® principles, which are beginning to make a paradigm shift in research. The move in applying OCAP® is changing the standard for First Nations' data and information. The First Nations principles of OCAP® describe collective rights to control the collection, use, and storage of data about First Nations Peoples. Data developed and collected in First Nation communities should address community concerns and allow for evidence-informed decisions. Data collected can produce more equitable research that not only contributes to community autonomy, strength and resiliency, but results in more productive and effective inquiry. First Nation led research can prioritize meaningful knowledge translation and capacity-strengthening to support self-determination and First Nations Data Sovereignty. What this means is communities and organizations can define wellness and success within their nation. When community-led research is developed and conducted in First Nations, research can contribute to community autonomy, strength and resiliency.

In the upcoming months, the Education Sector will be undertaking a collaborative and relationship-building project focusing on Special Education. The goal of the project is to determine how Chiefs of Ontario (COO) can support the 133 First Nations communities in special education. COO needs to identify what the First Nations require to support students' needs, with the overall goal of identifying gaps in services and needs. The project will be centred in First Nation ways of knowing and doing, with First Nations leading the development, planning, and implementation of solutions. Our team will be reaching out in the coming months.

Allan, B., & Smylie, J. (2015). First Peoples, second class treatment: The role of racism in the health and well-being of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The Wellesley Institute. <https://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Summary-First-Peoples-Second-Class-Treatment-Final.pdf>

First Nations Information Governance Centre. (2014a). Barriers and levers for the implementation of OCAP™. *International Indigenous Policy Journal*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.18584/iipj.2014.5.2.3>



**Seneca - Swampy Cree - Tuscarora - Lenape - Oneida - Potawatomi**

# Your Voice Matters

## Call for entries

We are looking to highlight your community language in the title of our Special Education newsletter... "Our Gifted Children"

**Submission Deadline EXTENDED :**

**December 15th, 2022, 5:00 PM EDT**

**Prizes: One of three \$50.00 Gift Cards**

(choices are: Tim Hortons, Walmart, or Amazon )



**TRANSLATE**  
**"Our Gifted Children"**  
**into your First Nation**  
**language**

**Submission link**

**<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6885766/Translation-Contest-Our-Gifted-Children>**

By entering, you are granting the Chiefs of Ontario permission to recognize you as the translator in our publication.  
In advance, we would like to thank and acknowledge all those who participate in our translation contest!

## First Nations Education Administrators Association

### ***“MAKING CONNECTIONS FOR FINDING SOLUTIONS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION”***

Educators, therapists, education administrators, and families of children with special needs understand the challenges involved in ensuring children receive the best education during their attendance at school. While each child has a unique educational journey, educators, and administrators within First Nations' schools share common challenges in providing special education services to their students. Some challenges First Nations' education administrators' and educators' experience include:

- a shortage of professionals for assessment and follow-up;
- limited funding to provide adequate services;
- confusion with regulations of *Jordan's Principle*; including culture and language in Personal Learning Plans and intervention;
- dynamic family circumstances caused by weak socio-economics and intergenerational trauma; inconsistencies with therapeutic approaches;
- and other challenges unique to local First Nations' communities.

The First Nations Education Administrators Association (FNEAA) is a newly formed not-for-profit organization that empowers First Nations education administrators and directors of education to collaborate, discuss, and provide optimal education services to local First Nations.

The mission of FNEAA is to provide a gathering place for First Nation education administrators to share information, collect and share ideas and enhance capacity in education, certification, professional development, partnerships, systems development and services, mentoring, and annual conferences.

First Nations and education administrators gather during FNEAA town halls or webinars to network, listen, and share their strategies and experiences. First Nation education administrators are the professionals and specialists in education who are respected within

their First Nations communities. They encompass the First Nation richness of extended family, diversity, inclusiveness, individual acceptance, and appreciation of traditional knowledge holders within their community. First Nations education administrators work collaboratively and find diverse solutions to address collective issues within these gathering places.

The FNEAA vision statement is “Balancing the interconnectedness in education which is rooted in First Nations languages, cultures, traditions, and self-determination under First Nations' control of First Nations education.” Within the gathering spaces provided by FNEAA, First Nations Education Administrators acknowledge the contributions of Elders' teachings, the expertise provided by First Nations Education Administrators, and respect the autonomy each First Nation has in controlling and overseeing the educational objectives of local First Nations communities.

To learn more about the First Nations Education Administrators' Association, visit the FNEAA website at [www.fneaa.ca](http://www.fneaa.ca). You may also consider attending this year's National Gathering hosted virtually on October 26 & 27, 2022.



## UNDERSTANDING INCLUSION



**EQUALITY** is that everyone gets the same book.



**DIVERSITY** is that everyone gets different types of books.



**EQUITY** is that everyone gets the book that is right for them.



**ACCEPTANCE** is understanding that everyone reads different types of books.



**BELONGING** is reading any book you want without fear of being judged.



**JUSTICE** is fighting to make sure everyone has access to books.



The Lac Des Milles Lac Education Centre, Thunder Bay  
Students are Leigh-Anna and Alera Anderson, from  
Kasabonika First Nation





## 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 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.

To be featured in "Our Gifted Children" please send your community, school, or student success stories, artwork and photos to Susan Deley at [Susan.Deley@coo.org](mailto:Susan.Deley@coo.org) or Patricia Magiskan at [Patricia.Magiskan@coo.org](mailto:Patricia.Magiskan@coo.org)



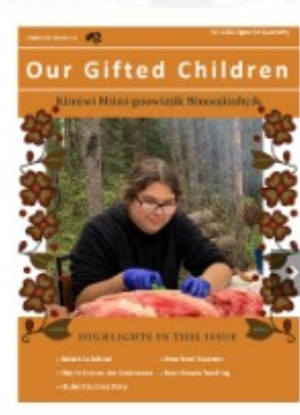
Summer 2022 – Special Education Newsletter



Spring 2022 – Special Education Newsletter



Winter 2021 – Special Education Newsletter



Fall 2021 – Special Education Newsletter

## 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 Chiefs Technical Committee on Languages and Learning (CTCLL) formerly known as FNECU. It is a joint technical and advisory body mandated by the CTCLL 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 CTCLL 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
Sherri Kabatay	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 two SESTs providing support to the First Nations in Ontario. They are based out of the Thunder Bay. The role of the SESTs is to support and assist First Nations with:

- effective use of funding provided for Special Education
- understanding and addressing capacity issues around Special Education;
- collection and analysis of information related to improving the First Nations Special Education programs;
- strengthening 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;
- policy development, and education agreements;
- professional development , organize Special Education Sharing Forums across Ontario.

# SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT TECHNICIAN COMMUNITY LISTING



## Central, North Eastern & Southern Region

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## North Western & Southern Region

**Susan Deley**

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Aroland First Nation	Nibinamik First Nation
Attawapiskat First Nation	Neskantaga – Lansdowne House
Aundeck Omni Kaning First Nation	North Caribou Lake
Batchewana First Nation	Northern Nishnawbe Ed Council
Bearskin Lake First Nation	Ojibways of Saugeen #258
Brunswick House First Nation	Pays Plat First Nation
Cat Lake First Nation	Red Rock First Nation
Chapleau Cree First Nation	Sachigo First Nation
Chapleau Ojibway	Sagamok First Nation
Constance Lake First Nation	Sandy Lake First Nation
Eabametoong First Nation	Serpent River First Nation
Fort Albany First Nation	Sheguiandah First Nation
Fort Severn First Nation	Shibogama First Nations Council
Fort William First Nation	Taykwa Tagamou Nation (New Post)
Ginoogaming – Long Lac #77	Temagami First Nation
Independent First Nations Alliance	Thessalon First Nation
Kasabonika First Nation	United Chiefs and Councils of Mniidoo Mnising/KTEI
Kashechewan First Nation	Wahgoshig – Abitibi #70
Keewaytinook Okimakanak Tribal Council	Wawakapewin First Nation
Ketegaunseebee (Garden River)	Webequie First Nation
Kiashke Zaaging Anishinaabek	Weenusk First Nation
Kingfisher Lake First Nation	Wikwemikong Unceded
M'Chigeeng First Nation	Whitesand First Nation
Matachewan First Nation	
Mattagami First Nation	
Marten Falls First Nation	
Mississauga #8	
Missanabie Cree First Nation	
Moose Cree First Nation	
Muskrat Dam First Nation	

Alderville First Nation	Moravian of the Thames – Delaware Nation
Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation	Naicatchewenin First Nation
Animakee Wa Zhing	Naotkamegwanning
Anishnaabe of Naongashing	Nigigoosiminikaaning
Big Grassy First Nation	North Spirit Lake First Nation
Bkejwanong (Walpole Island First Nation)	Northwest Angle #33 First Nation
Chippewas of Kettle & Stony Point	Obashkaandagang
Chippewas of the Thames	Ochiichagwe'babigo'ining
Chippewas of Nawash – Cape Croker	Ojibways of Onigaming
Chippewas of Saugeen First Nation	Oneida Nation of the Thames
Couchiching First Nation	Pikangikum First Nation
Curve Lake First Nation	Poplar Hill First Nation
Deer Lake First Nation	Rainy River First Nation
Eagle Lake First Nation	Seine River First Nation
Grassy Narrows First Nation	Shawanaga First Nation
Hiawatha First Nation	Shoal Lake #40
Iskatewizaagegan #39	Six Nations of the Grand River
Keewaytinook Okimakanak	Slate Falls First Nation
Keewaywin First Nation	Wabaseemoong First Nation
Kitchenuhmaykoosib	Wabauskang First Nation
Lac La Croix First Nation	Wabigoon Lake Ojibway
Lac Seul First Nation	Wahta Mohawk Territory
Mishkeegogamang	Wapekeka First Nation
Mississaugas of New Credit	Wauzhushk Onigum
Mitaanjigaming First Nation	Wunnumin First Nation
Mohawks of Akwesasne	
Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte	



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