



Fondation
Rideau Hall
Foundation

Indigenous Teacher Education NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 2 - NURTURE

Introduction & Welcome

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Co-Chair, National Advisory Committee on
Indigenous Teacher Education (NACITE)

Welcome to this edition of the Indigenous Teacher Education newsletter, focused on Nurture: supporting and sustaining Indigenous educators.

When I think about nurturing Indigenous teacher education, I think about the people who are already doing this work and what they need in order to continue. Indigenous educators carry so much into the classroom: their knowledge, languages, and cultures. They also have the ability to show young people what is possible.

For an Indigenous student, seeing an Indigenous teacher at the front of the classroom can leave an impact that goes far beyond what is being taught. We may forget what we learned, but we do not forget how we felt.

Seeing ourselves reflected in our teachers can create a spark of hope: maybe I can do that too.

Educators also need to feel supported. Bringing people together to share experiences and challenges helps us realize we are not alone. It creates networks, builds confidence, and sometimes gives us the courage to continue the work.

That is what Nurture means to me: creating the conditions for First Nations, Inuit and Métis educators to continue, to grow and to thrive. When educators are supported, it also creates more space for Indigenous children to see their cultural identities reflected in their education and to see possibilities for their own lives.



Grow, Nurture, Bloom: A Long-Term Commitment to Indigenous Teacher Education

The Rideau Hall Foundation's Indigenous Teacher Education initiative is working toward a shared goal of supporting the growth of 10,000 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis educators across Canada.

Grounded in culture, language, and community, the initiative focuses on strengthening pathways into teaching and supporting education systems that reflect Indigenous knowledge and ways of learning.

It is guided by three connected priorities:

Grow expands pathways into teaching and increases the number of Indigenous educators entering the profession.

Nurture supports the people, programs, and environments that help retain Indigenous students and educators, while strengthening the systems around them through research and partnerships

Bloom shares knowledge and celebrates achievements, amplifying voices and stories to inspire others and strengthen the field.

Theme - Nurture



Nurture is about tending what has been planted, supporting Indigenous educators, learners, and teacher education programs so they can grow, succeed, and thrive. At its heart, Nurture centres Indigenous-led approaches that strengthen learning environments, build capacity, and support long-term success.

Supporting educators means ensuring they have the resources, relationships, and opportunities needed to remain and thrive in the profession. It also means strengthening the programs and systems around them through Indigenous research, knowledge-sharing, capacity-building, and policy change.

Nurture also means creating learning environments where First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students feel valued, respected, and supported in their journey to succeed.

Put simply, Nurture is about strengthening the people, programs, and systems that sustain Indigenous educators and learners throughout their journey.

Sector News

Across the Indigenous teacher education network, Indigenous-led institutions and organizations continue to advance innovative, community-driven approaches to teacher education, language revitalization, curriculum development, and student supports. Here are highlights from across the country.

Matawa Education Department is advancing its Pathways for Language Revitalization initiative across nine Matawa First Nations by developing culturally grounded language curriculum and a train-the-trainer model to strengthen local capacity and support Indigenous educators, Early Childhood Educator (ECEs), aides, and language champions.

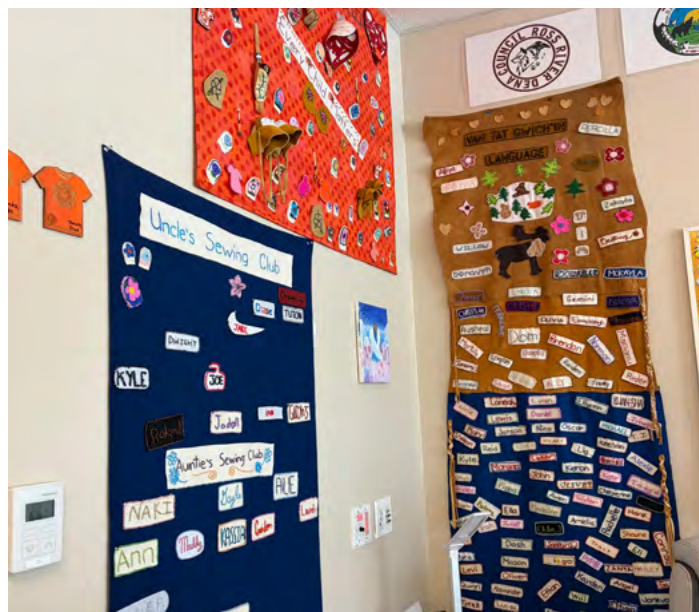
First Nation School Board and Save the Children are developing First Nations-led literacy and numeracy resources through the Nothing About Us Without Us program in the Yukon. Created in collaboration with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, language speakers, educators, and community members, the resources will be shared across six participating communities.



McGill University's Office of First Nations and Inuit Education (OFNIE) is expanding community-based teacher education, including a new cohort of its Bachelor of Education program in Kahnawà:ke and a Master of Education offered in partnership with the Cree School Board. OFNIE has also developed a resource bundle to support instructors, particularly non-Indigenous faculty, in understanding the cultural and community contexts of teaching off campus and integrating Indigenous perspectives and local curricula into their courses.

University College of the North has integrated land-based learning into its Kenanow Bachelor of Education program through a new elective course component. Hybrid delivery approaches are also helping expand access to teacher education and support continuity of learning in remote and community settings.

Yukon University, the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate, and the First Nation School Board continue to advance the Yukon Collaborative Indigenous Teacher Education Initiative. This work focuses on creating pathways into teacher education for Indigenous professionals already working in education without formal teaching certification. The partnership is also exploring rural and community-based pathways into teaching while supporting safe, sustainable land-based programming in schools.



Events & Conferences

Organizations, educators, researchers, and communities across the Indigenous teacher education landscape are coming together for gatherings, workshops, and celebrations focused on connection, learning, and shared priorities. Here are a few highlights.



National Indigenous Education Symposium (NIES 2026)

October 18–20 | Richmond, BC

A national gathering of post-secondary leaders, learners, Indigenous Institutes, communities, governments, and industry focused on advancing Indigenous education, workforce development, and economic reconciliation.

2026 Education, Languages and Special Education Forum

November 3–5 | Thunder Bay, ON

Hosted by the Chiefs of Ontario Education Sector, this year's forum explores "Learning Across All Stages of Life," with a focus on First Nations education and language, culture, community, and lifelong learning.

National Gathering for Indigenous Education

November 18–20 | Winnipeg, MB

Hosted by Indspire, this annual gathering brings together educators, schools, and communities from across Canada to share approaches to Indigenous education, cultural revitalization, and student success.

Have an event we should know about? Let us know and we'll do our best to include it in a future issue.

Guest Contributor

Natan Obed *President, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami*

Natan Obed is President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Vice-President of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (Canada). Originally from Nain, Nunatsiavut, he is a respected negotiator and consensus builder. Obed plays a central role in advancing Inuit self-determination through national and international partnerships, including the Inuit Crown Partnership Committee.



Nurture: The Importance of Inuit-Led and Inuit-Designed Education Programs

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami is building an Inuit-led university that empowers students through culturally grounded education.

Inuit Nunangat University's education faculty, Silatursarniq (becoming a wise person) will represent a transformative step in Inuit-led education. It is being designed by and for Inuit rather than fully adopting the frameworks of southern institutions.

The faculty is rooted in Inuit knowledge systems, values, and ways of learning. Its development is focused on supporting a wide range of roles in education—including curriculum developers, school principals, Inuktitut language teachers, university professors and instructors, pedagogical advisors, and researchers in Inuit education. It will offer world-class, transferable degrees and an education that is open to all.

A culturally strong education system nurtures belonging. When students have a strong sense of identity, language, and pride in who they are, they are



better equipped to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Through relationships with elders, mentors, educators, families, and community members, learners receive guidance and encouragement to succeed.

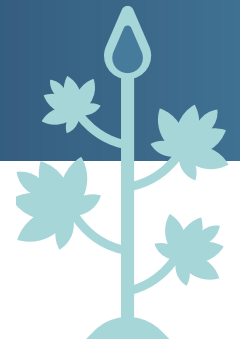
The program is fundamentally about growing people who support others: in classrooms, in families, and across communities. It is grounded in the concept of Silatursarniq equipping the next generation of educators to guide, teach, and encourage those around them.

For those seeking to build meaningful and responsive educational systems, Inuit Nunangat University intends to offer an important example: the strongest institutions are not built by asking students to fit into existing systems. They are designed to reflect and support the people they are intended to serve.

Inuit Nunangat University is set to open in 2030.

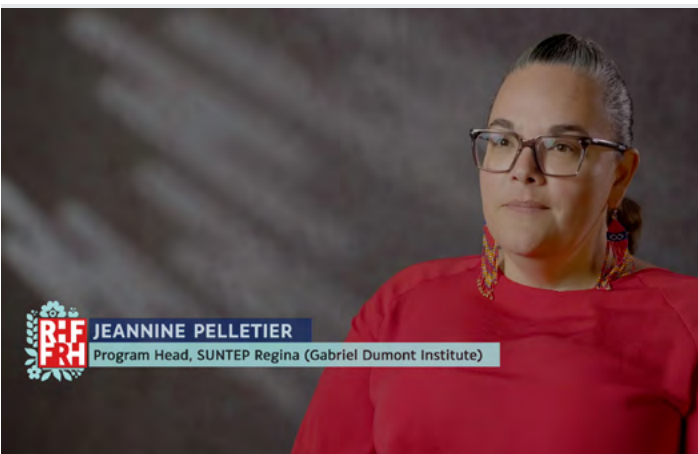


Voices from the ITE community: Creating the Conditions for Indigenous Educators to Thrive



Indigenous teachers can have a profound impact on the students they teach. But supporting Indigenous education also means creating the conditions for those educators to learn, grow and thrive themselves.

Across Indigenous teacher education, that support can take many forms, from culture and language to mentorship, community, professional networks and programs designed around the realities of Indigenous learners and educators.



For Jeannine Pelletier, Program Head of SUNTEP Regina, that kind of support was central to her own journey as a teacher. "A pivotal point in that program, and what we continue to see moving forward in the SUNTEP program, is this wraparound support," she says. "It made it easier for me to continue."

"We now have a network to be able to talk with other people about the challenges we've been facing, and we feel less isolated and alone,"

When Jeannine had her son during her third year of the program, that support became very real. "I was back in class on Monday with him," she recalls. "There were so many people in that space and place that cared for him, so that I could continue to do what I needed to do in order to make a better life for us."

That sense of care and relationship continues into the classroom. For Jeannine, culturally responsive and relational teaching begins by creating an environment where students feel they belong. "The first thing they're doing is building that relationship, building that circle of

trust and opening up the potential for that student to learn."

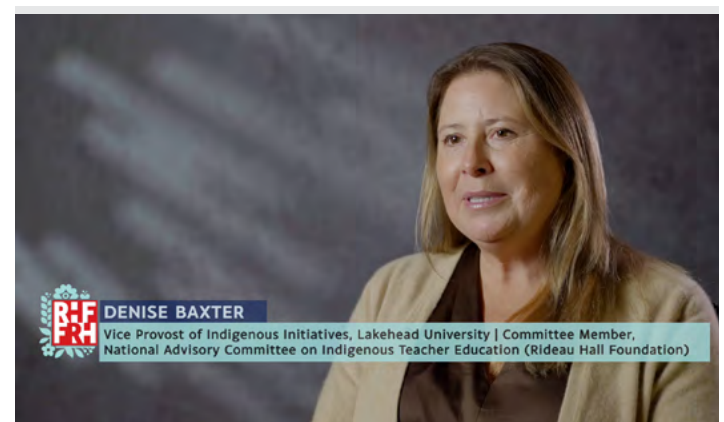
Yvette Arcand, Director of Indigenous Teacher Education Programs at the University of Saskatchewan, describes a similar approach. Students enter teacher education with very different experiences of culture, language and ceremony. The role of a program is not to assume where someone is starting, but to create opportunities for them to explore.

"For us in teacher education, we only look at opening that door for them a little bit," she says. "They're able to know what questions [to ask]... and that they are worth it, and that there's people behind them if they need that support."

For Rachel Mishenene, Director of the Indigenous Teacher Education Initiative at the Rideau Hall Foundation, nurturing educators also means recognizing that learning does not begin and end in a classroom.

"Creating space for land also provides opportunity for Knowledge Holders and Elders in the community to come in to share their experiences," she says.

It is an approach that creates space for different forms of knowledge and different ways of learning which Denise Baxter, Vice-Provost, Indigenous Initiatives at Lakehead University, sees as fundamental.



"There are multiple ways to see and be in the world," she says. "When we sit down together and we work together, we learn from each other. We kind of build that respect and understanding for each other."

Those connections can extend well beyond an individual program or institution. Aluki Kotierk, co-chair of the National Advisory Committee on Indigenous Teacher Education, points to the importance of bringing Indigenous educators and leaders together to share experiences and learn from one another.

"We now have a network to be able to talk with other people about the challenges we've been facing, and we feel less isolated and alone," she says. "And that in itself sometimes gives us courage to continue working on the things that we're working on."

For Cynthia Sigurdson, Cultural Programmer with the Louis Riel Institute, nurturing learning is also reciprocal. Educators bring knowledge into a space, but they continue learning from the people around

them. "Everybody has their own knowledge of their culture and their heritage, and we can learn from each other," she says. "I'm learning as much as I'm teaching."

Ultimately, nurturing Indigenous teacher education means creating programs, communities and systems where educators do not have to succeed alone. It means surrounding them with the relationships, culture, knowledge and support that allow them to continue learning and to create those same conditions for the students who follow.

Discover more stories from Indigenous teacher education students, educators, and leaders in our full Story Corner series: <https://indigenousteachers.canadiangeographic.ca/>

ITEP Stories / Project Spotlight

Gakino'amaage: Teach For Canada - Building a Pathway That Supports Educators at Every Stage

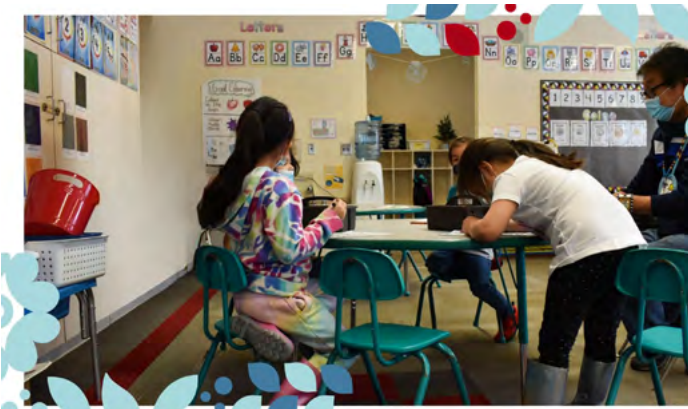
For **Gakino'amaage: Teach For Canada**, supporting more First Nations educators means building the infrastructure around them, from the first steps toward a career in education through certification and into the classroom.

Working with a network of 32 First Nations, Gakino'amaage is developing Endaayan, a First Nations-governed Bachelor of Education pathway, that is designed to allow community members to earn a teacher certification while continuing to live and work in their home Nations. Endaayan is not being built as a standalone program. It is part of a broader pathway intended to connect recruitment, Education Assistant programming, mentorship, certification and long-term employment.

That approach begins by recognizing where future teachers are already found. Education Assistants (EAs) are a key part of Gakino'amaage's educator pipeline, with many already working in classrooms and interested in becoming certified teachers. Gakino'amaage's existing Education Assistant programming provides mentorship and helps EAs move toward teacher certification, while Endaayan is being designed as the next stage of that journey.

Just as importantly, the pathway is being designed around the realities educators face. Surveys of Education Assistants identified caregiving responsibilities, financial barriers, access to education and professional development as obstacles to reaching their professional goals. In response, Gakino'amaage is developing supports that address these barriers from the outset, including options that would allow candidates to remain employed while studying, accommodate family responsibilities, and access learning remotely or in low-bandwidth environments.





The infrastructure is cultural as well as practical. Elders and Knowledge Keepers are embedded in governance and program design, providing ongoing guidance on culture, language and evaluation. Professional development, language preparation, mentorship and First Nations-led data governance are also being built into the model so that support extends beyond simply providing access to a degree.

“Education Assistants (EAs) are a key part of Gakino'amaage's educator pipeline, with many already working in classrooms and interested in becoming certified teachers.”

Community input is also shaping a more flexible route to certification. Rather than expecting every educator to enter at the same point, Gakino'amaage is exploring phased credentials and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) to recognize the knowledge, classroom experience and cultural expertise educators already carry. The goal is a pathway that can support people through high school prerequisites, Education Assistant training and ultimately a B.Ed., while accommodating employment, caregiving and community responsibilities.



Gakino'amaage is a great example of how supporting more Indigenous educators goes beyond creating pathways into teaching. It means recognizing the experience educators already bring, addressing the barriers that can make certification difficult, and providing the mentorship, flexibility and culturally grounded supports they need to build lasting careers in their communities.

Explore Indigenous Teacher Education across Canada

Discover Indigenous teacher education programs and pathways across the country through the Celebrating Indigenous Teacher Education interactive map.

[Explore the map](#)



Resources

A selection of resources, opportunities, and initiatives supporting Indigenous teacher education, language revitalization, and community-led learning across the network.



RHF Indigenous Teacher Education Summit 2025 - The Path Forward: What We Heard

Report: Explore key insights from conversations on Indigenous teacher education across Canada, including priorities around Indigenous-led governance, land- and language-based learning, culturally safe pathways, mentorship and stronger partnerships. [Read the report](#)



Indspire Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries and Scholarships:

Indigenous students pursuing post-secondary studies, skilled trades, apprenticeships and technology programs can apply for a range of financial supports through one application. Applications close November 1.

Learn more at [Bursaries & Scholarships | Indspire](#)



RHF Upcoming Webinar: Explore Knowledge

Weavers: Join the RHF and First Nations University of Canada for an introduction to Knowledge Weavers, a new resource hub bringing together culturally grounded resources, research and promising practices for Indigenous teacher education. The webinar will include a tour of the platform and practical ways educators, students and education leaders can use it in their work.

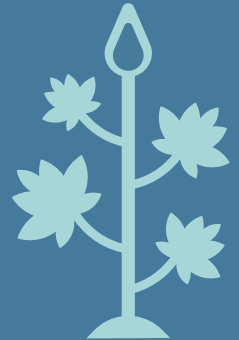
Date and time: Nov 4, 1-2 pm EST



Indigenous Education Resources — McGill

University: The Office of First Nations and Inuit Education has developed a collection of resources to support instructors, particularly non-Indigenous faculty, in learning about Indigenous approaches to education and informing their teaching practice.

[Explore the resources](#)



Thank you!

As we bring this issue to a close, I find myself reflecting on the people who nurtured me along my own educational journey.

When I was young, my family moved from our reserve in Northern Ontario to the city. Anishinaabemowin is my family's first language, and while I grew up with strong land-based teachings from my family and community, I rarely saw my language, culture, or ways of knowing reflected in school. Over time, I lost much of my ability to speak the language, though I could still understand it.

It wasn't until college that I met an Indigenous educator in a leadership role. Through her mentorship, I learned about our histories, rights, residential schools, and the importance of our lands, languages, and stories. She helped me recognize the strength of my own identity, inspiring me to become a teacher and ensure Indigenous voices, perspectives, and ways of knowing are reflected in education. Her mentorship also showed me the importance of having people who support and guide us,

For me, this is what Nurture means. It is the relationships that help us grow, the mentors who help us see our potential, the Elders and Knowledge Keepers who guide us, and the families and communities who help us stay grounded in who we are. Nurture reminds us that learning is not something we do alone. It is sustained through care, connection, language, culture, and reciprocity.

As you finish reading, I invite you to reflect on the people who have nurtured your own journey. Who encouraged you, guided you, or helped you find your voice? How can we continue creating spaces where Indigenous teachers, learners, languages, and ways of knowing are valued and can flourish?

Miigwetch for being part of this work and for helping nurture the future of Indigenous education, one relationship at a time.

— Rachel Mishenene, Director, Indigenous Teacher Education initiative

The Rideau Hall Foundation (RHF) is a non-partisan national charitable organization that amplifies and supports the past, present and future impact of Canada's Governor General, and seeks to engage all Canadians in the core elements of Canadian democracy. By working in partnership, the RHF celebrates excellence while creating opportunities and connecting communities, all towards the shared purpose of a better Canada.

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