

**SAGAMOK ANISHNAWBEK
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSION
MARCH 21, 2017**

Facilitator: Dr. Brent Debassige
Presented by: Anna Marie Abitong
Director of Education
Sagamok Anishnawbek Education

SAGAMOK ENGAGEMENT

- A total of 66 participants: including youth, elders, teachers, parents, leaders, and community members. Five working groups were assigned with a recorder and translator for elder participation.
- Agenda provided by Dr. Brent Debassige & Dr. Ashley Sisco, Western University, as follows:
 1. Why is this engagement being done?
 2. Part One: Brief presentation on the First Nations with Schools Collective (FNWSC) - including comments from Chief Paul Eshkakogan and Counsellor Roger Jones
 3. Part Two: Community input (questions)

PART II - IDENTITY & EDUCATION QUESTIONS (5):

- ◉ What does it mean to be Anishinaabe/Haudenosaunee?
- ◉ Main theme areas were:
 - Land - our connectedness, defines purpose, knowledge of our territory, land based activities to assert our rights within our territory.
 - Identity - understanding who we are and to be proud, educating our young early as Anishinaabe.
 - History - educating our students on our treaty, impacts of residential school, writing our own curriculum and telling our story from a community perspective.
 - Language, Culture and traditions - sharing with our young, starting language in the early years, telling our stories to keep culture and traditions alive.
 - Relationships - very important, one nation on turtle island, respect for everyone, family is important.

PART II - IDENTITY & EDUCATION QUESTIONS (5):

- ◉ What is Anishinaabe/Haudenosaunee Education?
- ◉ Main theme areas were:
 - Develop our own curriculum and learn from other models.
 - Elders in the classroom - knowledge keepers of our history, land, language, cultural, traditions and environment.
 - Parental and family engagement in our schools. Parents are the first teachers of our young.
 - Land Based Learning activities and teaching opportunities for our children.
 - Language - OUR language

PART II - IDENTITY & EDUCATION QUESTIONS (5):

- ◉ Who is responsible for our children's education? Adult education? Elder education?
- ◉ Main theme areas were:
 - Ultimately we are all responsible.
 - We as parents, that's our role.
 - Leadership - Chief & Council
 - Education Department
 - Government - through treaties
 - "All of us as Anishnaabe are responsible of our education why? Because we can pass it down to our grandchildren then after that our grandchildren can teach us then it can keep going on and on."
 - For Adult education its on an as needed basis, we have limited resources so we have to prioritize what will help provide people employment.

PART II - IDENTITY & EDUCATION QUESTIONS (5):

- ◉ What can we do right now to provide Anishinaabe/Haudenosaunee education?
- ◉ Main theme areas were:
 - Curriculum development - our history. “Will FN curriculum be based on just 1 community, 1 cultural learning/environment. Are we able to challenge the Min of Ed guidelines or create our own?”
 - Out of classroom learning and teaching - use of elders.
 - Commitment and do it!
 - After school language learning for everyone.
 - Language immersion in our school - speak it! Daily! We need to hear it!
 - “Prioritize funding for language programs, support full immersion, having discussion and taking responsibility, capture the language, speaking the language daily, utilizing the elders in the classroom, full engaged and empowering the people to use and speak the language, taking a radical approach and just do it, using the language that is meaningful to you, asking the students what they want to learn, visual, interactive learning, making it relevant to the students, parent teacher council - utilizing community elders.”

PART II - IDENTITY & EDUCATION QUESTIONS (5):

- ◉ How can communities be involved in Anishinaabe/Haudenosaunee education?
- ◉ Main theme areas were:
 - Developing our own curriculum
 - Parent/Grandparent/Community circles to teach about our education system.
 - Language is a key component to our Anishnaabe Education. “Language includes our whole value system and incorporates all of our worldview and culture so it is critical to understanding Anishnaabe worldview and “being Anishnaabe.”
 - “Utilize community elders, make language relevant to students to learn, mentorship, volunteers, use the technology to help our students achieve success and learn the language, give option to learn immersion.”
 - Our children are/have different learning styles (disabilities) and we need to be more accommodating and accepting
 - Support groups for parents to help them with their students and what they’re dealing with

PART II - PERSPECTIVE ON EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

- ◉ Is conventional schooling important to you? If so, why or why not?
- ◉ Main theme areas were:
 - If we have our own system we would still need to have some standards to follow.
 - Conventional delivery with community based (territory/treaty) curriculum.
 - Traditional educational system is our foundation.
 - Confidence and self-esteem are what they are focusing on - grounded in identity - who we are as Anishnaabe.
 - Because we don't get par funding we struggle with quality of our education now - how do we even meet the current standard plus add language and culture?
 - We live in 2 worlds, there are 2 philosophies. We want them to be strong Anishnaabe and strong in the western world as well.
 - Having that balance - Anishnaabe and western teachings

PART II - EDUCATION APPROACHES & MODELS

- ◉ Does your community use any inquiry-based decision-making approaches to improve educational outcomes?
- ◉ Main theme areas were:
 - The education committee has an inquiry-based approach to decision making. They use the four pillars as well as the 5 year strategic plan to improve outcomes.
 - The community development process identifies strategies. The Community Comprehensive Plan looks at how to bring the past to now and how to move forward to the future. (i.e.: chief and council use it as a tool to see how we are doing.)
 - Community Forums
 - School evaluations
 - There are different levels of this i.e. teachers with assessments and IEPs to parents, teachers to school success, admin to leadership, and leadership to community.
 - How do we create a good decision making model when we are not even properly funded?

PART II - EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS AND INVOLVEMENT

- ◉ What would be important to ensuring a strong and positive partnership among participating First Nations?
- ◉ Main theme areas were:
 - There absolutely has to be proportional representation at the decision making body.
 - Maintain community control over education - Chief & Council, partnerships, identify, TOR/Policies.
 - Autonomy has to remain to keep the dollars
 - Information = communication & collaboration
 - Trust, Respect, Honesty & sharing.

PART II - EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS AND INVOLVEMENT

- ◉ How would you see your community being involved in the partnership?
- ◉ Main theme areas were:
 - Need community engagement all the way through. Parent involvement!
 - Ensuring and advocating for proportional representation.
 - Share best practices.
 - Develop Curriculum team/specialty teams.
 - Mandate comes from community.
 - Information sessions - communication & collaboration.
 - Maintain autonomy
 - Make informed decisions!

PART II - EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS AND INVOLVEMENT

- ◉ How would you see yourself being involved?
- ◉ Main theme areas were:
 - Participation: attend meetings/sessions - be informed.
 - Collaborating with others through sharing and talking circles.
 - Need to have “home” discussions.
 - We need to hold ourselves accountable to participating in the process.
 - Supporting our students in the school and at home.
 - Stay current, updated and informed!

PART II - UWO'S CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

- ◉ What are your community's top program and research priorities that this Centre could support?
- ◉ Main theme areas were:
 - Language Curriculum development - Our History - Studying Indigenous ideology and re-teaching our young people.
 - Professional development for teachers and parents.
 - Community based program offerings.
 - Online learning platforms for capacity building without having to leave the community all the time for extended periods.
 - Information on best practices and shared research for land based curriculum programs.
 - Teacher exchange program support
 - Research and establish Education law/code - governance model.

SPECIAL THANKS TO MY TEAM

Translator and recorders:

- ✓ Claudette Jones
- ✓ Joanne Owl
- ✓ Andrea Jacobs
- ✓ Charlene Pine
- ✓ Lorrie Ann Linklater
- ✓ Marjorie Southwind