

YEAR 2020 & RE-ENVISIONING ITS FUTURE: Anishinabek Education Framework for Kenjgewin Teg



Ngo Dwe Waangizid Anishinaabe

One Anishinaabe Family

Debenjiged gii'saan anishinaaben akiing giibi dgwon gaadeni mnidoo waadiziwin.

Creator placed the Anishinabe on the earth along with the gift of spirituality.

Shkode, nibi, aki, noodin, giibi dgosdoonan wii naagdowendmang maanpii shkagmigaang.

Here on mother earth, there were gifts given to the Anishinabe to look after, fire, water, earth and wind.

Debenjiged gii miinaan gechtwaa wendaagog Anishinaaben waa naagdoonjin ninda niizhwaaswi kino maadwinan.

The Creator also gave the Anishinabe seven sacred gifts to guide them. They are:

Zaagidwin, Debwewin, Mnaadendmowin, Nbwaakaawin, Dbaadendiziwin, Gwekwaadziwin miinwa Aakedhewin.

Love, Truth, Respect, Wisdom, Humility, Honesty and Bravery.

Debenjiged kiimiingona dedbinwe wi naagdowendiwin.

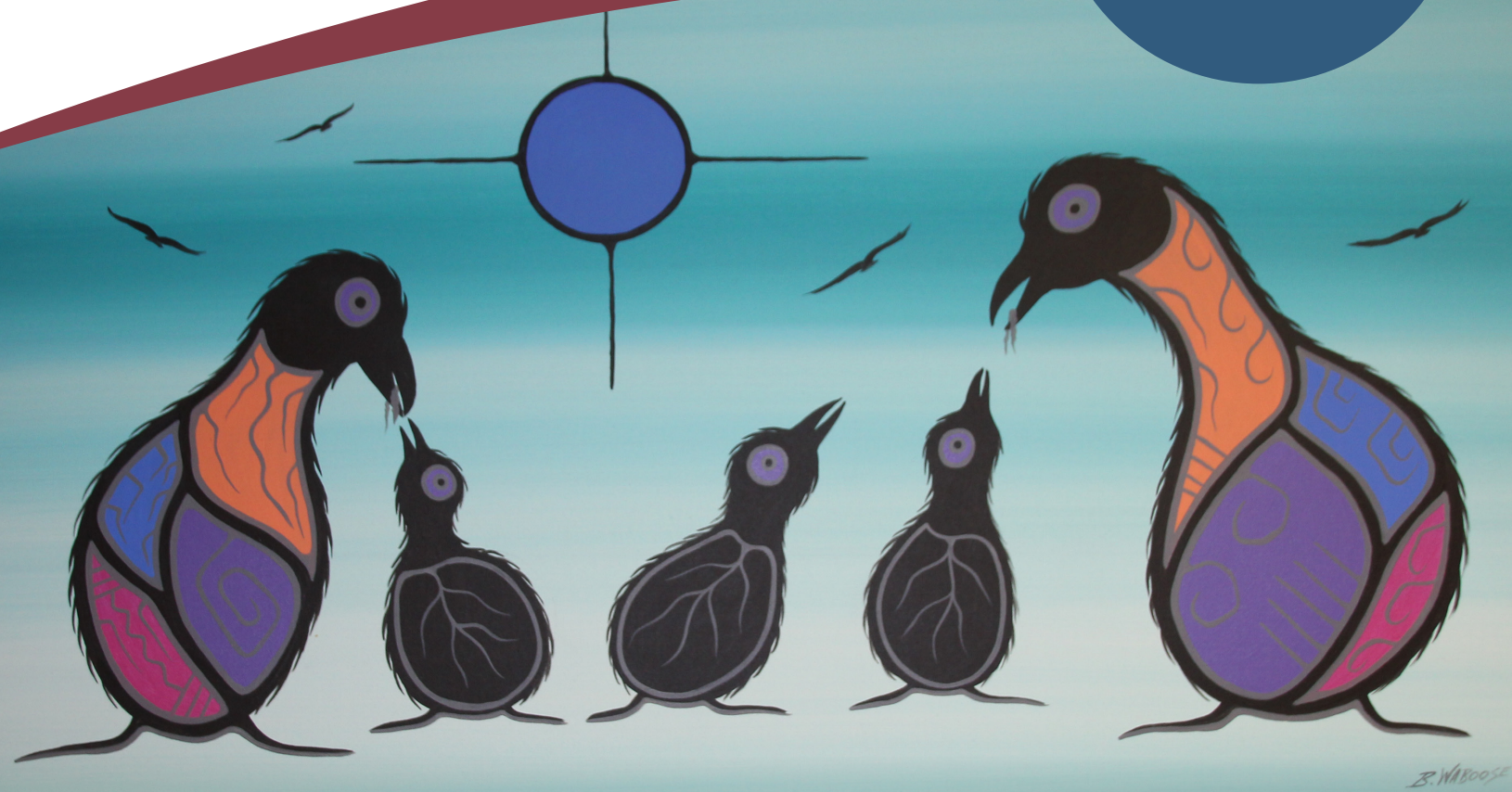
Creator gave us sovereignty to govern ourselves.

Ka mnaadendanaa gaabi zhiwebag miinwaa nango megwaa ezhwebag, miinwa geyaabi waa ni zhiwebag.

We respect and honour the past, present and future.

(Preamble to the Anishinabek Nation Constitution – as adopted by the Grand Council in June 2011) (UOI, 2012); Developed on Mndioo Mnising, UCCMM Elders Circle)

“How can we ensure we are living by the Ngo Dwe Waangizid Anishinaabe (the Anishinabek Nation preamble to the Anishinabek Constitution) in our Kenjgewin Teg Educational framework?”



Why a Kenjgewin Teg Framework is Critical for Year 2020

Kenjgewin Teg is embarking and preparing for a chartered path in Anishinabek education and training for the year 2020. The way forward for the Anishinabek of Mnidoo Mnising for the next decade and beyond is going to be of such magnitude that it necessitates the formulation of reconceptualising a new way of honouring, creating, sharing and teaching from a worldview that is truly Indigenous education or more specifically, Anishinabek education.

Creating or redefining an Anishinabek education system and its services that are defined, charted, delivered and governed by the Anishinabek people who have reclaimed and returned to the embers

of what constitutes authentic people hood and asserting sovereignty has been steadily emerging for reclamation. Kenjgewin Teg is seeking ways to move forward with anti-oppressive education, and part of moving forward is understanding the current dynamics of oppression and to consistently and conscientiously work against it.

Kenjgewin Teg Educational Institute will continue to strive for educational autonomy by utilizing a progressive community-based approach – with a foreseeable expectation that the existing organizational vision and mission will evolve and change as the new framework development begins to happen...



Overview of Process

Four separate gatherings took place from December 2016 to March 2017 for the purpose of Kenjgewin Teg's Re-envisioning of Education Services and System (KRESS). These four sessions resulted in participants both learning and sharing their knowledge and experience on varying formats and ways of sharing. KRESS had as its primary goal that of reviewing and specifying the future direction of Kenjgewin Teg, as a result of several micro and macroenvironmental changes occurring in Anishinabek education at the local, regional and national level. These changes include many positive advancements in structural changes affecting many First Nations and their approaches to Indigenous education, including revisions to current structure of services.

Participants in the four sessions included Elders, Knowledge Keepers, leaders, educators, professionals, parents, community members, and students.

Participants had varied experiences providing an enrichment of multiple perspectives, and all had a vested interest in the future of Anishinaabe education and Kenjgewin Teg Educational Institute's role.

In order to begin defining a new framework, it was necessary to do this against the backdrop of reviewing 250 years of colonial policies, to help in achieving an understanding why First Nation communities (which includes Kenjgewin Teg member First Nation communities) function the way we do amidst a complex array of social, political, economic and cultural challenges. KRESS as a group essentially went through a re-envisioning process which happened in stages and supported by each member's gifts and experiences. Many of the KRESS participants used story, experience and narrative which became part of creating this framework; shared stories and narratives are monumental in understanding and moving forward in this journey of reclaiming and asserting a new journey in Anishinabek education on Mnidoo Mnising.

Grounding Principles

Anishinabek Worldview

The Anishinabek worldview must be part of every component of any framework or system Kenjgewin Teg builds. It has been well documented by Indigenous scholars around the world that current approaches need to change for Indigenous education and those leading it. Using and creating a locally and explicitly articulated worldview through an Anishinabek lens has emerged in our framework development process and has become the foundational core. In speaking with Elders as part of our work, a multi-dimensional framework is now envisioned that has an Indigenous/Anishinabek worldview in every component... a worldview that is living in education.

Note: The Board of Directors formally approved this direction in name change, and the organization is transitioning and staying true to its original and intended Anishinabe name: Kenjgewin Teg.

"No more shut-eye dance!"

"we are in two worlds, even with the name of KTEI, is partly written in both English and Anishinaabemowin. We do not have an 'institute,' we have lodges and our bundles belong there. In May 2017"

Anishinabek Governance

Governance will be held as an integral part of Kenjgewin Teg's articulated education system and services framework, as the Anishinabek Clan Governance system was referred to consistently and repeatedly. The specific implementation components remain to be identified and explored; it is this 'operationalization' of the Anishinabek clan governance model in the education sector which will continue be the subject of ongoing, future conversations – another living process.

It is to be expected that there will be varied experiences in knowledge and practices in Indigenous *governance*, but all KRESS members had vested interests in learning and had a belief in the future of Anishinaabe education and Kenjgewin Teg's possibilities for new perspectives in traditional education *governance*. Going forward, it is expected that *governance* will

continue to be viewed from multiple levels and varying perspectives - includes being subjected to various interpretations and definitions from multiple community viewpoints pending the level of knowledge and actual practices in any given community, and their breadth and depth of knowledge of the Anishinabek clan governance system.

In its framework, Kenjgewin Teg acknowledges and distinguishes two key practicalities of the governance conversation:

Worldview: Education Governance
[The BIG reason of why our own Anishinabek framework is needed]

- Anishinabek Clan System of Governance
- Roles and Responsibilities for Nationhood: Asserting of Self Determination in Education Self Governance
- Education & Purpose: Student Growth and Finding Life Purpose based on Clan Roles and Responsibilities

Operational: Education Governance
[The PRACTICAL picture we will need for implementation]

- Organizational Structure and Leadership Practices (vs. Corporate Board Governance models)
- Accrediation of Anishinabek Content and Knowledge
- Authentication & Vetting of Traditional Knowledge and Languages: (Elder Council Roles/Responsibilities);
- Mew Terminology and Language: Teachings, Politics and Guidelines

Governance strength existed in Anishinabek communities before colonialism.

"It's so simple, it's hard! Just do it!"

Education System and Services: Key Framework Messages

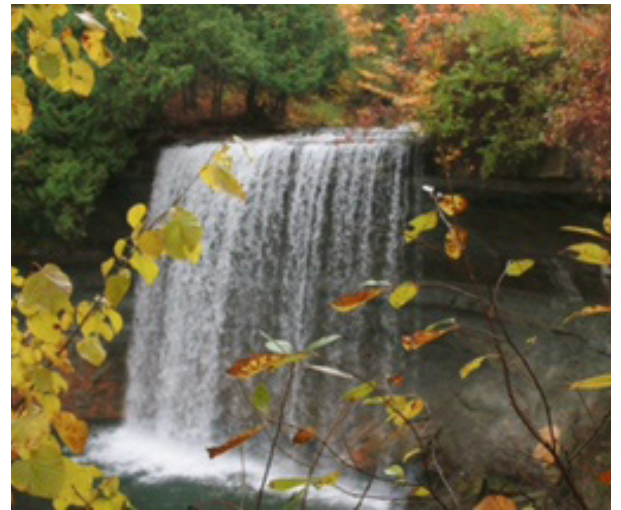
Learning our Truth: Towards our own Reconciliation

This re-envisioning exercise of KRESS must take the past into consideration, the present and the future as it states in the Anishinabek Nation preamble. It is through our very DNA, our blood that Indigenous people, including our own, encode the trauma of what has and continues to happen to us as a people, circumventing our Nationhood. Understanding that we unconsciously carry the trauma of our ancestors in our blood, then we can begin to unravel the dysfunction that we currently carry as Anishinabek people.

But we also a people of resilience; that too is in our blood. To return to a connection of caretakers of mother earth and to develop a reconnection of strength, pride, connection and resiliency in ourselves as Anishinabek is the way forward. This is a birthright and now that education will truthfully inform and help us understand our historical trauma of loss, assimilation and colonial policies, we can move forward in Anishinabek education with reclamation of self through knowledge, empowerment and resistance.

Once known, our history becomes very riveting – and through education, Kenjgewin Teg will be sowing seeds for future generations of Anishinabek Nation citizens who are empowered, kind, and honest – and always mindful of our original instructions on how to ‘be’ from the Creator.

“We are starting to acknowledge the history of where we were in our Nation to Nation relationship. Now we are in the process of educating other nations to recognize our own bundles of how we are connected to the land. Many nations are recognizing this by acknowledging what has taken place in history.” (J. Eshkawogon, 2017)”





"Where will our little ones land? Does our history and our future belong to us?"

"What are we setting up our children for? What are our standards of identity?"

Reflecting and Deciding where we want to be in Anishinabek Education

Anishinabemowin (learned and spoken) is what makes the Nation as Anishinaabe people unique, as it contains the Anishinabek worldview, virtues, philosophies, and instructions on all our relations within the natural world.

At the end of the day we want education that re-centers Anishinaabe language, epistemologies, culture, and allows the individual to flourish because they have a strong sense of identity and self. This way forward is under the guise of being "consciousness raising" using a proactive and positive standpoint so that we can imagine our future, along with what we want and what we are inherently about...

Kenjgewin Teg will be a solid contributor to supporting students as they walk in two worlds supported by Anishinaabe worldview from all directions. Our role in their educational journey is critical to their holistic development.

Kenjgewin Teg also has the potential to flow into mainstream education systems to support change and expedite the decolonization process. "The decolonization of education is not just about changing a system for Indigenous peoples, but for everyone. We all benefit by it" (Battiste, 2013, p. 22).

Asserting our Anishinabek Worldview – Indigegogy, Teaching, and Practice

An interesting way of describing what Anishinabek people know is *eshi kinomaading*; meaning, *how we teach each other*. If, taken in that context, that pedagogy is how one teaches, then Indigenous pedagogy would involve the reconnecting of Indigenous peoples to the land and the social relations, knowledge and languages that arise from the land.

For Indigenous pedagogy to be true to who we are as Indigenous peoples and in education services provided by Kenjgewin Teg, it must incorporate relationships: Indigenous pedagogy must delve into ceremonies, stories, place and time and then relate them to the present in education, teaching and learning.



Importance of Self Accreditation

Kenjgewin Teg will be a certified and accredited institute by 2021. Self accreditation is crucial for Kenjgewin Teg to continue the journey of providing quality programs and services that are in alignment with Anishinaabe ways of being and doing. Our accreditation process will be framed by the philosophies of the communities that we serve. Our programming will integrate Anishinaabe culture, language and worldviews into every area of delivery.

Our accreditation process will be living. Kenjgewin Teg accreditation will be a continuous self-study and evaluation that will foster quality assurance in education. We will develop our own criteria and guidelines for assessing educational effectiveness that values and reflects the diversity of our communities. Self accreditation is the next step in asserting our own jurisdiction on the validation of our knowledge and learning systems.



Mobilizing Community Knowledge Holders

Kenjgewin Teg will mobilize community resources and valuable language speakers; community will be brought to the curriculum circle as part of new teaching and learning practices and philosophies. Kenjgewin Teg will be opening the doors to more knowledge keepers in their place of learning.



"We have all these language speakers and knowledge keepers but we are not using them. We tell ourselves our knowledge keepers are important but we do not utilize them"

Education System and Services: Framework Components

Anishinabe Kendaaswin (Ojibwe Knowledge)

Where does learning happen? How does Indigenous learning happen? And in what language does learning happen are just as important as the content of the learning itself. Land, language, ceremony, and sacred history are what make Anishinaabe people, Anishinaabe people.

The challenge rests with us as a place of learning that in order to bring about change, there will be varied approaches in policy, curricula and pedagogy which impacts how we teach learners in the lifelong learning spectrum – and with great consideration of *how we learn* as Anishinabek citizens. Life is about connectedness; the connections we make with the land and with each other. Relationships are important, as our blood memory is directly tied through the bundles of our DNA and the land;

both bundles hold the key to connections that we need to move forward in Indigenous pedagogy. We are all related to each other through language (written, painted, oral) and the relationships we form. When we fail to see that we are related to all beings and that pedagogy is within everything, then we cannot pass our bundles on to the next generation.

“We have knowledge such as the four types of land, waters, fires and air, if we want to learn things we go to the lodges with these teachings”



Anishinabe Odziwin (Ojibwe Way of Life): Land as Pedagogy & Land as First Teacher

Kenjgewin Teg will center our place-space-relationships with land to curriculum and education. Land will be used as a decolonizing framework and as an untangling of colonial relationships of the past. Kenjgewin Teg will assist this way forward to advance our members, other non-Indigenous people and our Nations to be strong, vibrant and sustainable using an Anishinabek lens that uses, language, land and relationships as the basis of ensuring the advancement of progressing education in every discipline from social sciences, health care, business, legal studies, humanities through to arts and technology. Place based, experiential learning in which the land is our classroom must be the way forward regarding education at Kenjgewin Teg. Our philosophies, pedagogies, and epistemology will be the foundation of *Anishinabe minidoo-aadzawin*.

Anishinabe N'dow (Ojibwe Identity)

We want education that re-centers Anishinabe language, epistemologies, culture, and allows the individual to flourish because they have a strong sense of identity and self. Everyone has a choice on how to seek and have a purpose – and education plays a significant role in this discovery.

“Where will our little ones land? Does our history and our future belong to us?”

“Don’t abuse your name there are reasons why you have it. These names help us, such as when going on a Fast. You take care of your name.”





Anishinabemowin (Ojibwe Language)

Understanding the Anishinabek language is core to our Anishinabek peoplehood/Nationhood and that it is an element forming a strong foundational basis of a new framework for Kenjgewin Teg Educational Institute was key in this process. Language is the basis for our collective identity and that it needs to permeate everything that Kenjgewin Teg represents. As the Elders have shared, the voice of the land is in our language.

As language is at the root of Indigenous pedagogy, relationships are the arms that reach out from language to weave together knowledge, place and land to us all. If one cannot nurture that relationship first within themselves, then we cannot move forward in *eshi kinomaading*.

It was clearly articulated, and strongly supported, that the Anishinabek language, Anishinabemowin, is of utmost importance to participants within a new education framework. Elders, traditional knowledge keepers, and language keepers, all voiced this importance, and they did so in Anishinabemowin at each of the four sessions. Anishinabemowin (learned and spoken) is what makes the Anishinabek Nation as Anishinaabe people unique, as it contains the Anishinabek worldview, virtues, philosophies, and instructions on all our relations within the natural world.



Mnidoo Aadziwin

Anishinaabe people think of the life journey as continual cycle of *minidoo-aadzawin*. This gift of spirit is given by the creator and descends on their journey, seeking guardianship from the human world and is to be nurtured and loved. The spirit is a gift and is considered a teacher to those they are given to. The health of this spirit is not only the mother's responsibility, but it is a collective groups responsibility for it to make a healthy journey from the spirit world to the human world. Kenjgewin Teg's framework, as part of *minidoo-aadzawin* will take its responsibility that an educational learning places has, and will support and work with families to ensure that the spiritual being is nurtured, loved, and knows their place in the world – so that all will come to know through their stages of life.



Our Outcome: Anishinabe Bmaadziwin (Good Life)

The traditional teachings that guide us as Anishinabek people to live a life of balance and purpose – what is known as *mino bimaadziwin*. It has been found through Elders' story and narratives that ceremonies, songs, learning off the land, language, history, experiential learning, using

community knowledge, instilling a strong work ethic and living with *mino bimaadziwin* is the key to success of self, community, and nation.

As Kenjgewin Teg successfully implements this framework, students, their families, and communities will be on their way to a good life...



What Happens Next?

Kenjgewin Teg will continue to use community narrative, and story through several gatherings to continue developing this 2020 framework which defines what the organization stands for; this will be a living framework, which comes from the people, and is for the people.

This is what makes for change and becoming a self-determining organization in Anishinabek education: valuing our Anishinabek knowledge, governance and all our ways of being, feeling, thinking, and doing.