

# Growing Indigenous Teacher Education Through Self-Determination and Indigenous Knowledge: Perspectives from Indigenous Institutes in Ontario

June 1, 2023

Prepared For:

Indigenous Institutes Consortium



# 1. About The Indigenous Institutes Consortium

The Indigenous Institutes Consortium (IIC) is a collective of seven established Indigenous Institutes in Ontario.<sup>1</sup>The IIC strives for healthier and stronger Indigenous peoples and communities through Indigenous-led post-secondary education and training.<sup>2</sup> In this way, the work of IIC member Institutes is essential to the right of Indigenous peoples to establish and control their educational systems and institutions, providing education in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Indigenous Institutes Consortium (2023). *2023-2026 Strategic Plan*. Available at: <https://iicontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/IIC-20-Strategic-Plan-DIGITAL.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> This brief was prepared by Stephanie Procyk, Jon Medow and James White of Medow Consulting with the contributions of the Indigenous Institutes Consortium.

# 2. Executive Summary

Indigenous Institutes in Ontario—as the third pillar of post-secondary education in this province—play a unique role in supporting Indigenous learners to become credentialed teachers. They help recruit, retain and train teachers through Indigenous Teacher Education Programs currently delivered in partnership with mainstream universities and they support professional development in Indigenous learning for credentialed teachers through Additional Qualification offerings. Through strong community grounding and a pathbreaking provincial legislative framework recognizing their role, Indigenous Institutes are uniquely positioned to expand delivery of Indigenous teacher education through self-determined Indigenous-led post-secondary education and training.

IIC Member Institutes Engaged in Teacher Education	Indigenous Teacher Education Offerings
Oshki-Pimache-O-Win	Indigenous Teacher Education Programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal Bachelor of Education</li> </ul>
Kenjgewin Teg	Indigenous Teacher Education Programs: <sup>4</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor of Education</li> <li>• Master of Education in World Indigenous Studies in Education</li> <li>• Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Studies Degree (forthcoming)</li> </ul> Additional Qualifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching Ojibwe (Anishinabemowin)</li> <li>• Teaching First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Children</li> <li>• Outdoor Experiential Education</li> </ul>
Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig	Indigenous Teacher Education Programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forthcoming Bachelor of Education program</li> <li>• Forthcoming Masters of Education program</li> </ul>
Six Nations Polytechnic	Additional Qualifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children</li> <li>• Teaching Ojibwe; Teaching Cayuga; Teaching Mohawk</li> <li>• Principal Qualifications Program</li> <li>• Additional AQ courses that incorporate specific Indigenous worldviews</li> </ul>

The four institutions profiled above help meet the demand for credentialed teachers of Indigenous ancestry, enable teacher education to be grounded in an Indigenous worldview and help us collectively achieve reconciliation. As initiatives move forward to support the growth of Indigenous Teacher Education in Canada, it will be critical to work with Indigenous Institutes as key partners, to consider how sharing resources with Indigenous Institutes can become a win-win, and support long-term sustainable funding for these Institutions. These actions will help us all collectively move forward on a path that supports Indigenous learners and communities and meets the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action.

<sup>4</sup> Kenjgewin Teg. (2023a). *Indigenous Teacher Education Program*. Kenjgewin Teg. Available at: <https://www.kenjgewinteg.ca/programs/teaching-learning/indigenous-teacher-education-program>.

## 3. Introduction

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action set a goal to enable post-secondary education institutions to teach teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.<sup>5</sup> Increasingly, post-secondary actors are stepping up to help meet this call. For example, the Rideau Hall Foundation/Fondation Rideau Hall has committed to increasing the number of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis teachers in Canada by 10,000 teachers. Indigenous Institutes in Ontario, the third pillar of post-secondary education in the province, have also been working diligently to fulfil this call through Indigenous Teacher Education offerings that put teachers of Indigenous ancestry on the path to becoming credentialed teachers grounded in an Indigenous worldview.

The purpose of this brief is to illustrate the critical and unique roles that Indigenous Institutes play in teacher education. Without their vision and innovative approaches, promising future teachers who may otherwise not access post-secondary education could lack opportunities to become teachers and Indigenous Teacher Education offerings would be missing key dimensions of Indigenous worldview and grounding that are so critical for support of the next generation.

The collective work and impact of the Indigenous Teacher Education offerings at the following Indigenous Institutes will be highlighted to help elevate the awareness and leadership of Indigenous-led post-secondary education institutions and the impact they have on learners and communities.

- Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute
- Kenjgewin Teg
- Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig
- Six Nations Polytechnic

This brief will introduce the work of Indigenous Institutes overall, highlight the unique legislative framework for Indigenous Institutes in Ontario, unpack the options for becoming a credentialed teacher of Indigenous ancestry in Ontario, and illustrate the role that these Institutes play in the journey toward becoming a credentialed teacher. This brief will also highlight the ways that Indigenous Institutes' Indigenous Teacher Education offerings have an impact on learners and communities and conclude with calls to action to support the next generation of Indigenous teachers and students.

## 4. Indigenous Institutes

### 4.1 Indigenous Institutes are rooted in community

Indigenous Institutes are Indigenous-owned and -controlled post-secondary institutions, receiving their mandates from Indigenous communities and Nations. Indigenous Institutes are unique because

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<sup>5</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. Available at: [https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

their pedagogies are grounded in a holistic approach to the full continuum of life-long learning, embedded with Indigenous culture and language.<sup>6</sup>

Indigenous institutes have successfully delivered post-secondary programs and services in Ontario since 1985 and currently deliver programs to 4,000 learners per year.<sup>7</sup> The seven member institutes of the IIC deliver certificate, diploma, and degree programs, in most cases currently through partnerships with mainstream institutions, in a wide variety of fields across all regions of Ontario with a central focus on effective Indigenous student support. As institutions of choice, Indigenous Institutes also reach many Indigenous learners who would not otherwise access post-secondary education and training.

## 4.2 Indigenous Institutes actualize the right to education

Indigenous Institutes find their roots in the movement for *First Nations Control of First Nations Education* and the mandate to “reclaim our right to direct the education of our children.”<sup>8</sup>

Indigenous peoples’ right to establish and control their own education systems and institutions is affirmed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Article 14,<sup>9</sup> now adopted in Canadian law,<sup>10</sup> and Indigenous Institutes have an essential role in making this right a reality.

The work of Indigenous Institutes is also essential to the effective implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 2015 Calls to Action, including achieving the elimination of education and employment gaps, integrating Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms, and advancing language rights, among other key areas.<sup>11</sup>

The role of Indigenous Institutes in Indigenous-controlled lifelong learning has long been established. In 1996, they shared the following vision:

*Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*

*We see Aboriginal self-governance in education applying to Aboriginal education institutions at all stages of life from early childhood on. Elementary and high schools, Aboriginal colleges and universities would all function as part of an integrated system of lifelong education.*

While much work remains to be done to achieve this vision, Indigenous Institutes have made significant progress in Ontario by achieving formal recognition through the *Indigenous Institutes Act, 2017* (See: Appendix: Legislative Recognition in Ontario).

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<sup>6</sup> Indigenous Institutes Consortium. (2022). Indigenous Institutes Consortium Regional Model for First Nations Post-Secondary Education: Engagement Report and Proposal. Available at: <https://iicontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/IIC-21-PSEMainReport-Digital-4.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Indigenous Institutes Consortium. (2023). About IIC. Available at: <https://iicontario.ca/about-iic/>

<sup>8</sup> Assembly of First Nations (2010). *First Nations Control of First Nations Education*. Available at: [https://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education/3\\_2010\\_july\\_afn\\_first\\_nations\\_control\\_of\\_first\\_nations\\_education\\_final\\_eng.pdf](https://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education/3_2010_july_afn_first_nations_control_of_first_nations_education_final_eng.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2007). United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Available at: <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20Declaration%20on,%2C%20Bangladesh%2C%20Bhutan%2C%20Burundi%2C>

<sup>10</sup> Government of Canada (Accessed: May 23, 2023). Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act: About the Act. Available at: <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/declaration/legislation.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. Available at: [https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996). *Volume 3: Gathering Strength*. Available at: <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/royal-commission-aboriginal-peoples/Pages/final-report.aspx>.

Now in implementation, this legislative framework enables independent, credentialed Indigenous Institute programs to be designed and launched and opens the door to achieving the multi-generational goal for recognition, independence, and *Indigenous control* in the sphere of post-secondary education and training.

## 5. The path to becoming a credentialed teacher of Indigenous ancestry in Ontario

Since their founding, Indigenous Institutes have offered credentialed programs, including Indigenous Teacher Education Programs (ITEP) and Additional Qualifications (AQ) including through partnerships with mainstream colleges and universities.

### **Indigenous Teacher Education Programs (ITEP)**

Indigenous Teacher Education Programs (ITEP) are teacher education programs designed specifically to prepare Teachers of Indigenous Ancestry to teach in schools. These programs primarily include four semester programs that enable teachers to teach at the primary and junior divisions (e.g. K-6).<sup>13</sup>

### **Additional Qualifications (AQ)**

Additional Qualification (AQ) courses help existing credentialed teachers develop their learning and knowledge further. These may cover Indigenous languages, teaching methods, or cover coursework that will enable teachers of Indigenous ancestry to teach grades 7-12 after having completed an ITEP.

### **Early childhood education (ECE/ECEA)**

Early childhood education (ECE) courses are often included as a type of Indigenous teacher education program from the perspectives of Indigenous Institutes. This reflects the lifelong learning approach of Institutes.<sup>14</sup> ECE courses are not covered in this brief as they are not credentialed by the Ontario College of Teachers.

The journey from being a student to an accredited teacher is somewhat different for teachers going through mainstream pathways compared to teachers who emerge from the Teacher of Indigenous Ancestry pathway. As noted in the table below, post-secondary degrees are not required for teachers of Indigenous ancestry entering an Indigenous Teacher Education Program (ITEP). While the general education teacher pathway enables teachers to teach K-12, teachers in the Indigenous Ancestry pathway are certified to teach K-6, and can take Additional Qualifications (AQ) to later teach grades 7-12. A student does not have to be Indigenous to take an Indigenous Teacher Education Program, but students who are not Indigenous require a pre-requisite post-secondary education degree. It is

<sup>13</sup> Ontario College of Teachers. (2022a). *Registration Guide: Requirements for Becoming a Primary-Junior Teacher if you are of Indigenous Ancestry*. Available at: <https://www.oct.ca/->

[/media/PDF/Requirements%20for%20Becoming%20a%20Primary%20Junior%20Teacher%20if%20You%20are%20of%20Aboriginal%20Ancestry/EN/primaryjunior\\_aboriginal\\_e.pdf](https://www.oct.ca/-/media/PDF/Requirements%20for%20Becoming%20a%20Primary%20Junior%20Teacher%20if%20You%20are%20of%20Aboriginal%20Ancestry/EN/primaryjunior_aboriginal_e.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Indigenous Institutes Consortium (2023). *2023-2026 Strategic Plan*. Available at: <https://iicontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/IIC-20-Strategic-Plan-DIGITAL.pdf>

also important to note that Indigenous students access mainstream pathways to become teachers as well. However, the pathway for teachers of Indigenous Ancestry was designed for the purposes of increasing the number of Indigenous teachers and is therefore more populated with Indigenous learners. While teachers progressing through these programs are specifically prepared to teach Indigenous students, they are also prepared to teach in any provincial school board. All members of the Ontario College of Teachers can further their professional learning through Additional Basic Qualifications (ABQ) and Additional Qualifications (AQ), which are offered through a range of approved organizations including post-secondary institutions such as Indigenous Institutes, teacher federations, school boards, community organizations and other similar organizations.<sup>15</sup>

Table 1: Comparing Ontario mainstream and Indigenous-focused teacher program pathways<sup>16</sup>

Features of pathway	Teacher of General Education pathway	Teacher of Indigenous Ancestry pathway
<b>Indigenous ancestry requirements</b>	All students eligible	Students of Indigenous ancestry given preference in programs, but all students eligible
<b>Post-secondary degree requirements</b>	3 year post-secondary degree required	Post-secondary degree not required for those of Indigenous ancestry Post-secondary degree required for those without Indigenous ancestry
<b>Four semester teaching program requirements</b>	Completion of four semester teacher education program	Completion of four semester Indigenous Teacher Education Program (ITEP)
<b>Grade levels associated with certification</b>	K-12	K-6  With Additional Qualifications can later teach Grades 7-12

## 5.1 The path to becoming an accredited teacher of Indigenous languages in Ontario

Preservation of language and culture is core to the work of Indigenous Institutes. This is part of the work of the Institutes in not only educating students but helping them come away with a stronger sense of their own identity.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Ontario College of Teachers. (2016). *Professional Advisory—Additional Qualifications: Extending Professional Knowledge* (Professional Advisory, p. 16). Ontario College of Teachers. Available at: [https://www.oct.ca/-/media/PDF/Advisory%20Additional%20Qualifications/OCT1136\\_Prof\\_Advisory\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.oct.ca/-/media/PDF/Advisory%20Additional%20Qualifications/OCT1136_Prof_Advisory_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> There are two additional pathways toward becoming certified as a teacher in Ontario. These are teachers of native languages and teachers of technological education. After becoming certified, since 2022, all teachers must also complete a sexual abuse prevention program successfully.

<sup>17</sup> Indigenous Institutes Consortium (2023). *2023-2026 Strategic Plan*. Available at: <https://iicontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/IIC-20-Strategic-Plan-DIGITAL.pdf>

For a teacher to become accredited to teach Indigenous languages through the Ontario College of Teachers, the following must be in place:

- They may take the pathway to gaining accreditation as a teacher of native language through one of the four languages offered: Anishinaabek, Mushkegowuk, Onkwehonwe, or Lenape.
- They may take Additional Qualification courses in a specific language such as Teaching Cayuga, Teaching Cree, Teaching Mohawk, and a range of other Indigenous languages.

## 6. IIC Member Institutes in Ontario: meeting the demand for credentialed Indigenous teachers grounded in an Indigenous worldview

The Indigenous Institute approach to Indigenous Teacher Education is not just about growing the quantity of Indigenous teachers. It is about growing the number and quality of Indigenous teachers through community-based approaches rooted in Indigenous worldviews. The following section will provide a high level overview of four IIC member Indigenous Institutes who offer Indigenous Teacher Education and common characteristics that make these Institutes shine.<sup>18</sup>

### 6.1 Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute

Oshki-Pimache-O-Win was established in 1996 by Nishnawbe Aski Nation with a campus located in Thunder Bay to advance the holistic educational needs of Nishnawbe Aski Nation and others. For twenty years, Oshki-Wenjack has been providing holistic, culturally appropriate, accessible and flexible education and training programs to meet individual, community and organizational learning needs. Oshki Wenjack promotes lifelong learning for all members of Nishnawbe Aski Nation and is committed to increasing access to, and success in, education and training to the NAN people and other learners. Oshki Wenjack's Innovative post-secondary programs deliver courses that best meet the needs of the Indigenous community, blending on campus, online and distance learning, and in community sessions. This approach gives NAN community members the opportunity to earn a post-secondary credential while remaining in their home community and at the same time maintain local employment opportunities.

Oshki-Pimache-O-Win's Indigenous Teacher Education offerings include the following Indigenous Teacher Education Program:

- **Aboriginal Bachelor of Education:**<sup>19</sup> This program is offered in partnership with Brock University. It is a 5-year (15 semester) program designed to prepare students to be certified teachers. This program provides specialized training for teachers working with Indigenous children in Grades K-6. It intertwines Western and traditional learning approaches, focusing

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<sup>18</sup> There are nine total Indigenous Institutes in Ontario. This paper covers the seven Indigenous Institutes that are part of the Indigenous Institutes Consortium and focuses on the four Indigenous Institutes that offer Indigenous Teacher Education Programs that cover K-12 education.

<sup>19</sup> Oshki-Wenjack. (2022). *Aboriginal Bachelor of Education*. Oshki-Wenjack. Available at: <https://www.oshki.ca/programs/bachelor-of-education/>.



on Turtle Island Indigenous cultures and issues. Oshki-Wenjack's unique cultural and community-based program delivery model enables students to stay within their home community for the majority of the program – which includes practicums.

## 6.2 Kenjgewin Teg

Established in 1994 to serve the Mnidoo Mnising communities of the Anishinabek people, Kenjgewin Teg offers a multitude of educational programs and services; a pathways approach enables Kenjgewin Teg learners with the ability to explore their goals and choose the pathway that inspires them to find success. At Kenjgewin Teg, learners can choose from obtaining secondary school credits, literacy and basic skills, academic upgrading, online e-learning courses, college and/or university programs, or general interest/skills development opportunities - everyone, both Indigenous and non Indigenous, are welcomed to gain an inclusive understanding of Indigenous worldviews within the Anishinabek learning environment at Kenjgewin Teg.

Kenjgewin Teg's Indigenous Teacher Education offerings include the following Indigenous Teacher Education Programs:<sup>20</sup>

- **Bachelor of Education:** This program is offered in partnership with Queen's University. It lasts two years. The program fosters excellence and pride in First Nations education by empowering candidates to excel in their individual growth as teachers, learners, partners, and role models.
- **Master of Education in World Indigenous Studies in Education (WISE):** This program is offered in partnership with Queen's University as well. WISE is a progressive MEd program that allows students to pursue their research interests without leaving their community, family or job. The program is offered part-time blended (online and on-campus) for students with experience in Indigenous communities or World Indigenous issues.
- **Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Studies Degree:** This undergraduate degree is accredited by Kenjgewin Teg and is in the early stages of implementation and delivery as a pathway to supporting Indigenous teacher education candidates. This program provides an opportunity for Indigenous learners to gain an Indigenous Institutes degree before obtaining an education degree. Information and announcements relating to program delivery dates of the Bachelor of Arts Indigenous Studies degree are forthcoming.

In addition, Kenjgewin Teg offers a range of Additional Qualifications:

- **Teaching Ojibwe (Anishinabemowin):** This course provides relevant, meaningful, and practical experience in reading, writing, speaking, reflection, dialogue, and expression in Anishinabemowin. Candidates will explore strategies aimed at increasing participants' Anishinabemowin fluency which will ultimately enhance instruction at the school level.
- **Teaching First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Children:** Candidates will learn about the history of colonization in Canada, decolonization theory, current efforts of grassroots people to decolonize their selves in nations and finally, their role as teacher and educator in an era of truth and reconciliation.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Kenjgewin Teg. (2023a). *Indigenous Teacher Education Program*. Kenjgewin Teg. Available at: <https://www.kenjgewinteg.ca/programs/teaching-learning/indigenous-teacher-education-program>.

<sup>21</sup> Kenjgewin Teg (2022). Teaching FNMI Children AQ. Available at: <https://www.kenjgewinteg.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Teaching-FNMI-AQ-Summer-2022-from-Kenjgewin-teg-viewbook.pdf>

- **Outdoor Experiential Education:** The knowledge acquired in this course, both theory and practice, enables candidates to critically explore, reflect, and dialogue in a variety of experiential learning activities in outdoor settings, including natural, built, and cultural. Experiential learning is at the heart of Anishinabek knowledge; the candidate experiments with planning and designing activities, assignments, and research to help nurture their own pedagogies. This course is offered twice a year, pending sufficient enrolment. The Spring session is delivered using a hybrid model over a two-month period and the Summer course is a 10-day intensive in-person session held in July.

## 6.3 Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig (SKG)

Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig was established in 2008 and was founded on the Anishinaabe vision of learning as established by Chief Shingwauk in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario to serve the Anishinaabe people. The institute is founded on an Anishinaabe vision of learning, providing educational tools to support Anishinaabe students to thrive in modern society without compromising the values or integrity of our culture, knowledge, and traditions. SKG, in collaboration with Algoma University offers the only Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe language) in Canada and Anishinaabe Studies B.A. programs in Canada. Language immersion and land based education courses are available throughout the year for full or part time study.

SKG's Indigenous Teacher Education Program offerings will include programs that will be offered through the forthcoming Anishinaabe School of Education. The Anishinaabe School of Education would be the first of its kind in Ontario built foundationally from an Indigenous World View and incorporating aspects of the existing Western approaches:

- **Forthcoming Bachelor of Education Program:** This program will be launched in the Fall of 2026 in partnership with Algoma University. At present, SKG, through the accreditation of Algoma University, offers a range of courses in Anishinaabe Studies and in Anishinaabemowin.
- **Forthcoming Masters of Education program:** This program will be launched at a future date. Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig and Algoma University will create new ways of teaching teachers and transforming the education system as we know it today.

## 6.4 Six Nations Polytechnic

Six Nations Polytechnic was established in 1993 to offer first hand Indigenous knowledge, education and skills training, through one of the most unique learning experiences in Canada primarily serving the Haudenosaunee Nations. SNP Is unique in its ability to offer firsthand Indigenous knowledge, education and skills training in a culturally supportive environment to everyone who is committed to learning. At SNP, Students can earn degrees, diplomas and certificates in a range of areas including Indigenous languages, education, health, Human Services and trades through partnerships with regional colleges in universities and SNP accredited programs.

Six Nations Polytechnic offers the following Additional Qualification courses:<sup>22</sup>

- **Teaching First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children:** This 12 week course provides candidates with an overview of First Nation, Métis and Inuit perspectives which have been organized in themes that will reflect the similarities and uniqueness of their respective knowledge, culture, language, traditions and how that may relate to the present situation for children in the Ontario classroom. The course has been organized in themes and lessons that will guide candidates to begin to understand and validate Indigenous ways of knowing that may operate in a western developed framework. This course supports inquiry-based learning which honours candidates' knowledge and contributions throughout. The idea of holistic learning is embedded in the foundation of this course and seeks to reflect and model the importance of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual teaching and learning.
- **Teaching Ojibwe:** This 12 week course provides candidates with practical experience in developing teaching strategies in Nishnaabemwin conversational and written language education. The Teaching Nishnaabemwin Additional Qualification provides relevant, meaningful, and practical experience for Additional Qualification candidates in writing in Nishnaabemwin, reading Nishnaabemwin, speaking in Nishnaabemwin, dialogue in Nishnaabemwin, expression in Nishnaabemwin, and creating in Nishnaabemwin,
- **Teaching Cayuga:** This 12 week course provides candidates with practical experience in developing teaching strategies in Cayuga conversational and written language education. The Teaching Cayuga Additional Qualification provides relevant, meaningful, and practical experience for candidates in reading, writing, reflection, dialogue, and expression.
- **Teaching Mohawk:** This 12 week course provides candidates with practical experience in developing teaching strategies in Indigenous conversational and written language education. The Teaching Mohawk Additional Qualification provides relevant, meaningful, and practical experience for candidates in reading, writing, reflection, dialogue, and expression in the Mohawk language.
- **Principal Qualifications Program:** The program is designed to support candidates as critically reflective educational leaders who function effectively in dynamic, diverse, and complex contexts characterized by rapidly changing circumstances. The program components are rooted in the five leadership domains identified in School-Level Leadership found within the Ontario Leadership Framework. Candidates will identify and respond to systemic barriers and be empowered to advocate for and honour the diversity of voice and perspective as they engage with educational leadership practices and experiences.
- **Further Additional Qualification courses that incorporate specific Indigenous worldviews:** There are further Additional Qualification courses offered in a range of subjects such as environmental education and mathematics that are taught incorporating an Indigenous worldview.

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<sup>22</sup> Six Nations Polytechnic. (2022). *Additional Qualifications*. Available at: <https://snpolytechnic.com/additional-qualifications>.

## 7. Indigenous Institutes are building healthier and stronger Indigenous peoples and communities through Indigenous Teacher Education

As noted above, the range of Indigenous Teacher Education offerings differs amongst Indigenous Institutes. Some are working currently in partnership with mainstream universities to deliver degrees in education and others are focused on Additional Qualifications and languages. In all of their activities, the collective work of these Institutes is helping build healthier and stronger Indigenous peoples and communities. The following section will highlight the impact Indigenous Institutes have on learners and communities.

### 7.1 Indigenous Institutes help meet the demand for credentialed teachers of Indigenous ancestry

There is a need for qualified credentialed Indigenous teachers in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.<sup>23</sup> Currently, there are shortages of Indigenous teachers in communities across all of Canada.<sup>24</sup> For example, Nunavut alone had 105 open positions this past year.<sup>25</sup> This is particularly challenging in rural or isolated communities where the number of children is growing. Teacher shortages can have wide-ranging impacts on individual students, families and communities. For instance, this can lead to students not having the proper environment for learning; strains on administrators, teachers, and parents; and increased anxiety in children.<sup>26</sup> However, there is also a need for Indigenous teachers to teach an Indigenous worldview both to Indigenous and non-Indigenous children in the mainstream system. Increasing the number of Indigenous teachers can help close both achievement gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and knowledge gaps for all students who may have not been exposed to Indigenous teachings and knowledge.<sup>27</sup>

However, mainstream institutions are at times not best-equipped to recruit and retain Indigenous students from local communities to become teachers. Indigenous Institutes are deeply connected to local communities and can recruit, retain and train teachers to help address this need for more teachers. Indigenous Institutes offer training that is located in Indigenous communities, which increases accessibility for Indigenous students. For example, Oshki-Pimache-O-Win's programs are offered partly in person in Thunder Bay and partly online, for students to be able to stay in their home communities across the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, covering territory roughly the size of France.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> <https://rhf-frh.ca/our-initiatives/learning/indigenous-teachers-education-initiative/>

<sup>24</sup>

Connors, S. (2022, August 21). Wanted: teachers in northern Canada as school year starts. APTN News. Available at: <https://www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/wanted-teachers-in-northern-canada-as-school-year-starts/>

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> People for Education (2016). Moving toward reconciliation in Ontario's publicly funded schools. Available at: <https://peopleforeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Indigenous-Education-2016.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> Oshki-Wenjack (2022). Aboriginal Bachelor of Education Degree Program: Primary and Junior Divisions. Available at: [https://www.oshki.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Oshki-B.Ed\\_-Fly-Sheet-2022.pdf](https://www.oshki.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Oshki-B.Ed_-Fly-Sheet-2022.pdf)

## 7.2 Indigenous Institutes enable education to be grounded in an Indigenous worldview

Indigenous Institutes do not only contribute to growth in the *numbers* of credentialed teachers with Indigenous ancestry, they contribute to the growth of credentialed teachers with Indigenous ancestry who have been trained in Indigenous worldviews. Indigenous students face many barriers in attending post-secondary institutions and as a result, Indigenous students are more likely to leave post-secondary education early than other students in Canada.<sup>29</sup> Indigenous Institutes take many steps through their Indigenous Teacher Education programs that helps address this challenge and leaves students with pride and a sense of identity in their Indigenous cultures. These steps include:

- Offering culturally responsive programming: Indigenous Institutes educate teachers in a culturally responsive way, to have pride in their Indigenous ancestry and identity. For example, Kenjgewin Teg students are eligible to receive an additional certificate in Anishinabe Aadziwin Distinction. Anishinabe Aadziwin is living the ‘good life’ through body, mind and spirit and reflects learnings such as use and understanding of the Ojibwe language through cultural and land-based learning.<sup>30</sup>
- Offering training in languages: There is unmet demand for credentialed teachers of Indigenous languages.<sup>31</sup> Language teachers may teach Indigenous languages without accreditation, based on individual and community decisions. However, they require credentials to teach a language in the public school system. Indigenous Institutes help address this demand by playing a unique role of training teachers in Indigenous languages. For example, Six Nations Polytechnic’s extensive language offerings through their Additional Qualification programs demonstrate this.

## 7.3 Indigenous Institutes help achieve reconciliation

Indigenous Institutes are working to achieve reconciliation in self-determined Indigenous-led secondary education and training. There are many ways in which Indigenous Institutes are working toward that goal and two key ways that they are doing so through teacher education are highlighted below.

- A focus on wellbeing and the strengths that each learner brings: Mainstream institutions do not always recognize the competencies and skills of Indigenous learners.<sup>32</sup> In addition, Indigenous learners have unique program needs and interests that are not always being met by mainstream institutions. For example, Indigenous students are more likely to need support with high school completion and to access bridging programs to connect them to post-secondary.<sup>33</sup> Indigenous Institutes offer a range of programs and services to support students to help meet their academic and personal objectives, including mental health support, cultural and language programming, child care, student learning support and post-

<sup>29</sup> Herkimer, J. (2021). Holding Our Ground: Indigenous Student Post-Secondary Persistence & Early Leaving. Indspire. Available at: <https://indspire.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Holding-Our-Ground-Report-EN-Final-WEB1.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> Kenjgewin Teg and Queen’s University. (2022). Manitoulin – North Shore Community-based Indigenous Teacher Education Program.

<sup>31</sup> Monkman, L. (2017, September 15). With fewer fluent speakers, demand for teachers of Indigenous languages is on the rise. CBC News. Available at: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/indigenous-language-teacher-shortage-1.4290699>

<sup>32</sup> [https://oncat.ca/sites/default/files/media-files/s2019\\_fnti\\_final\\_learning\\_report.pdf](https://oncat.ca/sites/default/files/media-files/s2019_fnti_final_learning_report.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Indigenous Institutes Consortium. (2020). Programs and services: a comparative analysis. Indigenous Institutes Consortium. Available at: <https://iiconario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/IIC-20-Programs-and-Services-DIGITAL.pdf>

graduation employment services.<sup>34</sup> This can also include access to elders as part of these wraparound services.

- Self-determination through tailored program design and delivery: Self-determination through education is a key goal of reconciliation and a key objective of Indigenous Institutes.<sup>35</sup> Indigenous Institutes have a long history of working with partners in the mainstream system and adapting programs to meet learner and community needs, however, the requirements for Indigenous Institutes to partner with mainstream institutions to deliver programs has recently shifted. Now in implementation, the *Indigenous Institutes Act, 2017* recognizes Indigenous Institutes and enables them to grant fully independent certificates, diplomas, and degrees through quality assurance provided by the Indigenous Advanced Education and Skills Council.<sup>36</sup>

These examples not only highlight the innovative ways that Indigenous Institutes are moving Canada toward reconciliation. They also highlight how Indigenous Institutes cultivate a sense of pride, ownership and belonging in students in their teacher education offerings.

## 8. Conclusion & Calls to Action

Indigenous Institutes provide impactful, culturally responsive Teacher Education Programs, which are growing the number of teachers with Indigenous ancestry who have been trained in an Indigenous worldview. Their deep roots in community and strong record focused on Indigenous student success position Indigenous Institutes as key partners in the expansion of Indigenous Teacher Education in Canada. The unique achievement in Ontario of the *Indigenous Institutes Act, 2017* means this can be done through truly independent Indigenous designed, controlled, and delivered programs.

We need to ensure that Indigenous Institutes can continue to build on this foundation and achieve their missions successfully. The following calls to action can help Indigenous Institutes maximize their impact to build healthier and stronger Indigenous peoples and communities:

- Work with Indigenous Institutes as key partners in Indigenous Teacher Education: As illustrated above, Indigenous Institutes have the ingredients and strategies needed to help Indigenous students succeed in culturally grounded teacher education and continuously build their skills as certified teachers. Initiatives focused on investment to expand the number of Indigenous teachers in Canada should consider Indigenous Institutes as critical partners in self-determined and Indigenous-led Indigenous Teacher Education.
- Consider how sharing resources with Indigenous Institutes can become a win-win: Indigenous Institutes are already using innovative approaches to share resources amongst themselves and with mainstream universities and colleges. Mainstream institutions should continue to consider ways in which equitable partnerships can help mainstream institutions move toward reconciliation and help Indigenous Institutions maximize their community impact, leveraging the unique role and resources of each. For example, sharing staff resources, including the time of leading Indigenous educators who work at mainstream institutions, may be one path to which post-secondary education actors can aspire.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.  
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<sup>5</sup> Indigenous Institutes Consortium. (2023). 2023-2026 Strategic Plan 2-Pager. Indigenous Institutes Consortium.

<sup>36</sup> Indigenous Advanced Education and Skills Council (Accessed May 23, 2023). *About*. Available at: <https://iaesc.ca/about>

- Improve long-term sustainable funding: Indigenous Institutes work with learners who need unique supports and have cultural and linguistic aspirations that require more funding than is currently being received. Indigenous Institutes often contend with unstable proposal-based funding. Improving funding is key to helping Indigenous Institutes achieve their strategic objectives and better support Indigenous learners. Governments and all funders should consider ways to improve their funding and ensure it is long-term and sustainable.

There is a critical need to expand Indigenous Teacher Education in Canada and burgeoning interest in how to do this. Indigenous Institutes in Ontario and throughout Canada, can be critical partners in the success of these initiatives, which will not only help Indigenous learners and communities, but will help Canada achieve its goals for reconciliation.

## 9. Appendix: Legislative recognition in Ontario

In October 2014, the IIC submitted a position paper, *A Roadmap to Recognition for Aboriginal Institutes in Ontario* to the Government of Ontario.<sup>37</sup> This paper articulated the unique contributions that Indigenous Institutes make to the post-secondary education and training landscape, goals for achieving recognition, sustainable funding, credential granting, and vision for the future for Indigenous students in Ontario.

In response to the IIC's position paper, in June 2015, the Government of Ontario announced its commitment to develop a stand-alone policy to recognize Indigenous Institutes. This marked the beginning of a transformative and historic journey leading to the recognition of Indigenous Institutes in the *Indigenous Institutes Act, 2017*.<sup>38</sup> The following preamble of the Act expresses the intent of the Act and the role that IIC member Indigenous Institutes continue play every day.<sup>39</sup> Now in implementation, the Act is a key achievement and enabler of the positive future that Indigenous Institutes seek to build.

### Preamble to the *Indigenous Institutes Act, 2017*

The Government of Ontario affirms that it is committed to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

The Government of Ontario acknowledges that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes the right of Indigenous peoples to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

In Ontario, Indigenous Institutes are Indigenous governed and operated community-based education institutions that are mandated by and accountable to Indigenous communities.

<sup>37</sup> Indigenous Institutes Consortium (2014). *A Roadmap to Recognition for Aboriginal Institutes in Ontario Position Paper*. Available at: <https://iicontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/AIC-Position-Paper-A-Roadmap-to-Recognition-for-AIs-in-Ontario-10-10-14-2.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> Indigenous Institutes Consortium (2019). *Federal Engagement Strategy*. Available at: [https://iicontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/IIC19\\_Federal\\_Engagement\\_Strategy.pdf](https://iicontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/IIC19_Federal_Engagement_Strategy.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> For full text of the *Indigenous Institutes Act, 2017*, see: Government of Ontario. *Indigenous Institutes Act, 2017*. Available at: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/17i34a>

Indigenous Institutes primarily provide accessible post-secondary education and training, and pathways to further learning primarily to Indigenous students in a culturally safe environment.

Indigenous Institutes provide education framed by Indigenous knowledge and languages, worldviews and Indigenous ways of knowing and living, and represent one pathway among others for Indigenous communities and students to achieve their educational visions and goals.

Recognizing that Indigenous Institutes play a unique role in the post-secondary education system of Ontario, the Government of Ontario and Indigenous Institutes have come together, in the spirit of reconciliation, mutual respect and mutual accountability, to enhance educational opportunities for Indigenous students, and to promote the revitalization of Indigenous knowledge, cultures and languages.





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