

Honesty in all you do!

Warrior Spirits

Practice respect for one another and
know we are interdependent

Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund 2019-2020 Project Booklet

Open your minds to all important
things elders speak of.

Culture and language become a
place of healing

Be community builders and use your
education to give back!

Be proud of who you are!



ANISHINABEK
EDUCATION SYSTEM

Introduction

The Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund (Fund) is an annual grant established by the Kinoomaadziwin Education Body and the Ministry of Education. The objective of the Fund is to support and invest in community and joint projects, that advance the objectives of the Master Education Agreement (MEA), through five guiding priorities:

1. Increasing knowledge and understanding of Anishinabek histories, cultures, perspectives, languages, and contributions (“Bimaadziwin”) and traditional Anishinaabe knowledge passed down from one generation to the next through ceremonial teachings (“Kendaaswin”);
2. Enhanced opportunities for the engagement and participation of Anishinabek students, families, and communities to support Anishinabek student success and well-being;
3. Facilitating the successful transition of students between Anishinabek First Nations’ schools and schools in the Provincially-Funded Education System;
4. Innovation and introduction of leading practices in Indigenous education; and
5. Supporting collaboration between the Anishinabek Education System (AES) and School Boards, including data and information sharing.

2019-2020 was the second year of the Fund. Twenty projects were supported in 15 Participating First Nations, totaling \$609,255.00.

Over the last year, the Fund has positively affected students across the Anishinabek Education System (AES). Students have been engaged and invested in the opportunities. Feedback from the youth has been positive and uplifting. Many students indicated their self-esteem, sense of culture and identity have been solidified through the projects.

The objective of the Fund is to support and invest in community and joint projects and initiatives, that are locally-developed and that advance the objectives of the MEA. Equally important, is that through the Fund, communities can build on the local vision for education, with a focus on Bimaadziwin and Kendaaswin.

The information about the projects are categorized as follows:

- Graduation coach/indigenous tutor projects/student support
- Language
- Culture/Indigenous Knowledge
- Student development
- Community based

Contents

Introduction	3
Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation – Giizhigong	4
Indigenous Academic Tutor/Education Counselor	5
Indigenous Education Counselor/Tutor	5
Bimaadizowin Centre – Living the Good Life	6
Graduation Coach Model	6
Community Memoirs Resource Development	7
Supporting Successful Education Journeys	7
Lunaape Language Teacher	9
Revitalizing Our Language	9
It’s Our Time (AFN Resources)	10
Epiichi-maamwii-yaaying (While we’re all Together)	11
Secondary Student Leadership	12
Numeracy and Robotics	13
Strength Based Approach - A School Wide Approach	13
Education Poster Campaign Initiative	14
In closing, some of the learnings	15

Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation – Giizhigong

Target Audience: Students, parents, families, community, educators and school staff

Project Summary

Giizhigong is a second phase project. In the first year, an Indigenous classroom at the Port Perry High School and a Restorative Practice Model (well-being) was developed. The focus of Giizhigong was to support healthy relationships and well-being for First Nation students through the presence of an Indigenous Resource person along with the Durham District School Board's Resource Staff. Another focus was the development and delivery of lesson plans based on First Nation community facts and the co-creation of a document on "Indigenous Student Well-Being and Success".

Student Reflection and Success Stories

Two students stood out. These students were struggling and close to dropping out of high school. They felt they did not fit in and quickly began to succeed once the classroom was open and available to them. They began to attend school more regularly and met the expectations of their chosen courses and made more social connections in the high school. They expressed a new feeling of belonging and hope. Both students ended the year successfully. This contributed to a feeling of increased self-esteem and feelings of accomplishment.

The Indigenous Room became a touchstone of Hope for Indigenous Youth and their Families. A familiar and safe space in a sometimes-unwelcoming environment. It represented a movement toward reconciliation to ensure better outcomes for Indigenous youth to ensure they are safe, free to learn, grow and live-in dignity and respect while achieving their goals.

“Sense of belonging and hope”

This project saw ten consistent students attending the indigenous classroom. The students expressed how the indigenous classroom made a positive change in their daily school life:

- The indigenous classroom was a place where support could be found
- Sharing knowledge
- Sharing perspectives
- Encouraging
- Nurturing
- Place of resolve
- Fulsome and meaningful discussions for students that may have had the opportunity to do so in other spaces



Indigenous Academic Tutor/Education Counselor

Participating First Nation: Biigtigong Nishnaabeg

Target Audience: High School students

Project Summary

Students at Biigtigong Nishnaabeg attend elementary school on-reserve up until grade 8. Students then attend high school off-reserve in Marathon. An Indigenous Academic Tutor-Education Counselor (Counselor) at the high school assists Biigtigong Nishnaabeg students make this transition. The counselor also provided academic support, educational guidance, cultural support, social/mental health referrals and advocate for students when required. The Counselor

or also provided life skills mentoring, developed a personal transition plan for each student and met with each student on a regular basis.

Success Stories

The counselor at the high school provided the students with comfort as the counselor was someone from “home”. Students felt they had another resource and someone to communicate for them, when needed.

Indigenous Education Counselor/Tutor

Participating First Nation: Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek

Target Audience: High School Students

Project Summary

Indigenous Academic Tutor and Advocate (IATA) which supported Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek students as they transferred from Grade 8 into the local off-reserve high school. The IATA provided academic support, educational guidance, cultural support, social/mental health referrals and student advocate. The IATA assisted with the successful transition into high school, provided a supportive and welcoming environment for the students into high school, and worked with high school teacher/staff to jointly develop a standard transition plan for each student.

- Three students received their Ontario Secondary School Diploma
- One grade 11 student will graduate in June 2021
- Two grade 10 students had a 92% success rate throughout the school year
- Five grade 9 students had a 92% success rate throughout the school year
- Students obtained 52 out of the possible 56 credits

Success Stories

The IATA provided students with tutoring, an advocate in the school, assistance with day to day struggles, a familiar face and a voice for their concerns, issues and successes.

Future Needs

Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek students identified that student support and transportation to sporting events and extracurricular activities are needed. Students also identified that laptops and printers are required with the pandemic.

Bimaadizowin Centre – Living the Good Life

Participating First Nation: Long Lake #58

Target Audience: Elementary and High School Students

Project Summary

Building on the work from the first year, the Bimaadizowin Centre's focus was to provide a learning environment for students who are more successful in a non-contemporary classroom setting. This approach has allowed for the development of individual action plans that support the academic, physical, social, mental and emotional needs of elementary and high school students.



Success Stories

The Bimaadizowin Centre saw an increase in students' reading levels as students became more comfortable with literacy. Students participated in land-based activities which increased their land-based skills and knowledge. Students were modelled positive relationships with adults through various activities.



Graduation Coach Model

Participating First Nation: Moose Deer Point

Target Audience: High School Students

Project Summary

Moose Deer Point Students had the support of a dedicated staff person at Parry Sound High School and Northern Secondary School. The focus of the support was to build supportive relationships with students, families and communities. Mentoring with student focused academic goals, transition support into and through the provincially-funded education system with an emphasis on strength-based practices and community and cultural connectedness.

Success Stories

The Graduation Coach established and fostered many good relationships with the students, parents and the community. From this relationship came support to the students. This support proved to be beneficial to the students. It was noted that there was improvement in attendance, credit accumulation, graduation rate and student engagement. Typically, in past years, senior students with spares in between classes wandered around the school. With the Graduation Coach in the school, students visit the Hive (room dedicated to the students) to complete their work. This is a testament that the Hive and the Graduation Coach has created a stable, supportive, safe and comfortable space.

Community Memoirs Resource Development

Participating First Nation: Aundeck Omni Kaning

Target Audience: Community members, teachers and students

Project Summary

This was the second phase of the Memories Project. The First phase saw completion of the Aundeck Omni Kaning Community video. The second phase saw a completion of a curriculum resource with the intent to assist teachers and staff to implement content that is specific to Aundeck Omni Kaning's history and story as told by community members. The curriculum resource will be used in secondary schools, targeting Indigenous/Canadian History and Indigenous English classes.

Success Stories

Through the development of the resource there was an increased community connection through working with Aundeck Omni Kaning community members. Once the curriculum becomes active throughout the schools, students will have an increased understanding of their own history as told through the lens of their own people. This will create a sense of pride, identity, self and community. Ultimately creating a better sense of well-being and belonging within educational institutions.

Supporting Successful Education Journeys

Participating First Nation: Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation

Target Audience: Elementary and High School Students

Project Summary

Development of a First Nation Student Success Model that recognized and reflected the unique transitions for Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation students who reside on the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation. The First Nation operates a school on-reserve for JK to grade 5, then students must travel to school for grades 6 to 12 off-reserve. Students travel to school off-reserve by a bus ride on-reserve, a ferry-ride to the mainland and then a second bus ride to the school. In the winter, majority of the high school students board in homes on the mainland. The Student Success Model included expanded programming: literacy camp, post-secondary counselling, visiting Elders, drum training, beading, pow-wow dancing workshops, traditional teachings, daily smudge and talking circles, motivational speakers, and a comprehensive tracking system for monitoring student achievement.

Success Stories

This project had a strong emphasis on identity-building including cultural supports, supporting parent, family and community engagement. Students felt they had the supports needed in order to transition from the school on Georgina Island to the school on the mainland.

See next page for poster.



AASGAABWITAADIMANG WENJISHING KINOOMAAGE BIMOSEWIN SUPPORTING SUCCESSFUL EDUCATION JOURNEYS



The Chippewas of Georgina Island have had an increasing number of high school graduates and post secondary graduates over the past ten years. Our students experience unique journeys including transitions to new settings at an early age. A part of every school day for our students in Grade 6 and beyond, involves modes of transportation to and from school that are unique to living on Georgina Island. The following is a brief summary of our current education system:

Our Kindergarten to Grade 5 students attend Waabgon Gamig First Nation School on the island where small class sizes provide the opportunity for our students to receive individual attention, building on their skills, talents and gifts. Our students take part in Ojibwe language, culture, and land-based learning activities/ programming that contribute to their understanding of their

community, and who they are as First Nation people. Most of our students move into the provincial education system in Grade 6, where they attend Morning Glory Public School for Grades 6-8. Partnership activities and programs with Morning Glory, and strong individualized transition support from staff at Waabgon Gamig, help students with this first major transition from a small school that is close to home to a much larger school with many more students.



All students must travel from the island for a high school education and the majority of our students attend high school in Sutton. A typical school day means an early start catching the bus on the island, a ferry ride to the mainland, then catching a second bus to the school. Given the travel conditions in winter, most students board in homes on the mainland, and come home on the weekends. Again, a unique set of circumstances and challenges that are addressed through a unique set of student supports that are provided through the combined efforts of staff in both education systems.

Our members who choose to pursue postsecondary education receive individualized counselling and academic/career guidance counselling prior to beginning their programs and throughout their postsecondary experience as needed. Strong partnerships including with York Region District School Board, our partner school board, and the schools mentioned above, support the services that are being provided to our students in their unique education journeys.

The supports provided by staff from both systems working closely together have been of great benefit to our students. These student supports, including the unique transitions supports, have played a key role and will continue to play a key role in the successful education journeys of our students from the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation.



Lunaape Language Teacher

Participating First Nation: Munsee-Delaware

Target Audience: High School Students

Project Summary

Munsee-Delaware students have not had the opportunity to take a Lunaape Language course. This project saw three schools within the Thames Valley District School Board offering a Lunaape Language course.

Success Stories

History, culture and language is important to building self-esteem and self-confidence in students. For the students to know who they are and where they come from will help them to know where they are going. The history and the language of the Munsee-Delaware people is unique and different than surrounding First Nations. Students were proud to receive instruction in their own language as opposed to learning French or Ojibway, which they were normally required to learn.

Three students at The London School received the Lunaape Language Credit. This was a historical event as this was the first time ever, a Lunaape Language Credit was offered at the Thames Valley District School Board schools.

Revitalizing Our Language

Participating First Nation: Whitefish River First Nation

Target Audience: Students, staff and families of Shawanosowe School

Project Summary

The focus of Revitalizing our Language was to increase language use in staff, students and families. Also to increase traditional cultural opportunities within the on-reserve school through increased language learning opportunities, workshops and activities.

Success Stories

This project provided staff, students and families with the opportunity to build on their knowledge of Anishinaabemowin and participate in a variety of cultural activities. These opportunities saw an increased knowledge of language and culture in all staff and students. The increased understanding of the Ojibway language and culture within the school staff has better served the students at Shawanosowe School.

Staff of Shawanosowe School met weekly for language classes. These classes were a great team building exercise for the staff. Further, thirteen staff members enrolled in a Forest School practitioners as a team which gave the staff the skills necessary to teach on the land.

It's Our Time (AFN Resources)

Participating First Nation: Nipissing First Nation

Target Audience: Students, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, staff and community

Project Summary

It's Our Time (AFN Resources) focus was to implement the "It's Our Time" curriculum and resources. The curriculum and resources objective was to enhance treaty education and the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action.

Students and staff participated in focused Professional Development days, guest speaker events and increased access to resources. Teachers had dedicated time to explore and co-create unit and lesson plans and a clear programming map of First Nation content delivered in all high school courses. The Majority of the project focused on developing a "Canoe Building" unit that could be used in the Green Industries class.



Success Stories

Students at Nibisiing Secondary School had access to new resources. Waubgeshig Rice's book – Moon of the Crusted snow was integrated into the grade 11 English class. Waubgeshig Rice met with the students virtually to discuss the novel.



Students were able to partake in land-based learning. Students learned local knowledge and teachings from Elder Larry McLeod and began building a canoe.

Epiichi-maamwii-yaaying (While we're all Together)

Participating First Nation: Wahnapiatae First Nation

Target Audience: Students, staff, teachers, Board Trustees and community members

Project Summary

The focus of While we're Together was to implement and deliver cultural education through workshops and seminars. Staff and students participated in four sessions of Cultural Mindfulness Awareness. The Cultural Mindfulness Awareness workshops supported initiatives to increase knowledge and understanding of the history of residential schools, traditional medicines, meditation, Turtle Island, Seven Grandfather Teachings, the medicine wheel and Mother Earth.

Success Stories

Students really appreciated and learned a lot from the Cultural Mindfulness Awareness. Students and staff were asked to comment on what they learned. The following are their comments:

- Learn to respect myself and others more
- Love and kindness is important to show
- The importance of women
- Not to be ashamed of my culture
- Important to have meditation and silence for 15 minutes each day
- Why has this never been taught in Canadian history?
- Embrace what we already have
- Remember the ripple effect
- To be more understanding
- Residential schools and the painful facts
- Everyone comes with a story
- History continues to affect our present
- Acceptance, compassion and understanding
- Teach my own kids elements of today
- How to look beyond behaviors
- How long residential schools were open



Secondary Student Leadership

Participating First Nation: Aamjiwnaang First Nation

Audience: Secondary Students

Project Summary

Students participated in cycles of learning with Elders, community partners and educators for the purpose of learning and growth in culture and leadership. The learning cycles included a planning phase; a learning phase; a reflection phase; and an application & action phase.

Student Reflection

- Becoming more aware of what is happening today and what has happened in history is important for us
- You need skill to help people not give up and the knowledge to help/talk about what is going on so other people can learn too
- To be a leader means that you need to not give up and always encourage people
- The impact that was made at our school was very amazing (Orange Shirt day)

Educator/Community Partner Feedback

- I learned more deeply about the long term impact of residential schools on indigenous cultures
- I learned that our students have a better understanding of residential schools than most adults. The message is getting through
- It prompted conversation about resilience
- The value of this day is unmeasurable
- It was an honor to be part of truth and reconciliation in schools

Student Hopes for Future Learning Opportunities

- Continue to provide learning connections in classrooms
- Language opportunities
- Drum making and learning songs
- Beading
- Making salve
- Learn how to make traditional food
- Create awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls



Numeracy and Robotics

Participating First Nation: Whitefish River First Nation

Target Audience: Students, staff and families of Shawanosowe School

Project Summary

Numeracy and Robotics' focus was the development of students' numeracy skills through robotics and coding. Shawanosowe School created a robotics team and had 43 students participate on the team.

Success Stories

Teachers have noted that students are engaged in their learning. Students were excited about math and the coding/robotics helped with the engagement process. The students joined their very first robotics club. Currently, Shawanosowe School has robotic kits available for all classes so students can build on the skills developed throughout the project.

Strength Based Approach - A School Wide Approach

Participating First Nation: Whitefish River First Nation

Target Audience: Students, staff and families of Shawanosowe School

Project Summary

A parent/family engagement project that focuses on a strength-based approach to student learning and addressing their needs. This project included training for staff, evening sessions with parents, assessment of student achievements, archery training and tournament and a health day.

Parents showcased their strengths in the classroom by hosting a workshop on their skills. Each parent chose a skill they wanted to showcase to the students. This taught the students that everyone has their own strengths and to build on those strengths

Success Stories

The students enjoyed the partnership between the school, community and home. Students have greatly benefited from the implementation of a school-wide strength based approach. Teachers have taken the time to get to know their students' strengths and utilize these strengths in the classroom to assist and engage the students.

Education Poster Campaign Initiative

Participating First Nation: Nipissing First Nation

Target audience: Elementary, secondary and post-secondary students and community

Project Summary

Along the north shore of Lake Nipissing is Nipissing First Nation (NFN), home to the Nbisiiing Anishi-naabeg. A community where each individual does their part to make NFN stronger as a whole.

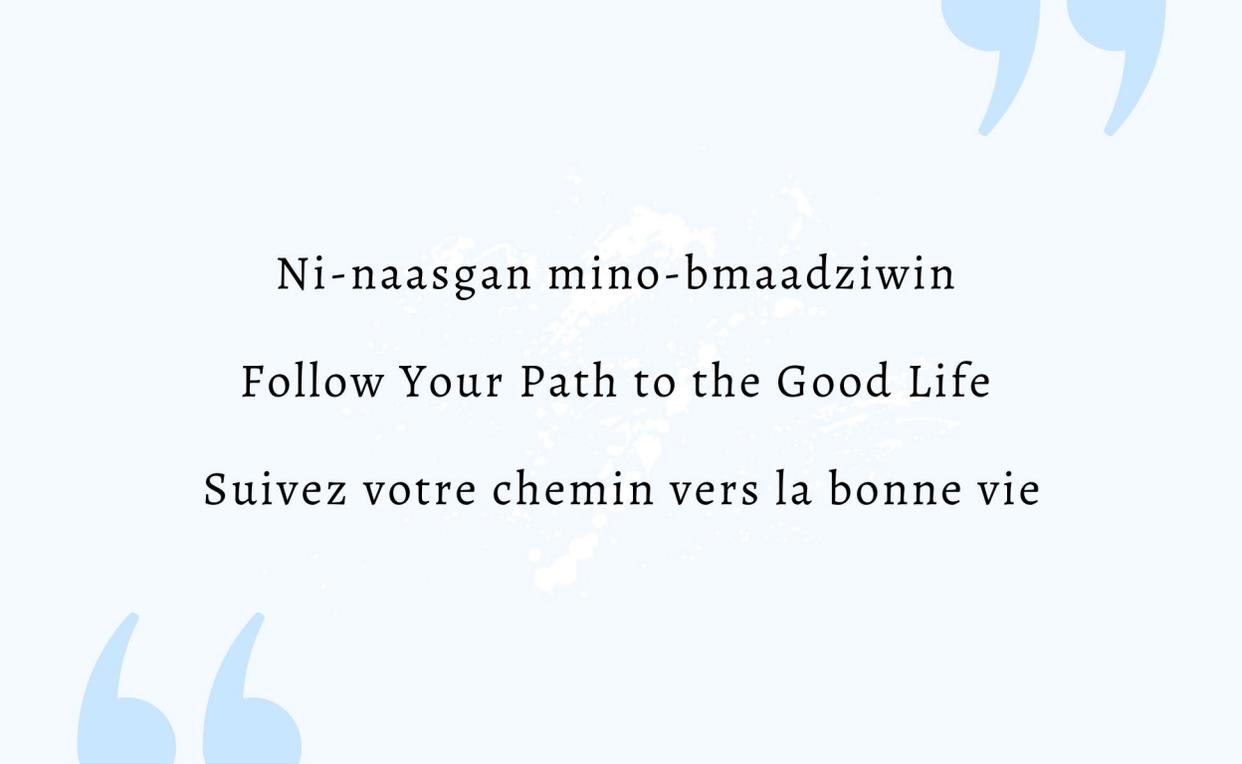
Within Nipissing and the surrounding area, there is a need for local resources that reflect our land and people, and considers future generations.

To promote education, lifelong learning, and local NFN members in various careers (Indigenous knowledge, language, health, trades etc.), the NFN Education department created a poster. This poster was designed in partnership with Canadore College, who provided graphic design services from an Indigenous graduate.

This poster is a celebration of local First Nation leaders in their career fields and captures community-based role models as mentors. Students will recognize the faces and aspire to follow their path, making connections and discovering mentorship opportunities.

The slogan was inspired from community mentors' messages and selected by the NFN Education Committee, which is made up of educational leaders and knowledge keepers. We all strive to live mino-bmaadziwin (the Good Life), and we each walk our unique paths to achieve it.





Ni-naasgan mino-bmaadziwin
Follow Your Path to the Good Life
Suivez votre chemin vers la bonne vie

In closing, some of the learnings:

- A dedicated space in schools is important to Anishinabek student well-being, offers a sense of balance
- Having the support of a caring adult such as an Indigenous Support Worker, makes a difference in the motivation and confidence of students
- Students thrive with land-based learning opportunities
- Transitions supports make a difference
- Activities rooted in Bimaadziwin and Kendaaswin provide the cornerstone to Anishinabek education.
- Hands-on, experiential approached to instruction are proven to be most effective with Anishinabek students who traditionally learned by watching and doing

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