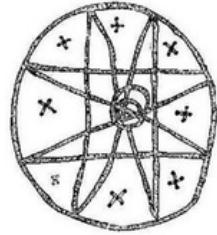


2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

ASD-N: FIRST NATION
EDUCATION



DATE :
July 2025

PREPARED BY :
Melissa Dedam
Subject Coordinator of First Nation

Territorial Acknowledgement

The Anglophone School District North would like to acknowledge, respect, and remind that we are situated in Mi'kma'ki, the unceded, unsurrendered territory of the Mi'kmaq people. The Mi'kmaq who welcomed English and French speaking settlers and taught them how to survive in their territory based on their relationship with the land, nature, and mankind that continues to this day. The Mi'kmaq Nations, who have inhabited this land since time immemorial, signed Treaties of Peace and Friendship with the British Crown beginning in 1725, which were upheld by the Government of Canada in the Constitution Act of 1982. These treaties did not deal with the surrender of land but established rules for ongoing coexistence and partnership between nations. We commit to ongoing relationships of peace and mutual respect as we strive to live up to the ideals of true reconciliation.



We are all treaty people!

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Meet Our Team



Matthew Sweezey
Director



Melissa Dedam
Subject Coordinator



Lori Gillhan
*Jodan's Principle First
Nation Support*



Rachael Bell
Lead



Patricia Miller
Lead





Message from the Director:

The First Nation Education Team in ASD-N has had another impactful and productive year, marked by meaningful progress in fostering a collaborative and culturally responsive district. Our ongoing commitment to building respectful relationships and deepening understanding with First Nation communities continues to guide our efforts to honour the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action within the provincial education system.

This report highlights key accomplishments from the past year, including:

- Targeted professional learning for Mi'kmaq language teachers
- Hosting the first-ever Indigenous Songwriters Camp
- The selection of six Indigenous students from ASD-N for the Mawiamalga'tijig/ Mawokahtine Intercultural Indigenous Dance Program by Atlantic Ballet of Canada
- The installation of the Witness Blanket art exhibit for 6 weeks in ASD-N
- The community approach to education through the ICE Centre that gets First Nation students career experience

The Enhancement Agreement remains a vital framework for regular collaboration between the district and First Nation communities, enabling investments that directly support student achievement, Mi'kmaw language acquisition, cultural engagement, and overall well-being.

This year, the Regional Enhancement Committee developed custom questions for the Youth Check-In Survey to help evaluate the effectiveness of enhancement measures. The results of this initiative can be found on page 31 of this report. Additionally, the Committee worked closely with District Senior Leadership to provide input on the new District Improvement Plan, which will guide our work over the next three years starting in the 2025–26 school year.

Further, a significant milestone was the creation of the Jordan's Principle – First Nation Support position, which has strengthened collaboration with Tribal Councils and communities on educational support services for their members. We are pleased to confirm continued funding for this role in the upcoming school year.

We invite you to explore the full report to learn more about the progress made and the path forward. The ASD-N First Nation Education Team works hard to advocate and execute the wonderful work within this report, and I would like to thank my team for the tremendous work they continue to do to support Reconciliation and Indigenous students in ASD-N.

Wela'lin,
Matthew Sweezey
Anglophone School District- North
Director of First Nation Education

Mission

First Nations Team and the Anglophone North School District are committed to empowering students through a student-centered approach, to be lifelong learners and promote academic success by supporting students with a culturally responsive approach and recognizing the importance of history, language culture, and traditions of the Mi'kmaq People while promoting and maintaining a collaborative and positive working relationship between First Nations, Anglophone North School District, and other stakeholders.

Objective

Creating conditions and provide support necessary to engage students in learning that is student centered, culturally responsive, relevant, challenging and evidence based.



Our District & Surrounding First Nation Communities



1. Buctouche Micmac First Nation (Tjipogtotjg)
2. Elsipogtog First Nation (Big Cove)
3. Indian Island First Nation (Lno Minigog)
4. Metepenagiag Mi'kmaq Nation (Red Bank)
5. Eel Ground First Nation (Natoaganeg)
6. Esgenoôpetitj First Nation (Burnt Church)
7. Pabineau First Nation
8. Eel River Bar First Nation (Ugpi'ganjig)
9. Listiguj First Nation

Statistics:

- ASD-N welcomes students from nine Mi'kmaw communities
- ASD-N supports the transition of students from five First Nation community run schools
- ASD-N is located in two of the seven Mi'kmaw districts of Gespegeoag and Sigenigteoag
- 1 in 6 ASD-N students self-identify as Indigenous
- ASD-N has the largest population of Indigenous students who attend provincial schools in New Brunswick
- ASD-N is the second largest district geographically in the province
- ASD-N has 29 schools in its district with over 8500 students.

Guiding Documents

Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada: 94 Calls to Action

(10) We call on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples. The new legislation would include a commitment to sufficient funding and would incorporate the following principles:

- ii.) Improving education attainment levels and success rates;
- iii.) Developing culturally appropriate curricula;
- iv.) Protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses;
- vii.) Respecting and honouring Treaty relationships.

(62) We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:

- i.) Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students;

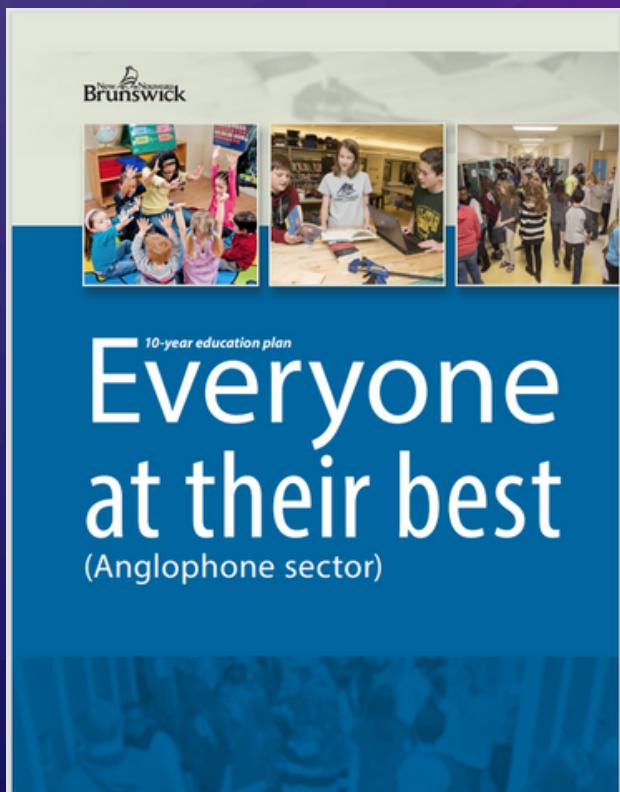
(63) We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:

- i.) Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools;
- ii.) Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history;
- iii.) Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect;
- iv.) Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above.

| Everyone at Their Best

New Brunswick 10 Year Education Plan

- Objective 1: Ensure all learners value diversity and have a strong sense of belonging
- Objective 6: Meet the needs of First Nation learners and ensure that provincial curriculum is reflective of First Nation history and culture
- Objective 7: Ensure all learners develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to continually adapt to, and thrive in, their environment
- Objective 9: Foster leadership, active citizenship and an entrepreneurial mindset



ANGLOPHONE NORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT

POLICY NO. E-11

POLICY TYPE: END RESULTS

POLICY NO: E-11

SUBJECT: COMMITMENT FOR FIRST NATION EDUCATION

EFFECTIVE: June 30, 2017

PAGE: 1 of 2

POLICY:

Anglophone North School District is situated on traditional and unceded Mi'kmaq territory, and it serves the largest population of Mi'kmaq children and youth in the province. The District Education Council of Anglophone North School District, in the spirit of reconciliation, is committed to providing quality educational opportunities that respond to the needs of First Nation children and youth, and their communities. Moving forward with the Truth and Reconciliation's 94 Calls to Action is a priority in building understanding of traditional and contemporary First Nation cultures, histories and perspectives by all students and staff, system wide. The following ends must be achieved:

1. The Superintendent will ensure that the three objectives of the First Nation Education Programs and Service Agreements are met, which include:
 - a) Reducing the achievement gap that exists between First Nations' students and non-First Nations' students attending, or that will be transitioning to, public schools in New Brunswick.
 - b) Providing children of First Nations in New Brunswick with a welcoming school environment and a quality educational experience that is relevant and recognizes cultural background.
 - c) Promoting positive learning and working relations between First Nations' communities and school districts.

2. The Superintendent will provide leadership and promote capacity building to support the implementation of First Nation community Education Plans in district schools that serve First Nation students.
3. The Superintendent will ensure that the District Improvement Plan addresses the teaching and learning of accurate First Nation culture, history and perspectives for all students.
4. The Superintendent will increase the knowledge of First Nation cultures, histories and perspectives among all staff members through appropriate professional learning opportunities.

MONITORING:

Method(s): Report by the Superintendent Twice Annually December –
Frequency: Monitoring Report August – Year-End Report to the District
Month(s): Education Council

and Minister of Education and Early Childhood
Development

Enhanced First Nation Education Programs and Services Agreement

Anglophone School District-North and First Nation Communities have continued to meet as required by the agreement.

Positive growth in academic, school environments, and relationships continue in First Nation Education with continued work needed.

Regional meeting offered opportunities for whole region collaboration with the goal to be held twice a year starting 2024-2025.

Enhancement Agreement Overarching Goals:

1

...to improve learning and social-emotional outcomes of Eligible First Nations Students attending or transitioning to public schools in New Brunswick;

2

...to provide eligible First Nations Students attending or transitioning to public schools in New Brunswick a welcoming school environment and a quality educational experience that is relevant and recognizes their culture, language, and traditions; and,

3

..to promote positive learning and working relationships between First Nation and the District that help foster positive and effective transitions for First Nations children entering public schools in New Brunswick.

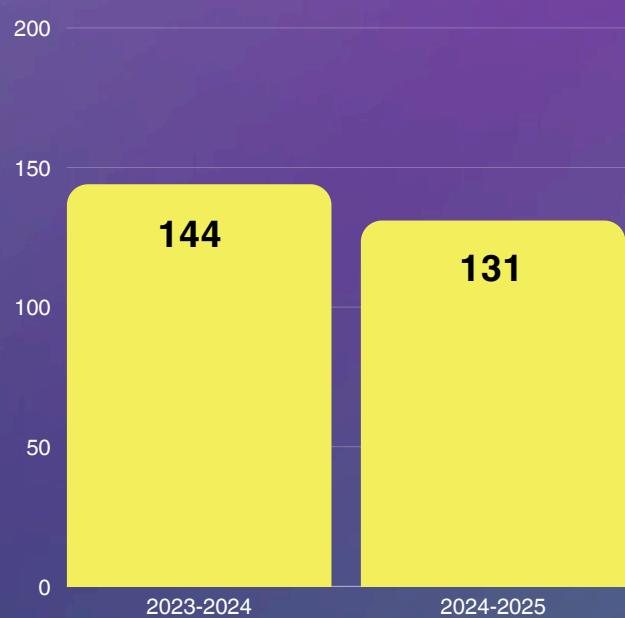
| Priority Areas, Supports & Data



Elders in Schools



The Elders & Knowledge Keepers in Schools Program had a strong and impactful year, with a total of 131 visits recorded across various schools in the Anglophone North School District. This initiative brought invaluable cultural teachings into classrooms, including Mi'kmaq language, land-based learning, storytelling, reconciliation education, traditional arts, and the 7 Sacred Teachings. Elders and knowledge keepers played a vital role in helping students understand Indigenous worldviews, histories, and identities, while supporting the district's commitment to Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing. Monthly data shows consistent engagement throughout the school year, highlighting the growing interest and integration of Indigenous education across subject areas.



Meet the Elders & Knowledge Carriers



Joseph Lenard Word
Natoaganeg



Sarah Ward
Natoaganeg



Marie Kryszko
Oinpegitjoig



Stephanie Simon
Elsipogtog



Jeannie Bartibogue
Esgenoôpetitj



Marilyn Ingram
Elsipogtog



Constance Sewell
Oinpegitjoig



Rosenne Martin
Listiguj



Sarah Simon
Elsipogtog



Rose Marie Boucher
Oinpegitjoig



Nora Labillios
Ugpi'ganjig



Donna Augustine
Elsipogtog

Meet the Elders & Knowledge Carriers



Ashley Sanipass

Lno Minigog



Liam Watson

Metepenagiag



Kateri Levi

Elsipogtog



Adrain Francis

Esgenoôpetitj



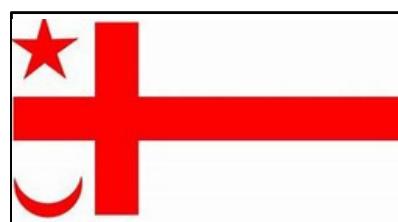
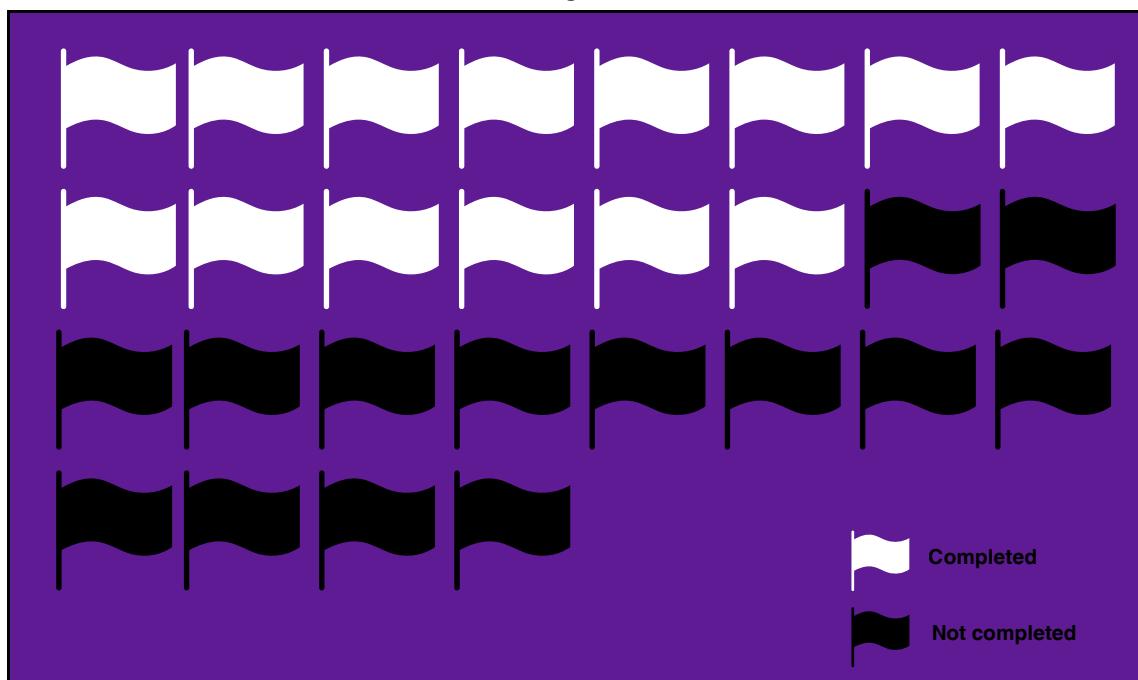
Oscar Baker

Elsipogtog

Flag Raising Ceremony

Terry Fox Elementary and Elenor Graham Middle School had their flag raising ceremonies this school year. There are now 14 out of 29 schools that are flying the Mi'kmaq Grand Council flag permanently in Anglophone School District North.

Grand Council Flags in the District:



Blanket Exercise

The Blanket Exercise provides a powerful, interactive experience that guides participants through the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization in what is now known as Canada. Following the exercise, participants take part in a reflection circle led by an Elder, creating a safe space for sharing, listening, and healing.

The ASD-N First Nation Education Team offers to facilitate the Blanket Exercise in schools across the district. Anyone—staff or administration—can request a session. We offer two tailored versions: one designed specifically for students and another for staff-only sessions, ensuring that the experience is age-appropriate and meaningful for all participants.

This activity is open to both staff and students and is a valuable opportunity to deepen understanding, foster empathy, and support reconciliation within our schools.

In the 2024-2025 school year, the First Nation Education team organized ten blanket exercise sessions, spanning from Rexton to Dalhousie. The participants included high school students and staff.



Reconciliation Ambearristers

Advancing reconciliation through education by creating professional learning opportunities for educators that promote an understanding of First Nations' historical and cultural contributions, as well as the complexity of the historical record. Support is also available to assist schools and teachers with acts of reconciliation, for example adopting a Spirit Bear, through our Spirit Bear Program.

We currently have seventeen spirit bears in Anglophone School District North, and we had six new spirit bears this year. Several are still waiting for their names.



Meet the Spirit Bears



Spirit Bear,
The original bear



Sipu Muin /River bear



Elapalin/ Splash



Awaiting a name



Pguman/Blueberry



Honey Bear



Toqaqewei
tupqwanamugs't
muinesk
Fall Brown Bear



Militaw/Butterfly



Storm



Ugju'sn Muin/Wind



Awaiting Names



Awaiting a name

Meet the Spirit Bears



Awaiting a name



Awaiting a name



Awaiting a name



Awaiting a name

Mi'kmaw Language

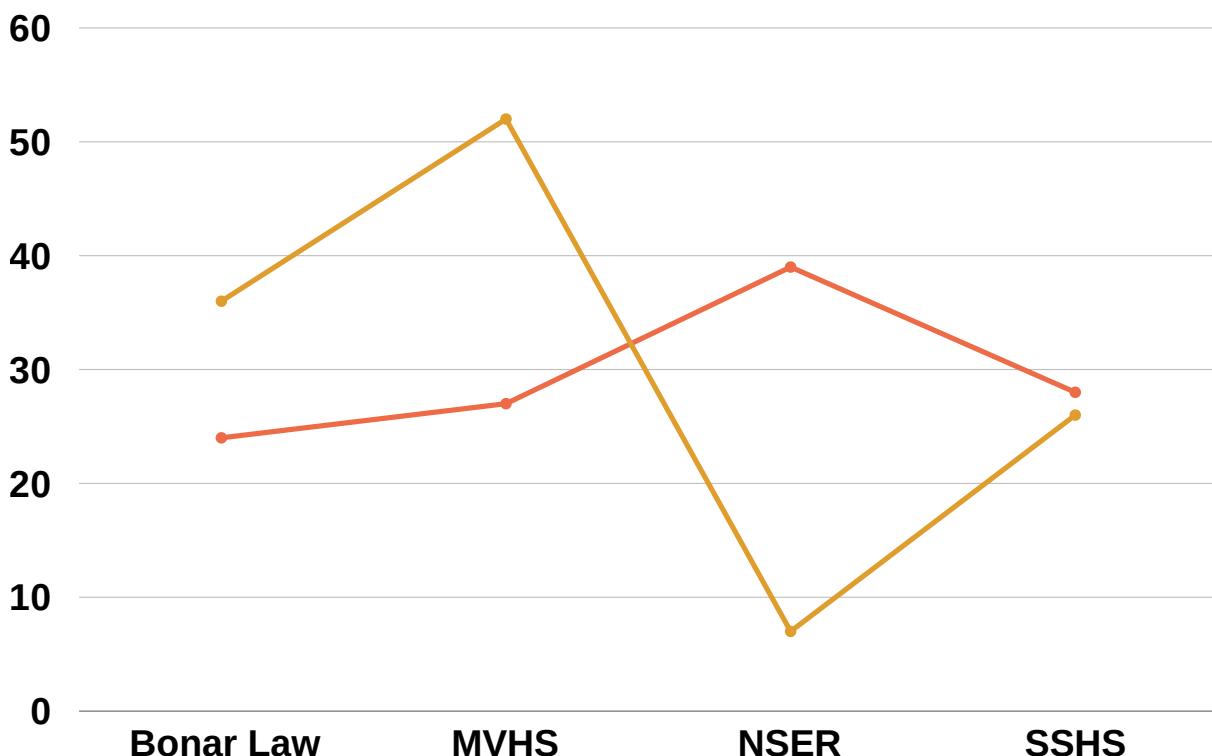
In December 2023, ASD-N initiated the Mi'kmaq language challenge, which has been thriving. Each day, a new Mi'kmaq word was uploaded to the ASD-N First Nation Education Facebook group. The team encouraged everyone to listen, learn, practice, and share. The Mi'kmaw Language embodied the essence of Mi'kmaw identity, culture, and wisdom within its vocabulary and expressions. It served as a fundamental pillar of identity; that was why every effort to revitalize the language was so important.



MI'KMAQ LANGUAGE ENROLLMENT

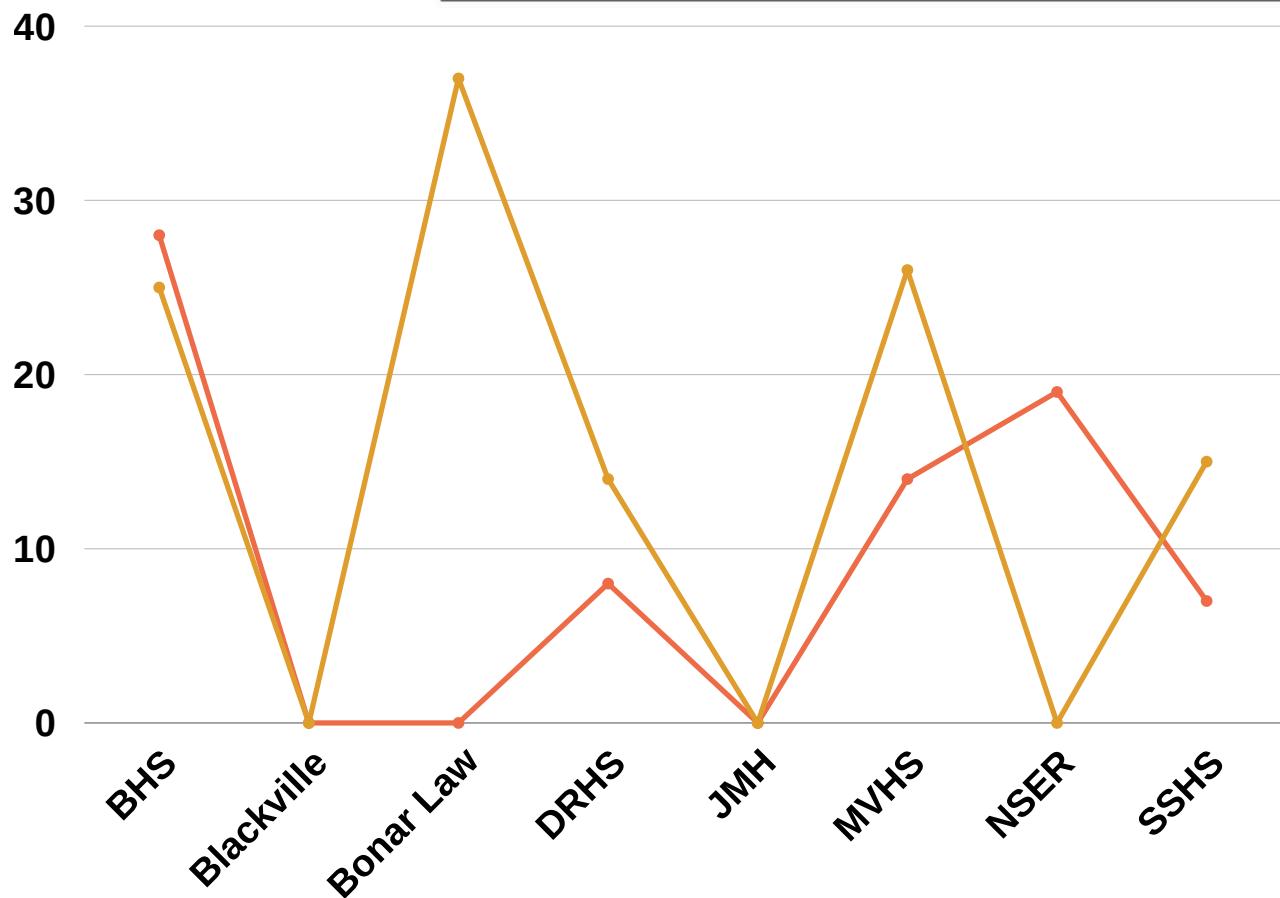
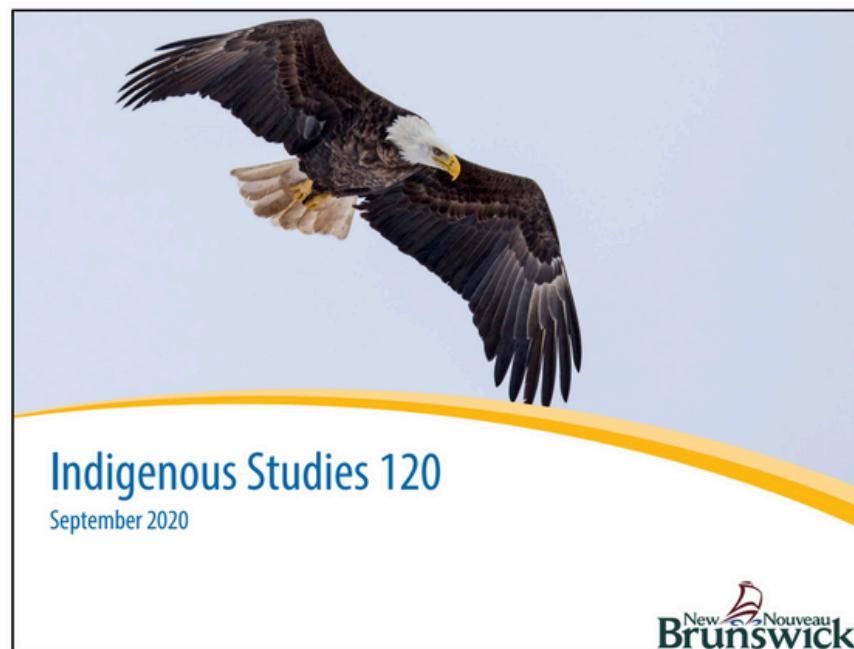
● 2024-2025

● 2023-2024



Wabanaki Studies

- 2024-2025
- 2023-2024

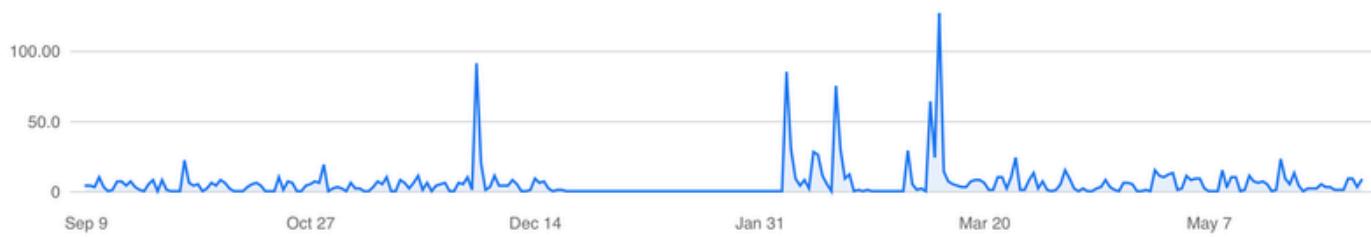


First Nations Educations in ASD-N Facebook Page



Here is an overview of the group re: engagement, from Sept 2024-June 2025.

1,616 Interactions ⓘ
-20.4% from previous 285 days



⌚
1,218
Reactions ⓘ

🗨️
66
Comments ⓘ

↗️
332
Shares ⓘ

Our Facebook page continues to be a dynamic space for promoting Mi'kmaw language revitalization and community engagement. One of our most consistent features is the Mi'kmaw Word of the Day, shared every school day as a short video. These posts offer learners of all ages a meaningful and accessible way to grow their language skills, one word at a time.

In addition to daily language content, we regularly share updates on cultural and educational initiatives, event promotions, and monthly cover stories that highlight important themes, individuals, and celebrations within our community. These posts aim to foster pride, connection, and awareness of our living culture.

Over the course of the school year (September 9 to June 20), our page generated 1,616 interactions, including:

- 1,218 reactions
- 332 shares
- 66 comments

While overall interaction levels have seen a 20.4% decrease compared to the previous period, engagement remains steady with noticeable spikes during key events and major announcements.

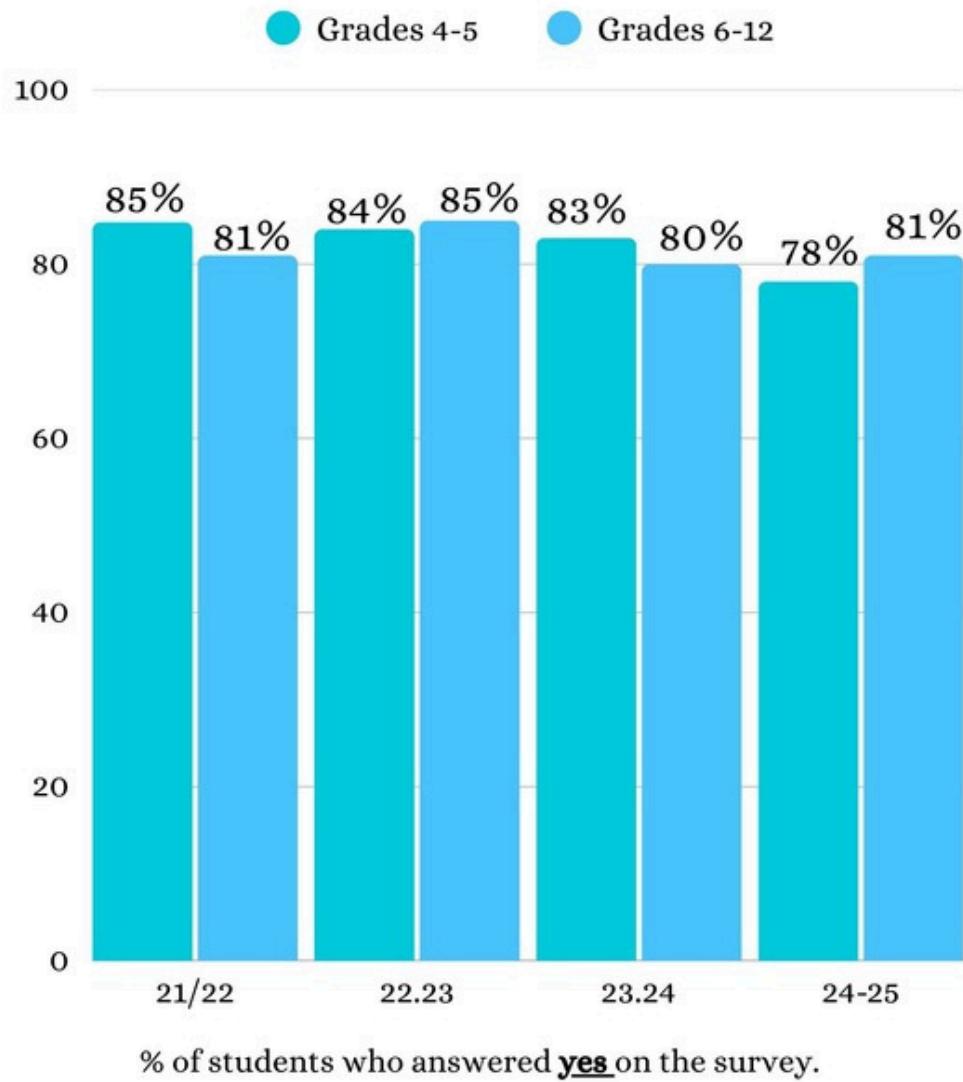
Content Insights:

- Video content drove the most engagement, accounting for 54% of all interactions.
- Photo posts followed at 20.4%, with additional contributions from text, links, and other formats.
- 67% of interactions came from followers, while 33% were from non-followers, showing our reach continues to grow beyond our core audience.

Although interaction trends fluctuate, the consistency of our content and community support shows that our page remains a vital tool for language preservation, education, and celebration of Mi'kmaw identity.

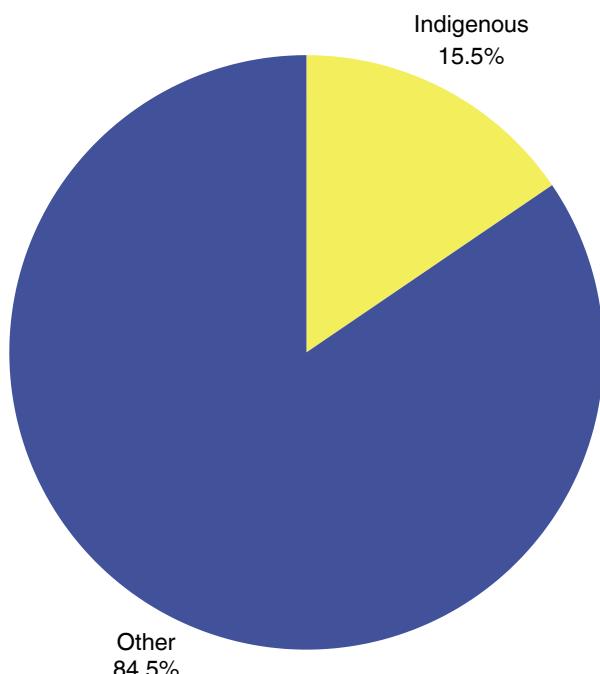
Student Perspective Survey

ASD-N District Question: *Have you learned about First Nations (ex. Culture, history, traditions) in your classroom lessons in the last year?*

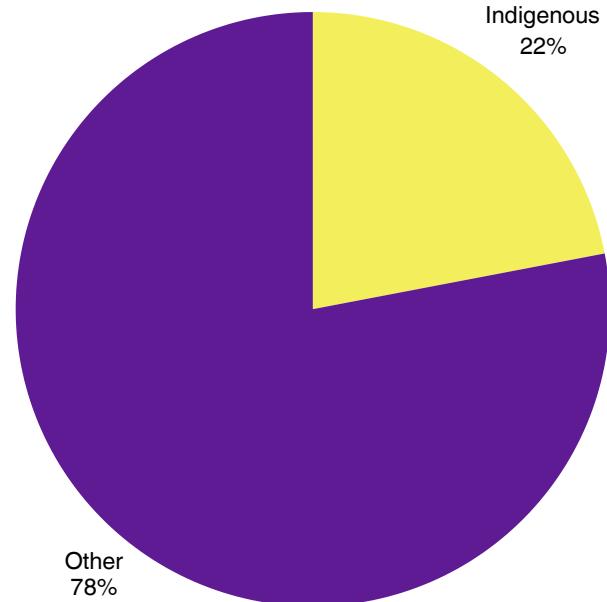


Student Perception Survey

Students that self-identified as Indigenous

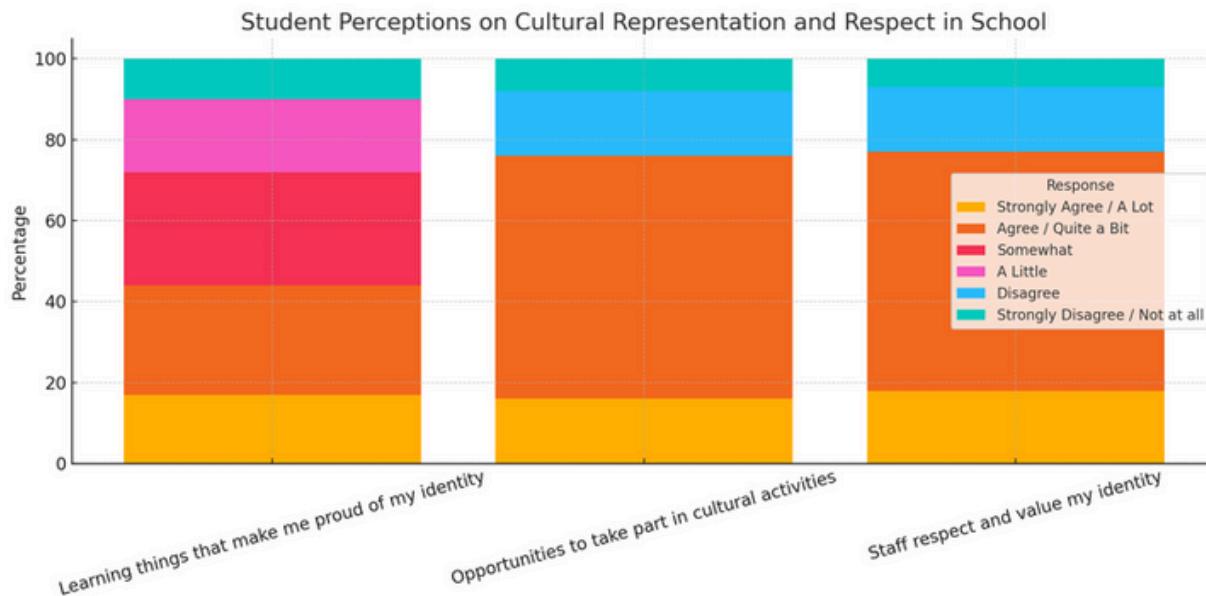


Grades 4-5



Grades 6-12

Youth Check-In Survey



A.) At my school we learned things that make me proud of my race/ethnicity/Culture/Heritage:

Alot 17%, Quite a bite 27%, Somewhat 28%, A Little 18%, Not at all 10%
=56% Somewhat or below

B.) At my school, I have opportunities to take part in activities that are important to my race, ethnicity, culture and heritage.

Strongly Agree 16%, Agree 60%, Disagree 16%, Strongly Disagree, 8%
=Only 76% Agree or higher

C.) At my school, I feel that staff members respect and value my race, ethnicity, culture and heritage.

Strongly Agree 18%, Agree 59%, Disagree 16%, Strongly Disagree, 7%
=Only 77% Agree or higher

First Nation Champions

Each school within our district has identified a teacher or staff member, in some schools two, to serve as the First Nation Champion(s)—a voluntary role undertaken in addition to their assigned responsibilities. The scope of this role varies across schools. In some cases, Champions support the promotion and distribution of Indigenous resources and information. In others, they take a more active leadership role by organizing cultural events, ceremonies, and initiatives that promote Indigenous education and engagement within their school communities.

During the 2024–2025 school year, we hosted a professional development day dedicated to supporting and empowering our First Nation Champions. The session was facilitated by our team and Elder Marie Kryzsko, and focused on foundational teachings including the use of sacred medicines, the significance of talking sticks, and Mi'kmaq worldview. As part of this learning experience, participants also began assembling their own teaching bundles, which will serve as meaningful tools in their continued efforts to support Indigenous knowledge sharing and cultural revitalization in their schools. Here is a list of all the champions:

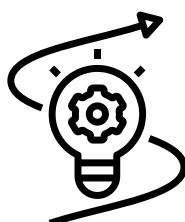
- Stephen DeVries
- Shannon Stewart
- Katherine Halas-Moulton
- JD Touchie
- Krista Harquail
- Karen Coughlan
- Megan Gallagher
- Nadia Arsenault
- Nick Scully
- Holly Talbot
- Amy Maloney
- Anika Natasiuk
- Elaine Foran
- Tracy Lynds
- Kelly Scott
- Candace Macrae
- Connie Ellis
- Mona Glazier
- Jennifer Winchester
- Marly Sutherland
- Teri Sharpe
- Kelsie Poole
- Melanie Maltby-Ingwersoll
- Chris Ross
- Joshi Akanksha
- Heather Casey Campbell
- Ginette Brewster
- Kristie Strunk
- Pam Armstrong

Innovative Indigenous Projects Initiative

Over the past several years, our district has supported an Innovative Projects Initiative, which invites teachers to submit proposals for creative and impactful projects. Selected applicants receive grant funding to bring their ideas to life. This school year, a new category was added to the application process—projects focused on Indigenous celebrations and cultural learning.

As a result, 17 out of 29 schools across the district implemented a total of 37 Indigenous-focused innovative projects, with over \$30,000 in funding allocated to this category alone. These projects reflected a rich diversity of cultural engagement and learning, including Midwinter celebrations, Apukanjik Teachings, traditional Indigenous foods, Mawiomi gatherings, outdoor land-based education, and Indigenous art initiatives.

This expansion reflects the district's ongoing commitment to Indigenous education and the integration of Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being within our schools.

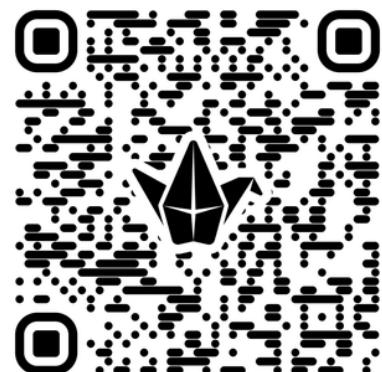


# of Projects	37
# of Schools	17/29
Grant total:	\$30K+

Professional Learning

Mi'kmaw Language

This year, Mi'kmaq language teachers from across the district came together for a powerful professional learning experience and language retreat focused on enhancing language instruction through technology and collaboration. During the retreat, educators explored innovative ways to integrate the MK language apps and iPads into their classrooms, expanding their pedagogical approaches and boosting student engagement. An Apple education representative joined us for an afternoon session, offering valuable tips and creative techniques for maximizing the iPad's potential in language learning. Later in the year, we reunited the group with fluent Mi'kmaq language speakers to co-create meaningful and culturally rich resources. These resources were uploaded to our shared Lang Padlet, making them accessible to all educators and helping to strengthen Mi'kmaq language revitalization efforts across ASD-N. [View the Padlet here.](#)



Treaty Education

Last fall, our team facilitated a district-wide professional learning series focused on Treaty Education, open to all staff across the Anglophone North School District. The series was anchored in a powerful and informative 10-part video collection created by Mi'kmaw historian Dr. Mercedes Peters from Nova Scotia, developed in collaboration with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD). Each video explored key concepts and historical truths related to treaties, Indigenous-settler relations, and the importance of treaty education in today's classrooms.

Over a span of 10 weeks, we hosted virtual sessions every week after school using Microsoft Teams. Each session lasted approximately 30 minutes and followed a consistent format: participants would log in, watch one of the videos together, and then engage in a facilitated discussion reflecting on the content. These conversations often led to thoughtful dialogue around classroom practices, curriculum connections, and personal reflections. To support meaningful participation, we also prepared a set of guided discussion questions each week in case the conversation needed prompting or if participants were unsure where to begin.

While we had a core group of dedicated participants who attended regularly, the sessions were also open and flexible, allowing others to join as their schedules permitted. This created a welcoming environment where educators could engage at their own pace while still benefiting from the collective learning experience.

Overall, the series provided a valuable opportunity for staff to deepen their understanding of Treaty Education and explore ways to respectfully and meaningfully incorporate it into their teaching.

Team Professional Learning

From May 14–17 over 35 staff members and educators from the Anglophone School District North (ASD-N) had the honour of attending the Atlantic Native Teachers Education Conference (ANTEC), hosted in Elsipogtog First Nation. The event opened with a powerful and moving ceremony featuring a vibrant hoop dance performance, the Elsipogtog youth drum group, and a cultural showcase of Indigenous sacred masks—crafted by a next generation of mask carvers under the guidance of master artist Gordon Sparks.

Throughout the event, participants engaged in a rich program of keynote addresses, including inspiring talks by Elder Albert Marshall and Leroy Fontaine. The conference also featured a wide array of breakout sessions covering diverse and meaningful topics related to Indigenous education. One standout session was led by Mercedes Peters, who delivered an engaging and thought-provoking workshop on Treaty & Reconciliation Education, helping educators deepen their understanding of treaty relationships and responsibilities in the classroom.

In addition to the learning sessions, the conference provided ample opportunities for networking, collaboration, and reflection. A highlight of the week was a sacred naming ceremony facilitated by respected Elder Jane Meader, graciously hosted by the staff of Elsipogtog School.

Rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, the ANTEC gathering was an enriching and memorable experience that empowered educators to return to their schools with renewed purpose and a deeper connection to Indigenous perspectives in education.



Indigenous Black History



This year, we hosted two powerful professional learning sessions for middle school teachers (Grades 6–8) across ASD-N, focusing on equity, identity, and inclusive education. One session was held in Bathurst for educators from the Bathurst-Dalhousie area, and the other took place in Miramichi for the remaining teachers in the district. Both sessions featured a keynote presentation by guest speaker Oscar Baker III, a Black-Indigenous journalist, educator, and storyteller from Elsipogtog First Nation. Oscar shared deeply personal reflections on his experiences growing up as a Black-Indigenous man in New Brunswick, highlighting the complexities of navigating intersecting identities in a system that often overlooks them. He also shared his research and writing, including his impactful article published in Canada's History magazine titled [“Black and Indigenous”](#), which explores the often-erased histories and contributions of Black-Indigenous peoples in Canada. Through storytelling, critical dialogue, and historical context, Oscar challenged educators to reflect on how they engage students in conversations about race, identity, and belonging. The sessions were not only informative but deeply moving, leaving teachers with important tools and perspectives to bring back to their classrooms as they work to foster more inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments.

Support for our Francophone Tutors

We collaborated with Linda Dickson, the French Language Subject Coordinator, to deliver two tailored professional learning sessions specifically designed to support newly arrived Francophone tutors in the province. These sessions provided an introduction to foundational Indigenous knowledge, beginning with the core concept of what it means to be a Treaty person. We also offered a brief historical overview of Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

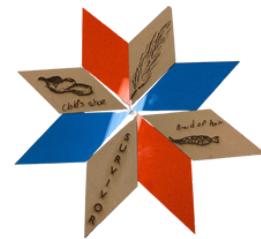


The sessions concluded with a hands-on activity that introduced participants to the Medicine Wheel teachings, along with an important discussion on cultural appreciation versus appropriation. These sessions aimed to build cultural awareness and confidence in respectfully integrating Indigenous perspectives into their work with students.

| Highlights & Initiatives

Witness Blanket Art Exhibit

From October to November, the Anglophone North School District proudly hosted the Witness Blanket Art exhibit for six weeks—the first time the powerful national monument has been displayed on the East Coast. Over 1,500 students and staff engaged with the exhibit, which is a profound tribute to the children affected by the residential school system. In addition to school visits, three evening public community events were held, providing broader access for families and local residents. The exhibit inspired a student art project that encouraged youth to reflect on truth and reconciliation through creative expression, deepening their understanding of Indigenous histories and the legacy of residential schools.



Indigenous Dance: MMIDP



Mawiamalga'tijig / Mawokahtine (the Intercultural Indigenous Dance Program) MMIIDP project is a vibrant celebration of movement, identity, and cultural expression. After hosting three rounds of auditions in Anglophone North, and others across the province, nine talented students were selected to participate—six of whom are from ASD-N! Over the next two years, these youth will have the opportunity to showcase their passion and creativity through traditional and contemporary Indigenous dance styles. They will be learning all kinds of skills. Mawiamalga'tijig / Mawokahtine (the Intercultural Indigenous Dance Program) will create a fundamental and crucial pathway for Indigenous youth in New Brunswick to access the professional expertise required to pursue further training and professional dance careers.



Song Writing Camp



The Indigenous Songwriting Camp, held March 14–16, 2025, at Red Bank Lodge in Metepenagiag First Nation, brought together 17 Indigenous youth from across ASD-N and PEI for a powerful weekend of culture, creativity, and connection. Throughout the camp, youth participated in workshops with Indigenous artists, learned traditional drumming and songwriting techniques, and engaged in cultural teachings from Elders and Knowledge Keepers. The experience culminated in a Final Showcase at Heritage Park, where each group performed original songs that reflected their identities, stories, and teachings. The camp fostered a sense of pride, community, and artistic growth for all who attended.



Photo story of the event.

Midwinter Celebrations & Mawiomis

Throughout the school year, many schools across the district proudly hosted whole-school Midwinter Celebrations and Mawiomi gatherings. These cultural events provided meaningful opportunities for all students to engage in learning about Indigenous traditions, seasonal celebrations, teachings, and historical context. At the heart of these gatherings were our Indigenous students, who were given the spotlight to proudly showcase their regalia, songs, dances, and teachings passed down through generations. These moments not only celebrated their identities but also fostered a sense of pride and belonging within the school community.

The events were inclusive and educational, offering non-Indigenous students and staff valuable insight into the rich cultural heritage of the Mi'kmaq and other First Nations. With drumming, dancing, storytelling, and shared meals, these celebrations reflected the spirit of community, respect, and relationship-building.

We are witnessing these cultural gatherings becoming more common across the district—a powerful shift that speaks to the commitment of schools to honour and incorporate Indigenous knowledge and traditions into the fabric of school life. This growing movement is made possible through strong and ongoing collaboration between school staff, district leaders, and Indigenous communities. Together, we are creating safer, more inclusive spaces where Indigenous voices, identities, and ways of knowing are not only welcomed but celebrated.



Midwinter Celebrations & Mawiomis



Reconnecting Students

One of our core priorities is supporting Indigenous students in reconnecting with their culture and identity. We collaborate closely with schools and teachers to plan meaningful events and initiatives that foster cultural understanding, empowerment, and pride. This includes creating safe, respectful spaces for ceremony and traditional practices such as smudging, talking circles, and naming ceremonies.



We also provide cultural teachings on topics such as drum making, land-based learning, traditional medicines (sweetgrass, sage, cedar, and tobacco), the 13 moons, ancient portage trails, Indigenous governance systems, Apukanjit teachings, sacred bundles, medicine pouches, and honouring the spirit. Teachers often reach out to request specific topics, and we work alongside them—and, when possible, with Elders—to deliver these teachings directly in their classrooms. This collaborative approach ensures that learning is authentic, respectful, and grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Reconnecting Students



Indigenous Content & Cross Curricular

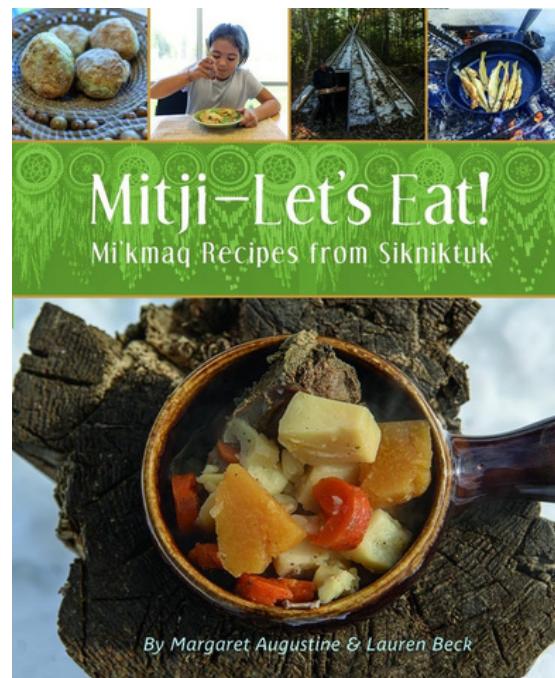


This school year, educators across ASD-N creatively embedded Indigenous content into a variety of subject areas, fostering deeper cultural understanding and hands-on learning. In Math classes, students engaged with the traditional game of Waltes, exploring probability, counting, and strategy through a culturally grounded lens. In Wabanaki Studies and Theater Arts, students participated in Treaty reenactments—bringing history to life while deepening their understanding of nation-to-nation relationships.

Home Economics and Fashion Technology classes featured experiential learning through cooking traditional foods and sewing ribbon skirts, honouring cultural teachings and skills. Students also ventured outside the classroom on field trips to art galleries and heritage parks, connecting classroom learning to local Indigenous art, history, and land-based knowledge.

In Trades and Technology courses, students learned practical skills in Welding and explored entrepreneurial thinking through Power Play programs, which also focused on teaching essential life skills such as budgeting, teamwork, and leadership. These cross-curricular initiatives exemplify our commitment to culturally responsive education that empowers Indigenous students and enriches learning for all.

Indigenous Content & Cross Curricular



Indigenous Content & Cross Curricular



Truth and Reconciliation Week



During the 2023–2024 Truth and Reconciliation Week, ASD-N honored and respected the survivors and children who never made it home from residential schools. Students and staff planned and organized a wide range of activities, including multi-school collaboration walks, assemblies, inviting Elders and residential school survivors to share their stories, theatre productions, created meaningful classroom projects, and came together in unity by wearing orange. Schools partnering with First Nation Education team to deepen understanding. These collective efforts highlighted the district's commitment to truth, reconciliation, and ongoing education as we continue to walk forward together as treaty people.



Mi'kmaq History Month

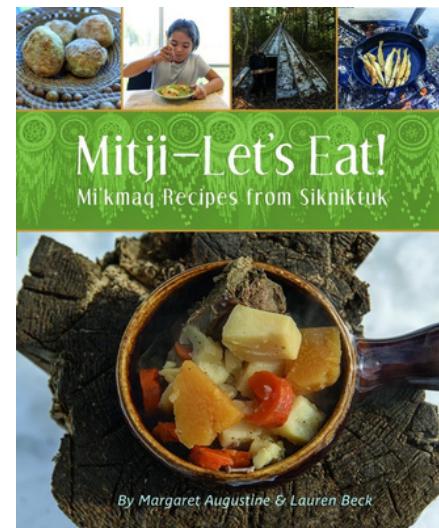


<https://mikmaghistorymonth.ca/>

To support educators and schools in engaging with this year's theme, each school in the district received a copy of **Mitji—Let's Eat! Mi'kmaq Recipes from Sikniktuk**. This beautifully written book blends storytelling and recipes, offering a cultural history of Mi'kmaq cuisine along with over 30 traditional and seasonal recipes. More than just a cookbook, Mitji serves as a powerful invitation to learn from the past, honour Indigenous knowledge, and celebrate the resilience of Mi'kmaq communities through food.

By sharing this resource, the district aimed to strengthen understanding, promote cultural pride, and support reconciliation through education rooted in lived Indigenous experiences.

In celebration of Mi'kmaw History Month 2024, the district embraced the provincial theme "Mijipjewey Na Mawa'luksi'k – Food Gathers Us Together," highlighting the deep cultural significance of Mi'kmaq foodways as a source of nourishment, identity, and intergenerational knowledge. The official Mi'kmaw History Month poster depicted this beautifully, illustrating traditional practices such as hunting, fishing, harvesting, and cooking, while emphasizing the communal and ceremonial role food plays in Mi'kmaw life. The poster served as an educational tool, sparking meaningful classroom conversations around Indigenous sustainability, food sovereignty, treaty relationships, and the importance of land-based teachings.



Community Approach to Education - ICE Centre



Advanced Welding

Students will specialize in the trade of Welding, working with a Red Seal Welder on a daily basis with a one to one ratio of welding booths to students. Students will prepare to challenge the Canadian Welding Bureau professional ticket exam by the end of this course.



Advanced Electrical

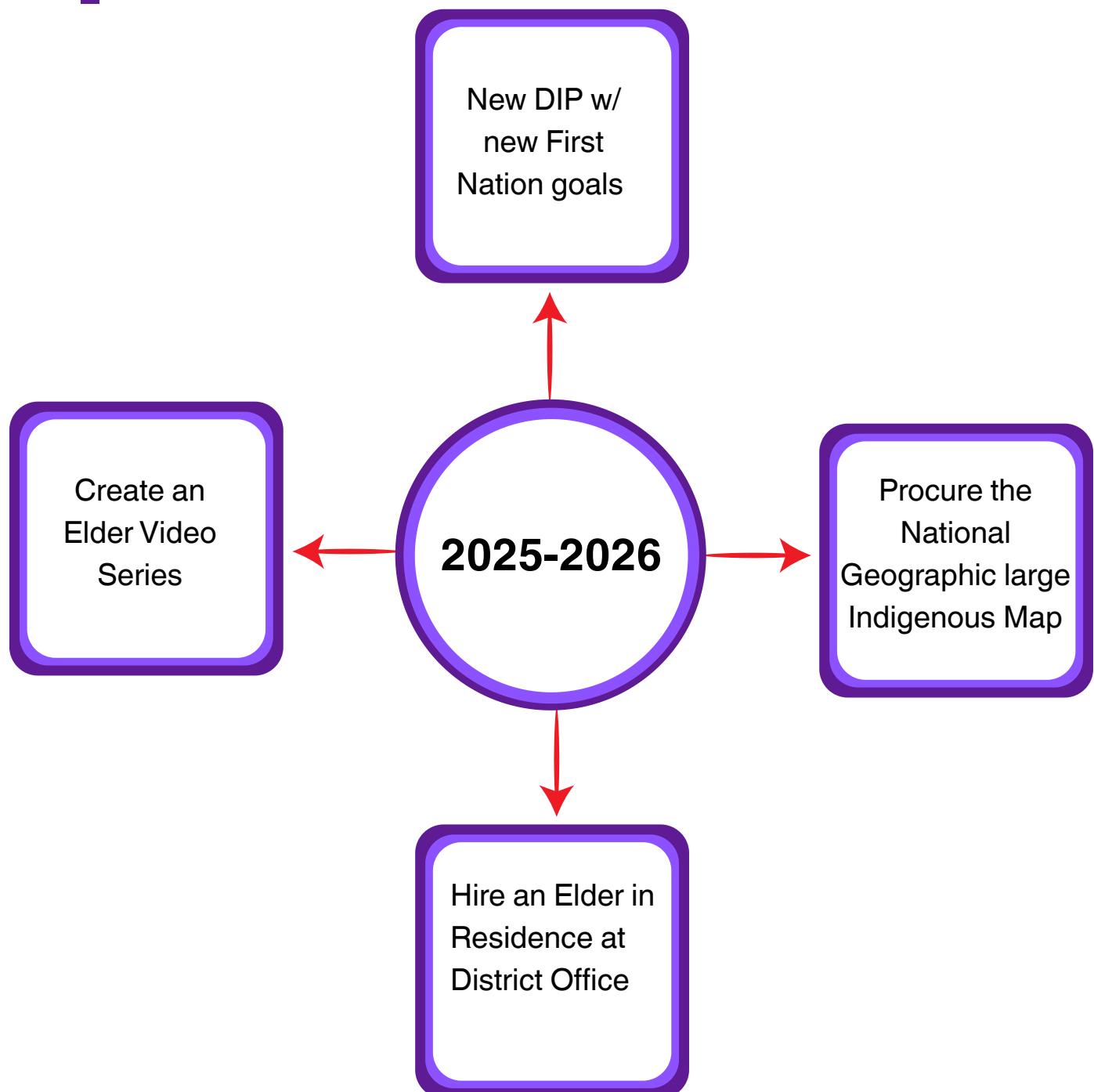
Students will explore the trades of Electrical & Residential Construction by working with a Journeyman Electrician and Construction Teacher. Students will develop hands on skills and advanced wiring skills to prepare them for the workforce.



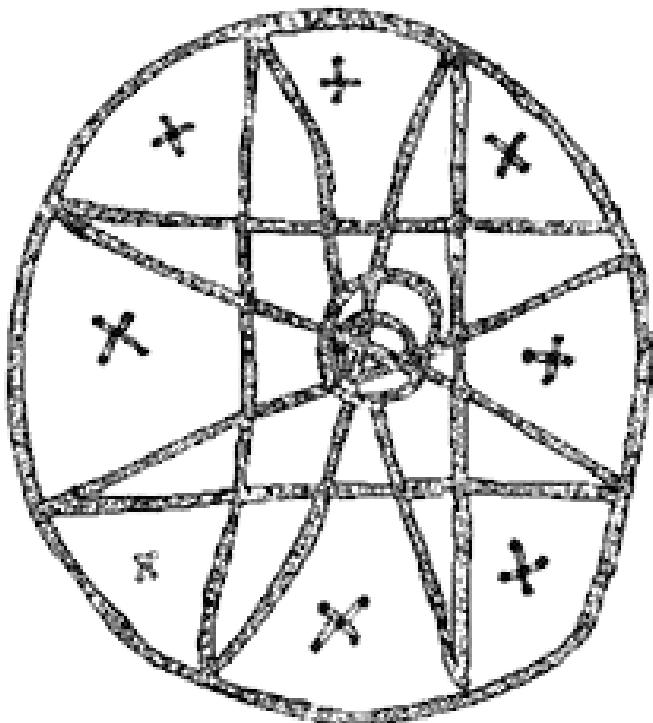
Students successfully challenged the Canadian Welding Bureau (CWB) Exam
CWB Honorable Mention in Forged by Youth Contest
CWB Grants for Safety & Equipment ~\$10,000
Built bleachers for Elsipogtog Community
Engaged students in meaningful career education
Electrical students wired the NBCC Fire Training Building as year end project

FUTURE GOALS

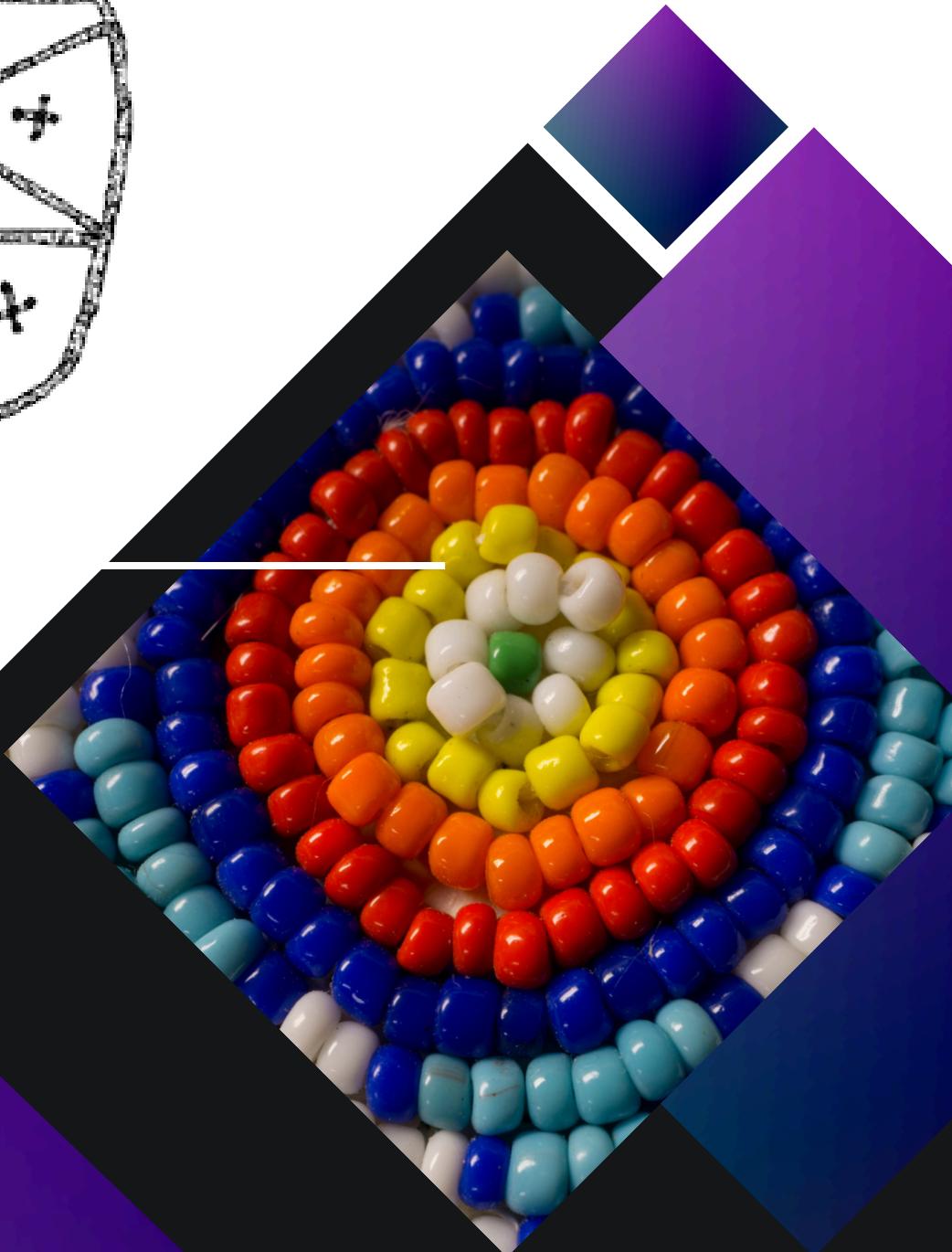
Future Initiatives:



...Continue and expand on all the great work the team is doing.



FNE_ASD_N



Wela'lioq

2024-2025