

# Helping Students Achieve Success



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# Biigtigong Ndoonjibaa

The screenshot shows the 'Community' page of the Biigtigong Nishnaabeg website. The header includes navigation links: ABOUT US, LEADERSHIP, NEWS / JOBS, DEPARTMENTS, COMMUNITY, and CONTACT. The main heading is 'Community' with a sub-link 'HOME > COMMUNITY'. A sidebar on the left contains an 'Overview' section with a list of links: Overview, Community Services, Community Gatherings, Health Services, Emergency Services, and First Nations Elections Act. The main content area is titled 'About our First Nation' and contains text about the community's location and historical status.

ABOUT US LEADERSHIP NEWS / JOBS DEPARTMENTS COMMUNITY CONTACT

BIIGTIGONG NISHNAABEG

## Community

HOME > COMMUNITY

### Overview

- + Overview
- + Community Services
- + Community Gatherings
- + Health Services
- + Emergency Services
- + First Nations Elections Act

### About our First Nation

Biigtigong Nishnaabeg is an Anishnaabe community located in the Superior Region. The First Nation maintains that it was not a signatory to the Robinson-Superior Treaty of 1850 and have maintained their aboriginal title since time immemorial.







# Biigtigong Nishnaabeg Education





List in your notes for later

What Key Components to Student  
Success does your  
community/organization offer?  
Are there any targeted specifically for  
First Nation students?

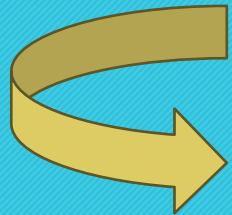


# What do the stats say?

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The 2016 census showed that 41.9% of First Nations 18-24 *living on reserve* had a high school diploma

For First Nations living *off-reserve* this figure went from 68.4% (2016) to 73.3 % (2021)



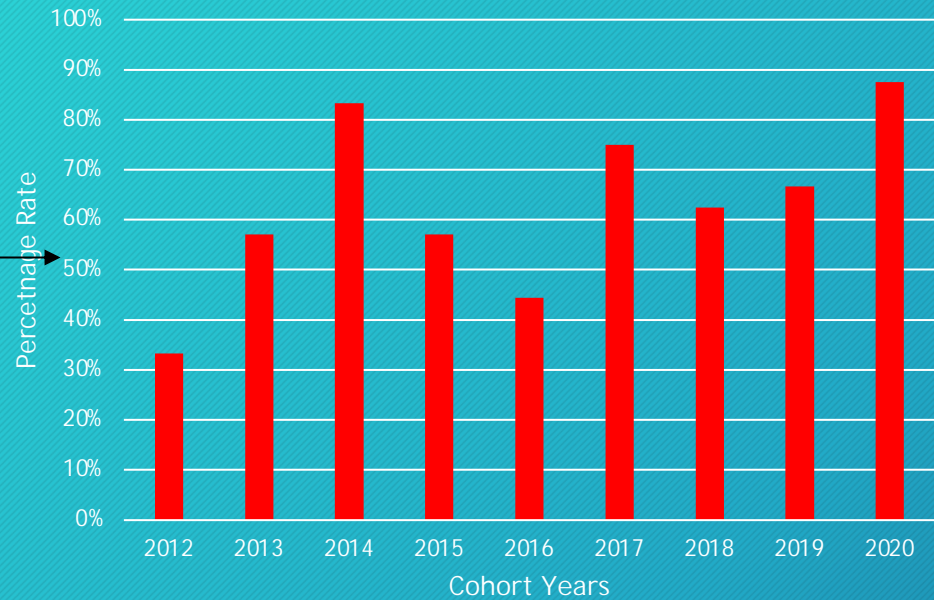
The 2021 census showed that 52.2% of First Nations 18-24 *living on reserve* had a high school diploma

Compared to non-Indigenous 87.7% (2016) and 89.6 % (2021)

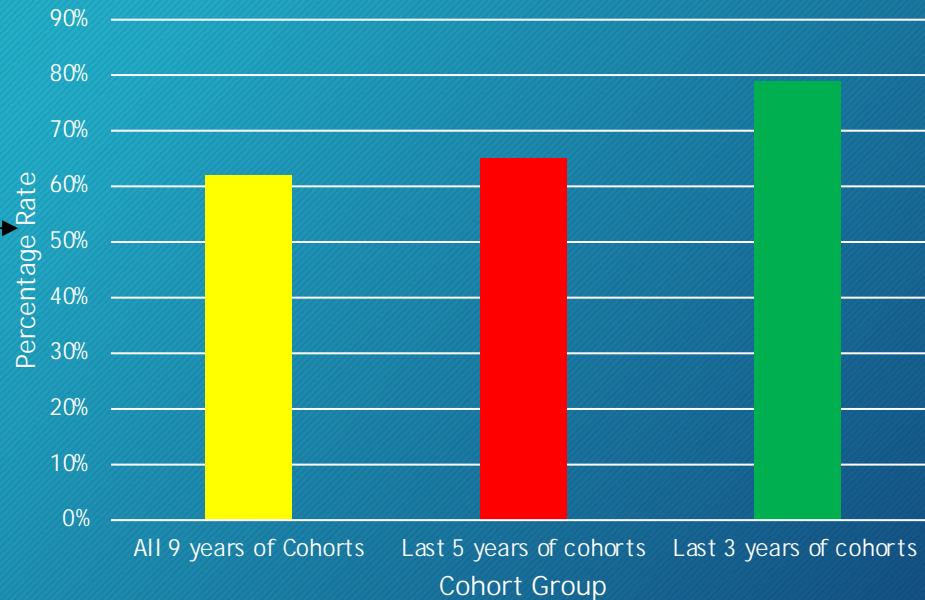


# BN GRADE 12 GRADUATION RATES

Grade 12 Grad Rates for Students Living on-Reserve (Biigtong Nishnaabeg)



Average Success Rate Among Grouped Cohorts



What barriers to student success  
is your organization/community  
challenged with? Are these  
barriers especially impacting  
First Nation students?

List them

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# What is Biigtigong Nishnaabeg Doing? 8



# Jurisdiction

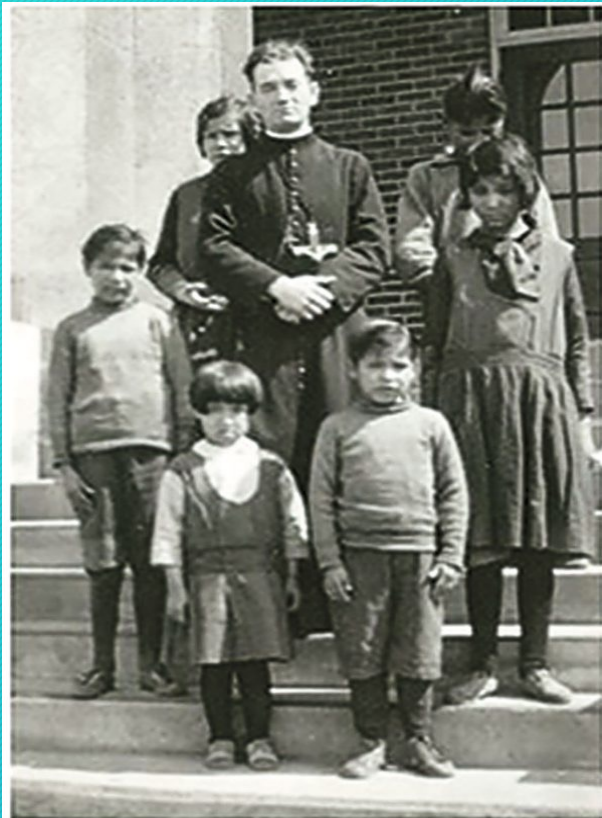
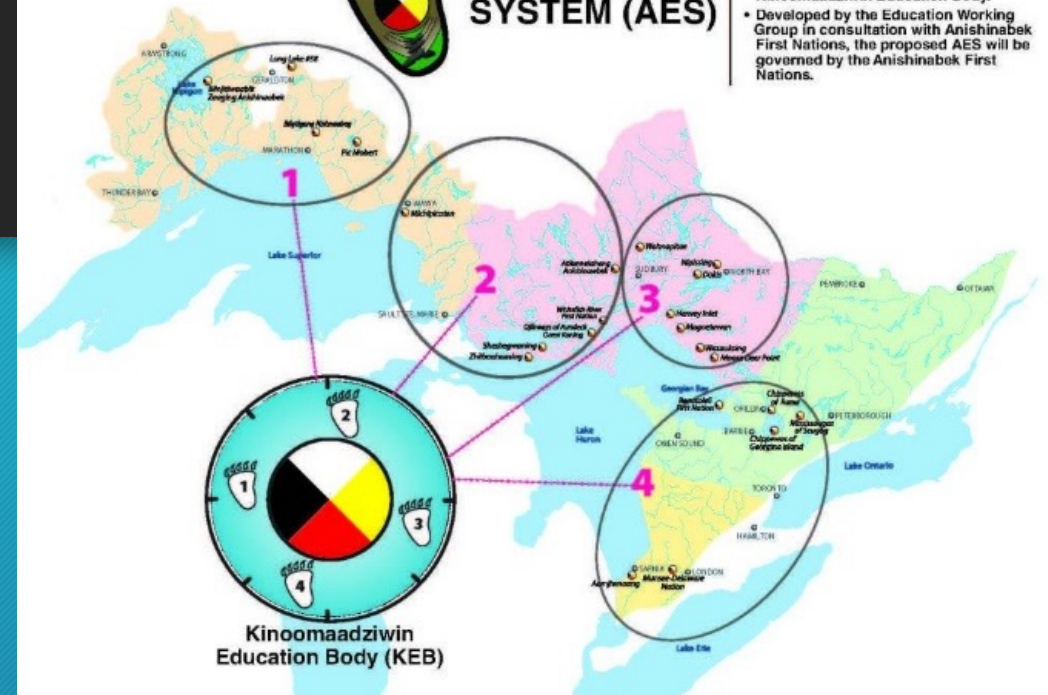


Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada



## ANISHINABEK EDUCATION SYSTEM (AES)

- This illustration shows the Anishinabek First Nations organized into four Regional Education Councils. It also shows their central coordinating Kinoomaadziwin Education Body.
- Developed by the Education Working Group in consultation with Anishinabek First Nations, the proposed AES will be governed by the Anishinabek First Nations.





# Exercising Autonomy

*“The time has come for radical change in Indian Education. Our aim is to make education relevant to the philosophy and needs of the Indian people. We want education to give our children a strong sense of identity, with confidence in their personal worth and ability.” (Indian Control of Indian Education Policy Paper, 1972, p. 3)*



“The education currently being provided by the public school system falls short in what we need to be providing for our children. We have to define the narrative. Learning their identity, spiritual values and teachings, and skills for survival should be the foundation of their education”. Dr. David Courchene Jr. 2001



# Good Governance

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- Biigtigong Nishnaabeg changed some of the roles of Chief and Council almost 20 years ago
- “let the experts in the field manage the department, that’s why we hire them” give the authority over budgets/direction
- Community Advisory committees were created for each department, portfolio system created for chief and council, the input from community was just as valid and heard as was the council member attached
- Terms of Reference, Code of Ethics, Policies and Procedures, System standards, Education Law development







# Relationship

- BNs community approach to education involves more than the school and parents
- Inter department support and collaboration (Health Department, Social Service Department, Economic Development, Lands/Resources,
- Direct services of mental and physical health, social and health presentations embedded, resources, joint special initiatives (healthy food program, oral health, winter clothing), sharing of resources, assistance in meeting needs of students,
- External relationships are just as important (District School Board and Education Service Agreements, AES System Regional Council and networking, AETS (employment and training)





# Prioritize

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- Biigtigong Nishnaabeg leadership always prioritized Education within their powers.
- Own source revenue went directly to the Education budget without objection for almost 20 years
- Internal policies changed, “no grade 12- no employment”
- Opened own private high school inspected by the province





# Consistency

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- Staff (not having a union isn't always a bad thing!)
- Policies
- Procedures
- Governance
- Community/parent involvement
- Not always run with hierarchy mindset because you have to do what needs to be done to give students the possible best





# Innovation/Support/Incentive

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- Locally developed credits - Canoe trip along our territorial routes, travel for credit, other land-based credits, political leadership course,
- Healthy food budget, school supplies, technology supply, secondary & elementary student success coaches, graduation incentive, credit success gifts, tutoring, advocacy, summer employment tied to success
- Create certification/diploma/degree programs with colleges and universities that directly impact Education staff (EA programs, Master Degree -Land Based Learning, Bachelor of Education program, all community based in order to maintain our system standards, customize whatever our community/staff needs to meet the needs of students





# Changing the Curriculum

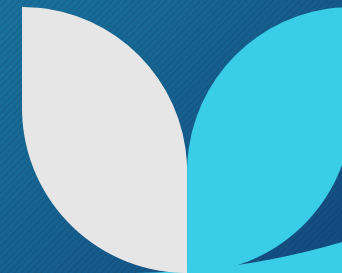
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- **“the current curriculum in Canada projects European knowledge as universal, normative and ideal....It marginalizes or excludes Aboriginal cultures, voices, and ways of knowing.” (Battiste, 2009, p.193)**
- **Unless a child learns about the forces which shape him: the history of his people, their values and customs, their language, he will never really know himself or his potential as a human being (NIB, 1972, p. 9)**
- “The western secular system of education appears to be blind to the spirituality that infuses or underlies Aboriginal epistemology and thus culturally appropriate education for Aboriginal students” Curwen Doige (2003) identifies the importance of spirituality within education in her article, “A Missing Link: Between Traditional Aboriginal Education and the Western System of Education.”





- **“What do you want your children to learn about being Anishnaabeg?”**





- 25 Paper review that included indigenous groups of 10 countries that measured different domains
- “72% of the studies reported that young First Nation people who were more culturally engaged had higher psychological well-being...and their cultural identity is enhanced” ..
- ....programs that aided in this included culturally responsive education , that incorporates cultural perspectives, language, values, and knowledge into the curriculum, school climate and assessment





- *“In our school, once students knew their identity, they excelled. Nurturing identity and culture is very important – growing young people in an environment where being Indigenous was negative but turning that into a positive is re-imagining the story for all Indigenous students.”*





# Key Features

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- Expectations of Learning Based on Seasons
- Emphasis on Experiences connected to land
- Emphasis on Elders/Parents/Community
- Takes into account the different role the “teacher” now has in some of the learning
- Leveling of students is not by single grade level rather K-Gr. 4 and Gr. 5-Gr. 8
- Each of the sections provides background knowledge for the users from a spiritual sense..how things are tied to the spiritual beliefs and values





# Features continued....

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- The core numeracy and literacy provincial expectations are still followed...all other subjects are secondary to the developed curriculum.
- Sacred stories are provided and referenced throughout
- Assessing from a different lens
- Divided among 5 themes
- Anishnaabemowin can be easily immersed in concepts





# BIIGTIGONG NISHNAABEG CURRICULUM

- Our Connection to the Universe
- Expressing Ourselves
- Taking Care of our Physical Bodies in Order to Live A Healthy Life
- Surviving off the Land
- Identity, Family & Relationships

Biigtigong **Nishnaabeg**

Endzhi-gkinoohmaading Elementary School



## Curriculum Guidelines



# What might public school boards do?

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- Find a partnering community or First Nation organization and let them have equal involvement in the work
- Go to community don't always expect the people to come into the school
- Value the learning experiences
- Set up a PLC just on topics related to Indigenous Education( land based experiences)
- Hire a community-based land experience coordinator
- **Community Engagement is a key to this process!**





# What can you do? 24

“Start small...start somewhere..”





Miigwetch



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