



**MIINIWEWINAN  
INDIGENOUS EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

- DATE:** Thursday, April 9, 2026, 9:30 am – 12:00pm – Boardroom/Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams
- CO-CHAIR:** Heather Harris  
Serena Essex
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Trustee Ellen Chambers, Anna Fern Kakegamic, Elder Gerry Martin, Grant Robbins, Elder Melissa Roberts, Angelina Tassone, Morning Star Tom, Indigenous Trustee Scottie Wemigwans
- ALTERNATES:** Trustee Pat Johansen, Dinah Jung, Akansha Kaur,
- RESOURCES:** Kali Bernst, Katie Borysewicz, Anika Guthrie, Jane Lower, Jasmine Sgambelluri,
- GUESTS:** Patti Pella (Education Officer, Indigenous Education Office, Ministry of Education), Emily Kerton
- ABSENT WITH REGRETS:** Trustee Leah Vanderwey, Kathleen Andrews, Kathy Beardy, Shelby Ch'ng, Elliott Cromarty, Elder Sheila DeCorte, Eryn Genno (Indigenous Student Trustee), Cheryl King-Zewiec, Sheri Boucher, Scott Baker, Juliana Chapman (Student Representative), Anthony Jeethan, Cedar Meeseetawageesic (Student Representative), Amelia Nodin, Student Representative, Dave Paddington, Sherri-Lynne Pharand, Director of Education, Loretta Sky, Kyra Visitor (Student Representative), Mikayla Burwell, Rachel Kakegamic, Crystal Wawia,

	<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
1.	Opening	Elder Gerry Martin opened the meeting.	Elder Gerry Martin
2.	2.1 Land Acknowledgement	Co-chair Heather Harris acknowledged the lands and traditional territory.	Heather Harris

	<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
	2.2 Welcome and Introductions	Co-chair Serena Essex welcomed everyone to the meeting and had all members introduce themselves.	Serena Essex
3.	Agenda and Minutes		
	3.1 Approval of Agenda - April 9, 2026	Moved by Elder Melissa Roberts and seconded by Trustee Wemigwans, that the agenda for the April 9, 2026, Miiniwewinan meeting be approved as written.  <b>Carried</b>	Heather Harris
	3.2 Approval of Minutes - November 27, 2025; and February 26, 2026	Moved by Elder Melissa Roberts and seconded by Trustee Wemigwans, that the minutes for the November 27, 2025, and February 26, 2026, Miiniwewinan meetings be approved as written.  <b>Carried</b>	Heather Harris
4.	Presentations		
	Land-Based Learning Lead	Emily Kerton, Land-Based Learning Lead, introduced herself and provided an overview of her role. Few of the highlights are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creating Indigenous ways of knowing and being, along with land-based training;</li> <li>• working closely with Kingfisher Outdoor Education Centre;</li> <li>• planning land-based learning activities; and</li> <li>• short term and long-term goals for land-based training.</li> </ul> All members' questions were addressed.	Emily Kerton
5.	Business Arising from the Minutes		
	Update on Miiniwewinan: IEAC Letter to the Minister of Education	Trustee Wemigwans inquired about the status of Item 5.1 from the February 26, 2026, meeting concerning the submission of a letter on behalf of the Miiniwewinan: Indigenous Education Advisory Committee (IEAC) to the Minister of Education. The letter is intended as a response to correspondence received in support of the role of the trustee. Co-chair Heather Harris advised that the draft letter must be presented to the Board of Trustees at an upcoming Board meeting for review and approval prior to submission.	

	Cultural Safety Strategy	<p>Kali Bernst, Principal of Indigenous Education, circulated packages of the Cultural Safety Strategy Plan and digital copies were shared by email.</p> <p>Members were divided into small breakout groups to discuss, share feedback, and actions for each of the priority of the plan. The execution of this plan once finalized, will be a collaborative effort with staff.</p>	Kali Bernst
6.	New Business		
	6.1 Youth Leadership Conference	<p>Kali Bernst, Principal of Indigenous Education, provided context on the Youth Leadership Conference. A small group of Grade 10 and 11 students will attend the Inspire Soaring Conference in May 2026 and will then be able to assist with the planning and implementation of a two-day youth conference scheduled for September 2026.</p>	Kali Bernst
	6.2 Family Event Discussion/Planning	Deferred to next meeting.	Serena Essex
	6.3 New FNMI Staff Positions	<p>Kali Bernst, Principal of Indigenous Education, reported on new pilot positions introduced in January 2026, including two literacy and two math Intervention roles to support Indigenous students requiring additional academic intervention. A reassessment will take place at the end of June 2026.</p> <p>A dedicated teacher is also supporting Indigenous students with special needs through life-skills programming. Co-chair, Heather Harris, reported improved attendance, motivation, and student engagement.</p> <p>All members' questions addressed.</p>	Kali Bernst
	6.4 Matawa Conference	<p>Kali Bernst, Principal of Indigenous Education, reported on the collaboration with Matawa to support principal turnover in northern communities. Three presentations were coordinated for the Matawa Education Conference addressing: strong school operations, leading with care and courage, and family and community engagement.</p>	Kali Bernst

	6.5 Updated VSC and CBC Requirements	Co-chair Heather Harris provided an update on a Ministry of Education directive requiring all staff, volunteers, and community partners to obtain either a Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) or Criminal Background Check (CBC). The Lakehead District School Board can provide the required letter to support applications through local OPP or municipal police services. All affected individuals and partners have been notified.	Heather Harris
7.	Ongoing Business		
	7.1 Indigenous Student Trustee Update	There was no update available at this time.	Eryn Genno
	7.2 Anishinaabemowin Revitalization	Anika Guthrie, Anishinaabemowin Revitalization Coordinator, provided an update on ongoing language revitalization efforts, including the establishment of a language-learning space at the Kingfisher Outdoor Education Centre, classroom storytelling visits, and engagement with elementary Ojibwe programs. Planned initiatives include a spring ceremony or feast with community partners for language revitalization, student mentorship and adult immersion partnerships, and the development of language-learning unit plans for May 1, 2026, Professional Activity (PA) Day.  All members' questions were addressed.	Anika Guthrie
8.	Information and Inquiries	N/A	
9.	Closing	Elder Melissa Roberts closed the meeting.	
10.	Next Meeting	Thursday, May 14, 2026	
11.	Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.	