

GRAND COUNCIL TREATY #3 BULLETIN



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Education policy

The month of September has been a really busy time for Grand Council Treaty #3 Education program. As students return to school and schools and educators are kept busy trying to keep with them, it has been interesting to see what new and exciting changes are scheduled to take place. I look forward to meeting more of you in the upcoming school year.

Language

Language has been identified as one of the top priorities in Treaty #3. Ogichidaakwe Diane Kelly's commitment to the revitalization of Anishnaabemowin in our area will ensure that our children will benefit to their greatest potential.

The language partnership between Lakehead University and Grand Council Treaty #3 which began in 2006 under the former leadership of Ogichidaa Arnold Gardner continues today. Elders from the 4 directions of Treaty #3; Darlene Bob, Nancy Jones, Betty Napish, and Dorothy Parenteau have been hired to conduct surveys in First Nation communities in the Treaty #3 area. The end result will be a 15 year Language Plan for Anishinaabemowin in Grand Council Treaty #3 to inform policy decisions.

A Language Conference will be held in Kenora in November 18 & 19, 2009. The final report is expected to be completed by June 2010.

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Anishnaabek Mushkegowuk Onkwehonwe Language Commission in Ontario continues to work on establishing their organization. While they work on recognition as a service delivery organization, they have been seeking a host community that will administer funds without charging an administration fee.

The board will be receiving training and will work on establishing policies to work with. Amos Keye has recently stepped down from the Executive Committee and a new member will be selected to sit on the executive at the next meeting on November 6 & 7. The head office has recently been relocated to a new building still within Six Nations. Jim Green from Bimose Tribal Council has been the Treaty 3 representative attending language meetings.

Education conferences

Grand Council Treaty #3 hosted 2 education conferences in the month of September. It was good to meet people that could attend. The conference provided a forum for Treaty #3 educators to share their concerns and identify needs for providing their students with quality education and programs. Educators identified the need to support our Native teachers, Native Language teachers and the Native Language programs through the development of a curriculum to be used throughout all schools in the Treaty #3 area, and a resource centre which would facilitate access to resources. Also discussed was the development of a Treaty #3 school board.

The first conference was hosted by Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation on September 3 & 4, 2009 at the Golden Eagle Casino. Researcher Marlene Starr made a brief presentation of her findings based on the surveys she has received and the community visits she has completed. Presentations from organizations external to Treaty #3 were planned to provide Educators with information from other regions. A bulletin specific to this conference was developed and is available to those interested.

“A School for Our Own” was presented by Irene Linklater from the Southeast Collegiate in Winnipeg. The Southeast Tribal Council saw a need to support students attending high school outside of their home communities and established a boarding school providing culturally appropriate support to meet their needs. “Immersion Schools – Do They Work” was presented by Dorothy Lazure from Akwesasne who provided information on the language immersion programs which discussed the process they used in their community. INAC Presentation on Funding Education - Barry King & Andrea Cahill, Funding Officers were invited to conduct a presentation and to discuss issues that educators had.

The 2nd conference was hosted by the Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation on September 22 & 23, 2009 at their round house. The community round house is located in a beautiful location overlooking a beach and their newly developed powwow grounds. For those who have never visited this community I would suggest a visit during their annual powwow next year, you will be amazed by the view.

Associate Executive Director Gwen Merrick presented for the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre which represents 5 Nations, 57 schools, and 49 First Nations. She shared information on the historical development of the organization, the problems and solutions they have experienced and some of the achievements they have made.

The 2nd presentation was by former principal Myra Laramée of the Niji Makwa Elementary school. Located in the north end of Winnipeg, the school incorporates traditional teachings of the Cree, Ojibway and Dakota with provincial curriculum in order to provide a culturally sound education for First Nation students.

Post secondary education

Treaty #3 representatives attended a post-secondary education forum hosted by Chiefs of Ontario in Toronto, ON. The purpose of the forum was to follow up and discuss the Audit of the PSE program and to provide feedback. INAC representatives were in attendance and participated in the activities but did not provide any confirmation of the rumoured changes to how funds would be accessed by first nation students. Participants from southern Ontario are adamant that post-secondary funding must be recognized as an Aboriginal right. Treaty 3 will work on this issue to have post-secondary education maintained as our treaty right.

Also briefly discussed was Resolution 09/15 which mandates FNECU to develop the process to deal with the post-secondary funding. Treaty 3 leaders had concerns with this resolution and were not in full support, however the resolution states it was passed by consensus. The response was no opposition was received through the formal process.

Special education

The funding formula is currently being reviewed by the FNECU with Dobi-Dawn Frenette of Nishnawbe Aski Nation taking the lead. The final report is to be presented at the next All Ontario Chief Conference.

Surveys were distributed to First Nations in Ontario with Debbie Lipscombe as the representative for the Treaty #3 area. April Pawless was hired as a consultant to provide the final report on special education.

The revision to the special education funding formula resulted in the loss of \$3 million to the treaty 3 area. Of concern to First Nations is the fact that many are reporting surpluses to INAC despite the increasing need for special education funding. Lack of resources, waiting periods to see qualified specialists

Tuition agreements

INAC representatives have been working on the development of a tuition agreement toolkit. The final product will be made available this year and will be distributed to first nations.