

GUIDE TO WELCOMING AND INCLUDING INDIGENOUS STUDENTS IN QUEBEC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS



by the Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec in collaboration with Quebec Native Friendship Centres and experts from the education sector

This guide was initiated, managed and written by the Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ).

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Legend



Inspiring practices that promote the welcome, inclusion and educational perseverance of Indigenous students



Tools available in the Toolbox



Avenues for collaboration between Native Friendship Centres and schools, school boards and school service centres.



Further reading or resources to encourage reflection or deepen the understanding of a subject



Common terms

Colonialism:	A structure of domination based on dispossessing people of their land and political authority. Characterized by the appropriation of the territory's resources, and the appropriation of the spirit and political autonomy of the colonized people.
Decolonization:	A critical process of deconstructing colonial knowledge, ideologies and structures to enable the recognition and revitalization of Indigenous ways and world view. The decolonization process allows for actions to be guided by the intentions, perspectives and goals of Indigenous people themselves.
First Nations:	The term "First Nations" is used to refer to all Indigenous Peoples in Canada, with the exception of the Inuit and Métis. The term "First Nations" came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the terms "Indian" and "Indian band," which many people find offensive. Although the term "First Nations" is widely used, it has no legal definition in Canada.
First Peoples:	The term "First Peoples" describes the original inhabitants of Canada and their descendants. This includes First Nations, Inuit and Métis.
Indigenous:	In Canada, the term "Indigenous" refers to the First Peoples of North America and their descendants. According to the Constitution Act, 1982, it refers to three distinct cultural groups, namely the First Nations, Inuit and Métis.
Inuit:	Indigenous people of northern Canada who live in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, northern Quebec and northern Labrador.
Non-Indigenous:	People who are not Indigenous.

"It is precisely because education was the primary tool of oppression of Aboriginal people, and miseducation of all Canadians, that we have concluded that education holds the key to reconciliation."

- Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

Quebec's Native Friendship Centre Movement

The Native Friendship Centre Movement has been growing in Quebec for over 50 years. The Movement comprises the Native Friendship Centres and the Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ), as well as all the Indigenous people who use the Centres. Together, they combine their efforts to improve the quality of life of urban Indigenous people and foster the harmonious coexistence of communities in the cities of Quebec.

The Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement is:

- \rightarrow Native Friendship Centres in several cities where there is a strong Indigenous presence.
- \rightarrow Approximately 300 employees in the Movement, more than 80% of whom are women.
- \rightarrow More than 200 partners that contribute to the success of the Native Friendship Centre Movement.
- → More than 2,500 young people involved and participating in the Native Friendship Centres' programs and services.

A continuum of integrated services to support individuals and families in all spheres of life (health and wellness, culture, employability, education, justice, advocacy, youth engagement, early childhood and family, etc.)

The RCAAQ is the provincial association that represents the Native Friendship Centres. Founded in 1976, the RCAAQ advocates for the rights and interests of Indigenous citizens living in cities and actively supports the development of its affiliated Native Friendship Centres.

- → Native Friendship Centres are urban service hubs, living environments and cultural anchors for Indigenous people;
- → Interveners from these Centres work to build bridges and provide liaison and support for the familyschool-community relationship.

Located in major urban areas, such as Montréal, and in smaller cities in more remote areas, such as Senneterre, Native Friendship Centres deal with very different realities. Variables include accessibility to public services, socio-economic issues in the city and the specific characteristics of their members (nation of origin, language, socio-economic situation, needs, etc.).

All the Native Friendship Centres share the common mission of improving the quality of life of Indigenous citizens living in or passing through urban areas. They are multi-service centres located in urban areas that meet the needs of First Nations, Inuit and Métis * people. Their "open door" policy means that all are welcome, regardless of status, nation of origin or place of residence. They create a continuum of integrated services to support individuals and families in all areas of life.

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^{*} In Quebec, the provincial government does not recognize any Métis nation within its borders.

INTRODUCTION

Providing a welcoming, inclusive school environment that nurtures harmonious living and learning for all students is the shared responsibility of everyone in the education sector.

This guide is a reference tool for welcoming, including and promoting the educational success of Indigenous students in Quebec's elementary and secondary schools. It provides information on the main issues related to the educational success of Indigenous students, practical courses of action, examples of inspiring practices, tools and resources to go further. Above all, it provides inspiration and ideas for encouraging collaboration between Native Friendship Centres and schools, school boards and school service centres (SSCs).

This guide is intended for all those in the Quebec education sector who wish to improve their practices, including school administrators, school board or SSC professionals and classroom teachers. We all have a responsibility to make our schools welcoming and inclusive spaces, to stamp out systemic racism and to recognize the value of Indigenous cultures and knowledge in education. As outlined in Quebec's Policy on Educational Success, the threefold mission of schools is to educate, socialize and provide qualifications. This mission goes far beyond formal qualifications, instead taking into account the full potential of individuals in their intellectual, cognitive, affective, social and physical dimensions, from the moment they enter school. It is imperative that we take action to ensure that our schools help Indigenous students develop their full potential.

Reading this guide is therefore a first step for those who, with empathy and cultural and pedagogical humility, wish to work toward enhancing the welcome, inclusion and educational success of Indigenous students.

"Teachers play an indispensable role in the process of reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples (...). [They must work to] prioritize the strengthening of intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect." (Government of Québec, 2020, p. 14).

"For every educator, our responsibility is making a commitment to both unlearn and learn—to unlearn racism and superiority in all its manifestations, while examining our own social constructions in our judgments and learn new ways of knowing, valuing others, accepting diversity, and making equity and inclusion foundations for all learners." (Battiste, 2013, p. 166)

Indigenous Peoples in Quebec are:

- → 10 First Nations and the Inuit.
- \rightarrow 55 communities*.
- → In Quebec, there is no legally recognized Métis community, as is the case in several western Canada provinces and in Ontario.
- → Each nation has its own history, culture and language.
- → Younger population than the rest of Quebec and, on average, with larger families.
- → Higher demographic growth than the non-Indigenous population, particularly in urban areas.
- → More mobile than the rest of Quebec's population, meaning more frequent moves and more complex school transitions.

53 %

Of the First Nations and Inuit population reside permanently in cities¹.

Cities also are often a place of transition or temporary settlement.

In urban areas, Indigenous people have been taking action, gathering and organizing resources for several decades already. Proof of this is the large number of urban Indigenous organizations in the province, including the Native Friendship Centres.

Click on tool to access

TOOL 1 Map of First Nations, Inuit and affiliated Native Friendship Centres in Quebec

You can have this tool printed for display in your classroom.

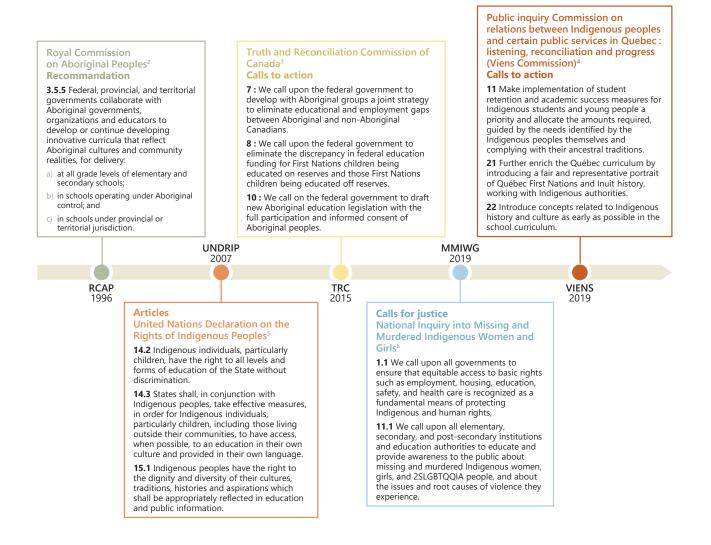
* Source: Lévesque et al. (2019), with data from the 2016 Statistics Canada census.



Commissions of inquiry

In recent decades, concerns about the education of Indigenous students have been the subject of several commissions of inquiry at the provincial, national and international levels.

These various reports call for greater consideration of the historical and contemporary realities of Indigenous students.



Despite all the findings and recommendations that have been made over many years, too few actions have been taken that would have a significant positive impact on Indigenous people, and such actions have often been delayed.

Working together to support Indigenous students in their educational success

In the forest, all living things and elements live together in harmony, each playing an important role in the health and balance of the whole. For a new tree to grow and develop, several factors are involved, including the soil quality, light, animals, insects, fungi, plants, etc. Just like in the forest, we know that for students to develop their full learning potential, collaboration between many different actors is needed.

In the case of urban Indigenous students, we know that their perseverance and success depend on their parents, family, community, Indigenous community organizations, Elders, school administration, school, afterschool services and classroom dynamics. This guide focuses on the three main types of issues (school, language and coexistence) that influence the success and well-being of Indigenous students in Quebec schools. Note that these three issues are interconnected and cannot be considered separately. It is important to keep in mind that the three issues affect all actors involved with Indigenous students.

We are all responsible for thinking about these issues and working in a collaborative and open manner to support Indigenous students in developing their full potential.



This guide exists because Indigenous families and Native Friendship Centres see schools as essential allies in reducing inequalities for urban Indigenous people and in promoting harmonious ways of living together. Together, we can take this first step to ensure that our children and youth have equal opportunities to develop and to pursue their aspirations.

Better preparing schools to welcome and include Indigenous students

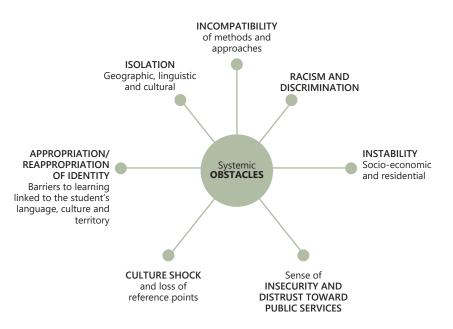
Who are urban Indigenous students?

In the context of the increasing urbanization and mobility of Indigenous families, a growing number of Indigenous children and adolescents are attending Quebec's public schools.

Indigenous students:

- → Have a different experience of school, family, social and cultural contexts than non-Indigenous students and newcomer students;
- → Frequently experience school transitions outside cycle changes which are often very complex as they involve cultural, family, academic and geographic changes;
- → Often have an interrupted school career and a very low graduation rate—realities that are attributable to the many systemic barriers they face.

In high school, Indigenous students are over-represented among those showing educational delays. In addition, the over-identification of learning and language difficulties among Indigenous children is of great concern.



Barriers Indigenous students face in cities⁷

Currently, there is no data to determine how many Indigenous students attend Quebec's public schools and no means of tracking their academic success. Nevertheless, it is estimated that more than a third of Indigenous students attend a school in Quebec's public system.

Negative educational and social experiences in the city for Indigenous students and their parents are detrimental to school perseverance and success.

THE NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRES

Families need an informal network in the city and to come together as people who share a common history and culture. In addition to providing a continuum of services to urban Indigenous families and serving as a liaison between schools and families, Native Friendship Centres are living environments where Indigenous youth can expand their social network, have culturally relevant learning experiences, and reinforce a sense of pride in their identity—all elements that are considered essential to lifelong learning, development and success.

Turn to the Native Friendship Centres to:

- \rightarrow Promote services for Indigenous students attending your school and their families.
- ightarrow Learn more about Indigenous languages and cultures in your area.
- ightarrow Stay up to date with public events and cultural outreach activities in your city and participate with your class.
- → Work in a complementary way to ensure that Indigenous students and their families have access to all the professional and community services they need.



TAKE IT FURTHER

- → <u>Urban Indigenous People and the Accessibility of Public Services Portrait of the Situation in</u> <u>Quebec</u>, 2018 published by the RCAAQ (2018) (French only);
- → <u>Le point de vue de jeunes autochtones en milieu urbain sur leur parcours scolaire</u>, published by Natasha Blanchet-Cohen et coll. In the Revue Jeunes et société (2018) (French only);
- \rightarrow <u>Vidéo Nous US</u>, celebrating 50 years of the Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement.



Nearly a third of urban Indigenous students are behind in their education by the time they reach high school.

FINDINGS⁸

1 – Realities of Indigenous students are not recognized and are not properly addressed in schools

Transitions and hyper-mobility

The lives of many Indigenous families are shaped by numerous relocations, particularly between urban and community settings. More than half of Indigenous students have experienced at least one school transition in addition to the usual educational changes (childcare–elementary–high school). When a student moves from a community to an urban school, the transition is particularly complex because the school systems are completely different. Moreover, transitions are not always planned and can occur at any time during the school year.

Socio-economic factors

Many Indigenous families struggle with economic poverty and social challenges associated with the intergenerational consequences of colonial policies and systemic racism, such as the low educational attainment of many parents and the difficulty families have in accessing affordable, quality housing.

Rebuilding a trusting relationship with the school system

Indigenous students are often direct descendants of residential school survivors. Their parents and grandparents may be distrustful of Quebec's school system, which is still often representative of abuse and oppression. This past may seem like a long time ago, but the wounds from it are still very present in many families.

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2 – Methods of welcoming Indigenous students are often absent or inadequate

- → In general, school staff are not sufficiently aware of Indigenous realities and do not receive the training or tools to learn about them.
- → Indigenous students find themselves immersed, on a daily basis, in a cultural and linguistic environment that is very different from their own. For some, this can result in cultural shock.
- → Most schools are not prepared for new students' arrival during the year, although this is common for Indigenous students.

3 – New students are often inaccurately assessed, resulting in an over-representation of Indigenous students in special education classes

- → In general, diagnostic tests for learning and language disorders are not adapted for Indigenous students.
- → Indigenous students' knowledge and proficiency in the language of instruction should not influence how their skills are assessed in other school subjects. Interpretation services should therefore be provided.
- → Indigenous students who receive part of their schooling in their communities should not be penalized for any mismatches or gaps between the different school curricula. It should be noted that the Quebec's Ministry of Education validates and endorses the curricula of all First Nations/Inuit schools for each grade level. In this context, making students repeat a grade they have already passed would be not only inappropriate but discriminatory.

4 – Elementary and secondary school curricula do not address historical and contemporary Indigenous realities, nor the cultural and scientific contributions of the First Peoples

- → Many studies have demonstrated the importance and relevance of teaching all students about these facts, in order to properly prepare them to be part of an open and inclusive society.
- → History programs reflect a colonial perspective of Indigenous peoples in Quebec and Canada that is relegated to the past.
- → Teachers often do not have the reflex or the necessary knowledge to include Indigenous aspects in the learning content. However, doing so would not only allow all students to discover Indigenous knowledge and cultures, but also show recognition of Indigenous students.

COMPETENCY 15: Value and promote Indigenous knowledge, worldviews, cultures and history

This competency has been proposed for the Reference Framework for Professional Competencies for Teachers and developed jointly by the First Nations Education Council (FNEC), the Institut Tshakapesh and the Centre de développement de la formation et de la main d'oeuvre Huron-Wendat (CDFM), with the unanimous support of the provincial table on the educational success of Indigenous students. The key elements described in this competency would enable teachers to have a greater understanding of Indigenous learners and to work alongside them to create an equitable and inclusive learning environment.

For more informations on <u>Competency 15</u>, visit the FNEC website in the "Achievements" section.

5 – Pedagogical approaches in schools could be more inclusive and more in line with Indigenous pedagogical approaches

- → Many studies have demonstrated the positive impact of inclusive pedagogical approaches and Indigenous pedagogy on all students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous.
- → Using Indigenous pedagogical approaches and the holistic view of learning would be beneficial to all schools.
- → In general, teaching and assessment do not take into account this holistic view and the ways in which knowledge is transmitted in Indigenous pedagogy.

INCLUSIVE APPROACH

Inclusive education⁹ draws on the strengths, qualities or skills of people in a community. The aim of this relational dynamic is to ensure that children with specific needs can develop their full potential and learn the skills they need for autonomy and self-determination. Being inclusive means first and foremost looking at and deconstructing one's own cultural biases through a lens of cultural humility. This approach is beneficial for all students!

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For Indigenous people, education:

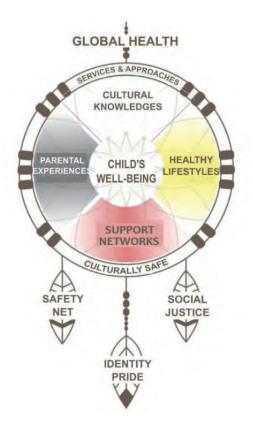
- \rightarrow Is a holistic and voluntary process that continues throughout life;
- → Includes all dimensions of the individual: mind, body, heart and soul (interconnectedness);
- \rightarrow Aims to ensure the overall well-being of the individual and the community;
- \rightarrow Is rooted in the language, the culture and the land;
- \rightarrow Goes beyond the classroom and the concept of academic success;
- → Includes all relationships and life experiences.¹⁰

A holistic view of educational persistence and success allows for consideration of different forms of educational success.

Integrating Indigenous approaches, teaching and values into the classroom

THE DREAMCATCHER OF LIFE : THE DREAMCATCHER OF LIFE IS A CULTURALLY SAFE SERVICE APPROACH TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS CHILDREN.*

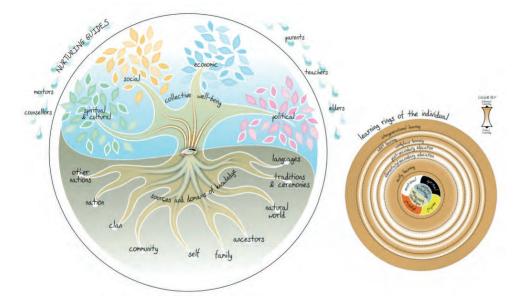
The four action areas—cultural knowledge (spiritual), healthy living (physical), support network (mental) and enriching the parenting experience (emotional)—are the gateways for parents and families. The feathers which are social justice, safety net and identity pride, represent the longer-term changes that are needed to support the development and well-being of all Indigenous children.



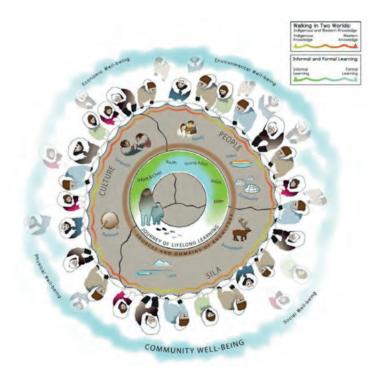
* Diagram representing the optimal development of Indigenous children by the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre. Source: Centre d'amitié autochtone de Vald'Or (CAAVD) (2019) Final report on the assessment of the Abinodjic II Project.



First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model*



Inuit Holistic Lifelong Learning Model



* Pour For more on the holistic learning models, see the Canadian Council on Learning document (CCL, 2009). The State of Aboriginal Learning in Canada: A Holistic Approach to Measuring Success. Ottawa: Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre.

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THE SEVEN SACRED TEACHINGS (OR THE SEVEN GRANDFATHERS TEACHINGS)

The seven sacred teachings serve as a guide to and a means of entrenching traditional cultural values. Although there may be some differences between nations or communities, the seven traditional values are shared by most First Peoples.

WISDOM

Protecting knowledge is a path to wisdom. Communities are built on the gifts that each person has received from the Creator. We must use all our gifts to create healthy and peaceful communities.

LOVE

To know love is to know peace. We must love those around us, but we must also love ourselves.

RESPECT

To honour all of Creation is to have respect. We must show respect if we want to be respected.

COURAGE

Facing adversity with integrity. The courage teaches us to have the mental and moral strength to do what is right and good, even if the consequences may be difficult to accept.

HONESTY

Facing a situation with bravery. We must keep the promises we make to others and those we make to ourselves.

HUMILITY

Seeing ourselves as a sacred part of Creation. Thinking of others before yourself.

TRUTH

To know the truth is to learn, understand and respect the sacred teachings. We must speak the truth and not deceive others, nor seek to deceive ourselves.

Inspired by:

Manitoba Trauma Information and Education Center (2021)

Best Start Resource Centre (2010) A Child Becomes Strong: Journeying Through Each Stage of the Life Cycle.

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ACTION AREAS

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

- → Establish **policies** to ensure equal opportunities in education: recognize circumstances that may influence students' capacity to learn (bilingualism, multiple transitions, intergenerational trauma, etc.).
- → Establish policies for voluntary self-identification of Indigenous students by nation and record statistics related to Indigenous students.
- Put in place a service dedicated to school transitions for Indigenous students, extending from early childhood to high school, to help ensure the implementation and continuity of appropriate and effective means of intervention.
- → Develop agreement protocols with Indigenous organizations, including Native Friendship Centres, to facilitate the sharing of information and to formalize collaborative best practices.

AT SCHOOL

- Create and adopt a strategic action plan to foster pedagogical approaches that are sensitive to Indigenous realities and that value Indigenous knowledge and cultures.
- → Establish specific **welcoming procedures** for Indigenous students.
- → Establish advisory committees* to support Indigenous students and their families while developing and applying intervention plans to ensure they correspond to the students' situations and needs.
- → Provide ongoing education for all students and staff, including those in after-school services, on Indigenous realities.
- Provide ongoing training for teachers and all professionals who work with Indigenous students (including speech therapists, resource teachers, psychologists, psychoeducators, special education staff, afterschool staff, etc.) to ensure that Indigenous students have access to appropriate assessment and support services that take into account their historical, family, cultural and linguistic realities.
- → Put in place the necessary mechanisms to ensure that assessment, diagnostics and placement of Indigenous students are in no way influenced by school professionals' cultural and linguistic biases or lack of knowledge of Indigenous realities, and conduct regular reviews to correct such errors.

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^{*} These committees may include parents, Indigenous liaison, a teacher's aide, special educator (if needed) and psychoeducator (if needed). Support measures and time spent on this task could be recognized for those involved.

IN THE CLASSROOM

- → Obtain and use Indigenous pedagogical material.
- → Carry out projects designed to encourage Indigenous students' success, using available funding*.
- → Promote learning through **observation and experimentation**.
- → Organize activities **outside the school**.
- → Provide tools for students to improve their vocabulary in the language of instruction (e.g., create a glossary for all school subjects).
- → Encourage Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to work together by creating **mixed groups**.
- → Recognize the essential role of Knowledge Keepers in the transmission of Indigenous knowledge and integrate this latter into certain lessons.
- Allow students to take part in catch-up activities adapted to their realities (e.g., offer catch-up meetings in a location chosen by the student and family, on a flexible schedule; provide remedial camps during the summer; offer academic support at the Native Friendship Centre which Indigenous students are already attending).

It is important to work collaboratively with the Native Friendship Centre and other community-based organizations to ensure that the measures in place match the realities of Indigenous students and to ensure that students' families have access to the support they need.

DID YOU KNOW?

Native Friendship Centres offer cultural activities for all students. You can work with the local Native Friendship Centre team to organize a cultural activity for your class or for your school!

KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS

Indigenous knowledge includes the unique cultural systems, languages, governance systems and history of the Indigenous people of a particular community or nation. Knowledge Keepers are the people best positioned to define and transmit the Indigenous knowledge of their community. Knowledge Keepers are often Elders.

Be careful: People are only considered to be Elders if they are publicly recognized as such by their community. An Elder cannot be self-proclaimed. It is important to be sure of the legitimacy of a Knowledge Keeper before inviting them into the classroom. You could do this by contacting a local Native Friendship Centre or the local community's band council.

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^{*} There are operating budgetary rules for school resources that provide financial support for the educational success of Indigenous students in schools in the Quebec school system. For more details, visit the Ministère de l'Education website.

INSPIRING PRACTICES

Inclusion of Indigenous pedagogy at Maniwaki Woodland School

The Western Québec School Board is developing practical measures to include Indigenous pedagogy, using the hybrid approach developed by Diane Campeau. This approach can be summarized by the 3-4-5 formula: the three dimensions, four elements (water, air, fire and earth) and five senses. For example, one teacher at Maniwaki Woodland School fully integrated Indigenous pedagogy into her teaching approach for secondary school science courses. This initiative led to a unique collaboration between the Sûreté du Québec, the Maniwaki Native Friendship Centre and the school: an educational activity involving butchering an animal found by the side of the road. The activity was overseen by an Elder, the traditional Knowledge Keeper for this practice.

For more information, visit the <u>Western Quebec School Board</u> website, in the "Educational project" section.

Using the Seven Grandfathers teachings to analyze a novel

A grade 11 teacher in a Gatineau school used the teachings of the Seven Grandfathers to analyze and understand a novel in her English class. This activity helped boost Indigenous students' pride in their identity while promoting openness and general knowledge about Indigenous realities among all students.

For more information: Baskin, Cindy. Strong Helpers' Teachings: The Value of Indigenous Knowledge in Helping Professions, Toronto, Canadian Scholars' Press (2016).

Click on tools to access

TOOL 2	Knowledge mobilization tool: summary of research findings in Understanding and Supporting Harmonious School Transitions for Indigenous Youth in Urban Settings
TOOL 3	Resources for raising awareness about Indigenous realities
TOOL 4	Examples and models: frameworks, policy and agreement protocols
TOOL 5	Checklist for developing and implementing a welcome and inclusion plan
TOOL 6	Recognized inspiring practices for more equitable assessment of Indigenou students
TOOL 7	Checklist for developing and implementing an intervention plan
TOOL 8	Selection of resources for the classroom
TOOL 9	Selection of resources for developing practices and policies to support Indigenous students' educational success

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Turn to the Native Friendship Centres to:

- → Contribute to developing or validating policies, mechanisms and procedures related to Indigenous students.
- → Participate in follow-up and intervention plans for Indigenous students and their families.
- \rightarrow Offer homework help*.
- Offer after-school activities and summer camps*.
 - * Services offered vary from one Friendship Centre to another. Check with your local Friendship Centre to find out which services are available to Indigenous students.



TAKE IT FURTHER

→ <u>Understanding and Supporting Harmonious School Transitions for Indigenous Youth in Urban</u> <u>Settings</u>, published by RCAAQ (2020).

.....

- → Indigenous pedagogy and pedagogy of place: proposal for an Indigenous teaching model, an article of Diane Campeau in the Journal Éducation et francophonie de l'Association canadienne d'éducation de la langue française (2021).
- → Journal of Perseverence and Academic Achievement for First Peoples, published by the Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite de l'université du Québec à Chicoutimi.

PART 2 - LANGUAGE ISSUES

Indigenous students' first languages should be valued

- → Language is central to the culture and identity of Indigenous peoples.
- → Knowledge and mastery of their parents' first language is an asset for children who are learning to read and for their overall well-being.

FINDINGS¹¹

oexistence issue

lege issues

1 – Failure to recognize the first language of Indigenous students often leads to misdiagnosis of language and learning disorders

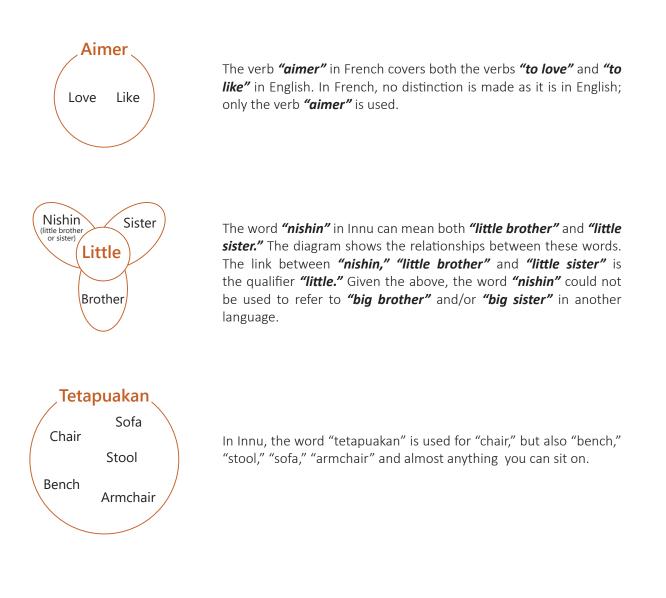
In Quebec, several Indigenous languages are very much alive and in use. For example, Cree, Atikamekw and Inuktitut are spoken by more than 80% of the members of a single nation.

- → Schools usually fail to recognize that English or French is often the second language of Indigenous students. However, it is important to consider the linguistic context of each child when assessing whether their language and learning are developing normally.
- → Even when children are not fluent in their Indigenous first language, that language may influence the way they speak English or French. Such dialectal variations are often systematized within a nation and should not be interpreted as language problems.
- → There are no standardized tools for measuring Indigenous language proficiency, so assessment results must be interpreted with this in mind.
- → From grade 3 onwards, all learning and assessments involve reading in the language of instruction. This makes it all the more important to consider students' proficiency in the language of instruction so that they are assessed on their skills in each subject, not on their skills in English or French. It is still common for Indigenous students to be misdiagnosed as having learning difficulties when, in fact, their difficulties can be explained by the context of learning in their second language.

The meaning of words (semantics)

"Each word has one or more meanings. The meaning of a word in one language may include several words in another language. Thus, in French, one says 'aimer,' whereas in English there is a distinction between 'to like' and 'to love.' In Innu, the word 'tetapuakan' includes the words 'chair,' 'bench,' but also several other sorts of seats. While the Innu term is used for almost everything you can sit on (including the log around the campfire), the words in French and English are not interchangeable" (Bodson, 2019)*

Venn diagrams organize information visually in order to see relationships between words, such as their shared aspects and differences. Children and teachers can use them to think about the logic of words, but also the logic of Indigenous languages.



^{*} The Venn Diagrams were created by Hélène Bodson.



DID YOU KNOW?

- → A child learning a second language often combines words from both languages in the same sentence, and that's normal!
- → It might seem that the child's range of vocabulary in each of the languages is limited, but when combined, the range is similar to that of a monolingual child.
- → The child's lexical knowledge varies from one language to another, depending on the context in which each word is learned. For example, a child may use French or English for words related to school, and their first language for words related to food. (This situation is known as diglossia.)
- 2 Valuing Indigenous languages in the school environment can have a significant positive effect on Indigenous students' sense of belonging, self-esteem and perseverance
- → Preventing Indigenous students from speaking their own language at school is discriminatory and detrimental to their learning.
- → Many Indigenous children find themselves deemed "at risk" as soon as they start school, simply because of their language skills. For some, this can lead to failures and a loss of motivation or lack of interest in school, sometimes leading them eventually to drop out.
- → When a school highlights the value of Indigenous languages, it encourages Indigenous students to take pride in their identity and to have a positive perception of themselves. This is also true for Indigenous students who have not had the opportunity to learn their language.

BE CAREFUL: Keep in mind that as a result of colonial policies, many Indigenous students and families do not know their first language.

3 – In urban areas, preserving and transmitting Indigenous languages is a particular challenge and concern for many parents

- → Language is a major part of culture.
- → The Indigenous languages that are still spoken in Quebec are unique in the world, and efforts must be made to preserve them.
- → Being in a minority situation, Indigenous students in the city are at a very high risk of losing their first language. Schools can position themselves as allies to parents and provide a safe environment for students by protecting and valuing Indigenous languages.

Remember: it is parents who choose which language is spoken at home.

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Bilingualism does not cause any problems or difficulties, neither for language nor for learning.

ACTION AREAS

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

- Provide special ongoing training for teachers, speech therapists and/or resource teachers on language issues that affect Indigenous students. (For example, the structure of Indigenous languages spoken by students, the influence of student's spoken language on the language of instruction; the phenomenon of linguistic interference in spoken and written language.)
- → Implement programs for Indigenous students that both support their acquisition of the language of instruction and promote the value of their Indigenous first language.
- Provide teaching materials and resources related to Indigenous cultures and languages (e.g., at the school board's or SSC's central library).
- → Provide a glossary of basic words in the region's most common Indigenous language(s) to all staff and ensure that bilingual dictionaries are available.
- → For each subject, provide second-language students with a glossary of vocabulary words in the language of instruction.
- → Create a directory of Indigenous language interpreters to facilitate communication with Indigenous parents and students when needed.

AT SCHOOL

- → Highlight the value of Indigenous languages in the school. (For example, adopt guidelines, develop and implement initiatives, and ensure their visibility).
- Offer an introductory course in the Indigenous language to school staff and/or as an extracurricular activity.
- → Provide students with **books in Indigenous languages** to encourage reading and literacy at home.
- → In the same way as for newcomer students, questions on diagnostic tests and assessments can be translated in advance into the student's first language.



IN THE CLASSROOM

- → Ensure that subject-specific vocabulary is clearly explained when students are learning in their second language.
- → Ensure the visibility of Indigenous languages (e.g., posters and flyers, the school's voicemail and school calendar, word of the week, etc.) and in school media (e.g., radio, social media, newspaper, blog, etc.).
- → Invite Indigenous authors or poets to lead workshops.
- Organize school or class projects on Indigenous languages and invite Indigenous students' parents to get involved (e.g., pictographs, storytelling, songs, etc.).
- → Encourage Indigenous students to speak their first language and share it with their classmates.*
- → Share music in Indigenous languages.
- Create activities based on pedagogical contexts that are open to children's way of thinking (e.g., games) and that allow children to explore reading and writing at their own pace.

Teaching Indigenous languages in secondary schools

Learning an Indigenous language as a third living language, in upper secondary school levels, brings non-Indigenous students into contact with different cultural realities. It also helps them develop an attitude of openness and respect toward their Indigenous classmates.

For non-Indigenous students, learning greetings and other basic vocabulary in the first language of their Indigenous classmates can help to deconstruct stereotypes. Judgment is required because some Indigenous students don't speak an Indigenous langage.

^{*} Research shows that children need to communicate in a language 40% of the time to become proficient in it!¹²

PRE-SCHOOL AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

- → Play is important for language development. It helps children not only use but also understand language and symbolic representations. In the context of play, children have many opportunities for language learning, in which adults become key partners.
- → It is important to communicate to parents of pre-school and elementary school children that oral proficiency in the first language is an essential basis for learning to read, even in another language.

Resources from the CPE Premier Pas

Great language stimulation resources (French only) for young children (up to kindergarten) are available on the <u>CPE Premier Pas</u> website.

INSPIRING PRACTICES

Ongoing training on language issues specific to First Nations

- → The Institut Tshakapesh organizes ongoing training for resource teachers and special educators in their schools.
- → The Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite offers workshops for speech therapists on cultures and languages in Indigenous communities, specifically those of the Algonquin, Atikamekw, Cree, Innu and Naskapi nations.

Limiting cultural bias in assessment tools

In British Columbia, major work has been done to limit the cultural bias of assessment tools for Indigenous children: even when they are proficient in the language of instruction, dialectal variations can be identified in the English used by many Indigenous communities.

For more informations, see Jessica Ball and Barbara May Bernhardt, *First Nations English dialects in Canada : implications for speech language pathology (2008)*.

Inclusion of Indigenous languages at Maniwaki Woodland High School

Maniwaki Woodland School incorporated Indigenous cultures and languages through visible signs that recognize the Indigenous presence in the school. They are particularly aware of place given to the Algonquin language. Indigenous youths say they are proud to see vocabulary words in Algonquin, English and French on school signage.

For more information, visit the <u>Western Quebec School Board</u> website, in the "Educational project" section.

Click on tools to access

- **TOOL 8** Selection of resources for the classroom
- **TOOL 10** Knowledge mobilization tool: *state of scientific knowledge on Indigenous languages, bilingualism and early childhood*
- **TOOL 11** Indigenous languages and Nations in Quebec
- **TOOL 12** Working with an interpreter



Turn to the Native Friendship Centres to:

- → Help you promote the languages of Indigenous students in your school.
- → Identify all possible resources to support the language of Indigenous students.
- → Look at the most appropriate measures to support fair assessment of bilingual Indigenous students.
- \rightarrow Help you find interpreters (e.g., for exam periods).
- → Provide suggestions of Indigenous authors, artists and Elders to invite for activities or workshops.
- → Communicate important information to parents (e.g., Centres can post notices on their social media pages).



TAKE IT FURTHER

- These articles in Journal of perseverance and academic achievement for the First Peoples, vol.
 3 (2019):
 - For a more equitable assessment of Indigenous student's needs: Knowledge Synthesis of Scientific Literature and of two Atikamekw Communities by Corina Borri-Anadon et coll.;
 - Design and Experiment of a Bilingual (French-Anicinabemowin) Metaphonology Program in Anicinabe School Environment for the First Cycle of Elementary Education by Nancy Crépeau and Carole Fleuret;
 - Linguistic Factors in Algonquian Languages Influencing the Learning of French or English by Hélène Bodson.
- → Exploring socially-responsive approaches to children's rehabilitation with Indigenous communities, families and children from the National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health (NCCIH), p.20 to 23 (2018).
- → Research Report <u>Une juste mesure : Développement d'instruments et de critères d'évaluation</u> <u>linguistique pour des élèves allophones</u> by Lori Morris and Marie Labelle (2008).
- → First Nations Elders' and Parents' Views on Supporting their Children's Language Development by Jessica Ball and Marlene Lewis (2014).
- → <u>A Resource Kit: To Assist Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists in Providing Informed</u> <u>Services to First Nations,Inuit, and Métis People</u>, by Elizabeth Kay-Raining Bird (2014).



PART 3 - COEXISTENCE ISSUES

Often, schools do not provide a safe environment for Indigenous students and their families.

FINDINGS¹³

- 1 Many Indigenous students and their families experience challenges that are not properly addressed by the school
- → Socio-economic challenges (e.g., economic poverty, residential instability and difficulty accessing housing).
- Physical and psychological health issues (e.g., chronic illnesses, addictions, impacts of intergenerational trauma, exposure to violence).
- → Family challenges (e.g., involvement with the Director of Youth Protection, high rates of single parent families and of children being placed in foster care).
- → Isolation and culture shock (minority status, few cultural references, distance from their extended family).

2 – Many Indigenous students and their families experience discrimination and racism in the school environment as well as in Quebec public services

- → Indigenous people's low usage of the Quebec public services network is often due to mistrust of the institutions or to bad experiences linked to prejudice or racism.
- → Many Indigenous students experience micro-aggressions and unintentional racist prejudice from teachers who tolerate racist behaviour or comments from other students.
- School staff often demonstrate a lack of understanding and knowledge regarding the realities of Indigenous people. They sometimes use outdated terms or unintentionally convey stereotypes or prejudices about Indigenous people.

Be careful of the following situations:

- → Dressing up as an Indigenous person for Halloween.
- Playing "Cowboys and Indians."
- → Watching films that convey a false version of colonial history (e.g., Pocahontas).
- → Using outdated language that conveys stereotypes or prejudices against Indigenous people, e.g., "to sit Indian style" or call someone "chief," etc. (students can sit with their legs crossed or "criss-cross applesauce" and call someone "dude" or "boss").
- → Use outdated terms that are stereotypical or prejudiced, such as Indian, American Indian, savage, reserve, Eskimo.

Why is it not okay to use the term "Indian"?

The term "Indian" refers to the historical error of colonizers mistakenly thinking they were arriving in India. Its use is now seen as pejorative in that it perpetuates the injustices suffered by Indigenous peoples. The term "American Indian" is also suggestive of the colonial power from which Indigenous peoples wish to break free.

Watch the video Briser le code - Autochtones 102 on the Tele-Quebec website (French only)

Many prejudiced ideas about Indigenous peoples are spread within schools, often unintentionally. It is essential to deconstruct them and, above all, to ensure that they are not perpetuated by students. *Being inclusive also means challenging one's own cultural biases*.



Are the staff members at your school familiar with the recent historical events experienced by Indigenous people in Canada?

"Killing the Indian in the child": The recent history of residential schools

From 1883 to 1994, residential schools in Canada took more than 150,000 Indigenous children away from their families for the purposes of schooling, evangelization and assimilation. Now recognized as a crime against humanity, the abuse, violence and humiliation inflicted led to the illness and death of many Indigenous children. These assimilationist policies, responsible for what is now described as cultural genocide, have created intergenerational trauma that continues to undermine the relationship of many Indigenous people to school and education. Since 2021, the discovery of children's remains at the sites of former residential schools in Canada has further eroded this fragile relationship.

For more information:

- → <u>Relations autochtones</u> with the collaboration of La Boîte Rouge Vif (French only)
- → Intergenerational trauma: Residential schools by Historica Canada on Youtube
- → Les pensionnats au Canada of the Institut national de santé publique du Québec (French only)

The Sixties Scoop

Across Canada, from 1960 to 1990, more than 20,000 First Nations, Inuit and Métis children were taken from their birth families and adopted by other families, mostly non-Indigenous and often in exchange for financial contributions, in the United States and Canada.

For more information:

→ <u>Sixties Scoop</u>, by Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair and Sharon Dainard

Forced sterilization of Indigenous women

Thousands of women have been forcibly sterilized in Canada. In Alberta and British Columbia, the practice was even legalized for several decades.

For more information:

→ <u>Sterilization of Indigenous Women in Canada</u> by Karen Stote

The Oka Crisis

In July 1990, a 78-day dispute over a golf course to be built on Kanien'kéhaka (Mohawk) land in Oka led to confrontations between Mohawk, Quebec police, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Canadian army.

For more information:

- → *Kanehsatake, 270 years of resistance,* a film by Alanis O'Bomsawin (1993)
- → The Oka Legacy, a documentary by Sonia Bonspille-Boileau (2015)
- \rightarrow *Beans,* a film by Tracey Deer (2020)

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women

Indigenous women are three times more likely to experience violence than other women in Canada and are over-represented among the country's missing and murdered women. Over a 30-year period, more than 1,186 Indigenous women have been victims of homicide or have been declared missing in Canada.

For more information:

- → National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
- → Rustic Oracles, a film by Sonia Bonspille-Boileau (2019)

The intergenerational trauma and resulting marginalization caused by these events continue to affect many Indigenous families.

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CULTURAL SAFETY

DECONSTRUCTING STIGMA AND PROVIDING A CULTURALLY SAFE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

"The process of ensuring social and cultural safety is one of affirmation, transformation and reconciliation intended to reduce the gaps and inequalities that exist between the Indigenous population and the [non-Indigenous] Canadian and Quebec population in health and other areas. Based on the foundational principle of social justice, it recognizes the legitimacy of the social and cultural differences of Indigenous people. It proposes a response to the power imbalance between the dominant society and Indigenous people" [translation]. (Blanchet E., Laroche S. et Wawanoloath M., 2019)¹⁴

In practical terms, working toward social and cultural safety is a process of learning and mutual respect, demonstrated by a collective and community will for social transformation and innovation.*

Here are some indicators that a service is NOT culturally safe for Indigenous people:

- \rightarrow Indigenous people rarely use the service.
- \rightarrow Indigenous people are reluctant and distrustful when interacting with the service provider.
- \rightarrow Indigenous people do not follow the advice or the proposed intervention plan.
- → Indigenous students are over-represented in special education.
- \rightarrow Indigenous people show signs of low self-esteem and sometimes even anger.
- → Complaints are made about the lack of cultural relevance of some tools or intervention methods that come from the dominant culture.
- \rightarrow Some members of the school's staff deny that there is a problem.

The results of ensuring cultural safety are as follows:

- \rightarrow Indigenous people have the power to evaluate the quality of the services they receive.
- → Students and their parents feel that their cultural identity and way of being have been respected, or at least not challenged or harmed.
- → The availability of several different avenues or opportunities means that all Indigenous people can be reached (as opposed to a single model, which would not respond to the different languages, nations, economic situations, ages, education levels, etc. of Indigenous people).

^{*} The process goes beyond individual adjustments to the services or support offered: for systemic changes to be made, cultural safety must involve public and governmental institutions as well as Indigenous people.

Where are you on the cultural safety ladder?¹⁵

1. Cultural AWARENESS

→ I know which nations and communities the Indigenous students at my school/in my class belong to.

2. Cultural SENSITIVITY

- → I learn about the realities of the nations and communities of the students at my school and/or in my class.
- → I have a map of First Nations and Inuit displayed in my classroom, and I invite Indigenous students to tell us about their communities if they want.

3. Cultural COMPETENCY

- I contribute to dismantling prejudices and stereotypes.
- → I plan activities that value Indigenous knowledge.
- → I have invited an Elder to come and share about the realities of his nation, followed with a talking circle.

4. Cultural SAFETY

→ The school team has a variety of measures in place to dismantle biases, train its staff, and support and value Indigenous students and their families.

ACTION AREAS

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

- Adopt a concerted action plan to prevent and counter racism, discrimination and intimidation. Ensure that it contains guidelines to avoid the use of certain outdated or inappropriate terms (e.g., American Indian, Indian, etc.).
- → Formally **recognize the actions taken to support coexistence** and provide funding for them.
- → Encourage the hiring of Indigenous teachers and professional staff.
- Have a full-time expert resource on Indigenous realities who supports Indigenous students and their families and communicates with Indigenous organizations and communities, including Native Friendship Centres (e.g., liaison officer; Indigenous education consultant).
- → Provide Indigenous awareness training or workshops to current teachers and, when needed, to new teachers.
- → Organize an Indigenous cultures week and support schools in its implementation.

AT SCHOOL

- → Put in place a **"buddy" system** with older Indigenous students (positive role models).
- → Create formal partnerships with Indigenous community organizations in the city (including the local Native Friendship Centre) and invite them to participate at school events.
- → Ensure the visibility of Indigenous cultures in the school (display art work, include words and phrases in Indigenous languages, etc.).
- → Set up a **meeting space** for Indigenous students in the school.
- → Visit the Native Friendship Centre with classes or teachers.
- → Occasionally offer **menus from traditional Indigenous cuisine** in the cafeteria.
- → Make sure school libraries or classroom reading corners include authentic Indigenous children's literature and reference books on the history, cultures and contemporary realities of Indigenous peoples.
- Set up a group of student "watchdogs" to combat bullying and racism.
- Make sure the school participates in local events that build bridges between communities in the city (e.g., city events for reconciliation, anti-racism marches, National Indigenous Peoples Day in Canada or International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples).

IN THE CLASSROOM

- → Adopt a zero tolerance policy regarding racist and discriminatory comments.
- Include important dates for Indigenous students (holidays, cultural weeks, hunting season, etc.) in the class calendar.
- Display a map of the First Nations and Inuit in Quebec in your classroom.
- Organize cultural activities with the whole class when a new Indigenous student joins (in the classroom and/or at the Native Friendship Centre).
- Invite family members of Indigenous students or a community resource person to share in class (life story, craft, other traditional knowledge or skills, etc.).
- Plan projects to address coexistence issues (e.g., create a play on the theme, create a poetry collection, a video, etc.).