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Decolonizing The Desk:

Transforming Frontline Support Through
Indigenous Policy and Advocacy

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Awegwenowanen

Ah-way-gway-no-wuh-nay-n

Who the heck do you think you are

Treaty member of the
Robinson-Huron Treaty

Ketegaunseebee miinawaa
Obaajiwan Indoonjibaa

Baawaating miinawaa
Mishibikwadinaang

Anishinaabe miinawaa
Ojibwe indaaw



Learning Coach for the Toronto
District School Board -
UIEC/Wandering Spirit School

ITEP Professor with Queen's
University/KTEG

Future PHD/EdD Candidate?

Union (ETFO/ETT)



Story from Home

A cousin of mine got approval from Jordan's Principle, they were able to secure an Education Assistant through the application and were excited about it. Months went on and they didn't want their child to go unsupported. I was contacted via Facebook and the situation was explained to me. I provided them with a number of documents to support them and connected them to the person they had to bring their concerns with.

After stating their Rights and knowing of the system and misappropriation of funds, they secured an Educational Assistant for the remainder of the school year.

Now think about all the other times within the system that this money was misappropriated and not used for our communities.

Shingwauks Vision



Understanding Systems

- Federal/Provincial School systems,
- Need to know documents in Education,
- Who you need to access.



Community

- Planting seeds versus disrupting,
- Resistance, resiliency & resurgence,
- The stories and lived experience of our people rely on us to speak on issues.



Our Collective Rights

- Knowing your Indigenous rights,
- Building capacity in language to navigate the educational world,
- Layering your rights and grounding them is key!

Public Service Annoucement



The context of my presentation will be based solely on my lived-experience in Ontario, however think about your province.

Every province has strengths and gaps within the greater system, but know that these systems are meant to be changed. These gaps are opportunity to cultivate conversations to be visionaries for our communities.



Our Rights

Royal Proclamation of
1763

Treaty - Yours and whos
you're situated on

Indian Control of Indian
Education 1972

Canadian Charter of Rights
and Freedom, 1982

Canadian Human Rights
Tribunal, case JP

Ontario Human Rights
Commission

United Nations Delcaration
Rights of Indigeous People

TRC: 94 Calls to Actions
(ongoing and beyond)

Ministry of Education:
Indigenous Education

Ontario College of Teachers:
Obligations



**Makes us
unstoppable!**
(in theory)

Provincial

Ontario's MOE, Indigenous Edu.

- 2023-24 with consultation the Ministry created 6 Priorities for Indigenous Education; Student Achievement, Language, Land-based, Culturally responsive approaches, Local relationships, and FN perspectives.
- Indigenous Leads in every board across the province work along side the Indigenous Education Councils (IECs).
- First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Framework (2007/14), this specific document is outdated, but has established an outline for boards to follow.
- Partnership Agreements with; AES, MNO, NAN, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, GCT#3, and TI for Inuit Edu.

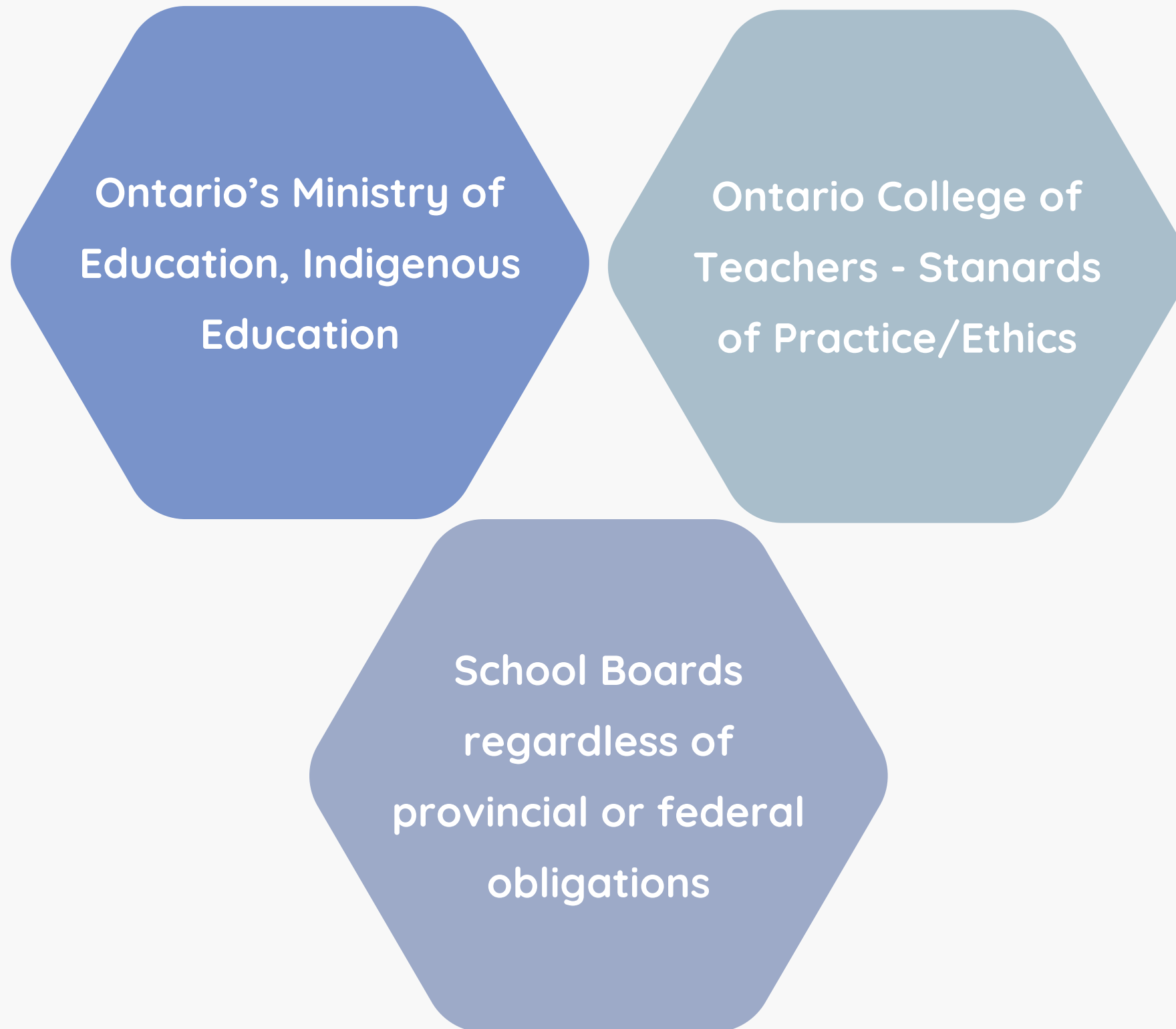
Policy Program Memorandum

- While these aren't "law", every board is expected to follow them, as they are official directives from the Ontario MOE.
 - PPM 119 - Every board must have an equity policy. If Indigenous students aren't getting supports, Jordan's Principle is a lever to say: this isn't just inequitable, but it's a violation of provincial policy.
 - PPM 159 - This calls on educators to work with families and communities in decision-making. Again, this aligns perfectly with Jordan's Principle's focus on family-centered approaches.

Growing Success Document 2010

- Document created that all educators must follow to explore achievement gaps and assessment. Assessment must be fair and transparent, but if Indigenous students can't access services like assessments or accommodations, how can that be fair?

Understanding the System



1. OCT - While we hold teachers accountable, we sometimes forget that Directors, Superintendents and Administrators are technically for the system and the board. If items get denied, it hails from the board office directly. Accountability may sometimes be overlooked, but they are also apart of the OCT body.
 2. Ontario MOE services both federal and provincial school systems. Both systems have agreements and should be upheld in their respective fields.
 3. Accessing these type of documents from the systems - Data Sovereignty.
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Rights/Frameworks

1. Royal Proclamation of 1763
2. Treaty (yours and where you're situated on)
3. Indian Control of Indian Education, 1972
4. Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom, Section 25 & 35
5. Canadian Human Rights Tribunal

Ontario's Policies and Bodies

1. Ontario Ministry of Education policies
2. Local Boards, IEC and Indigenous Lead.
3. First Nations', Metis, Inuit Framework, 2007-14
4. Growing Success Document
5. Equity & Inclusive Education (PPM 119)

Intersections with Jordan's Principles

1. Crown's duty to Indigenous peoples - JP ensures government honours obligations by removing jurisdiction excuses.
2. Treaties include educational promises - JP enforces equitable services as part of those responsibilities
3. Asserts First Nations' right to control education - JP strengthens access to culturally grounded programs.
4. Protects Aboriginal and treaty rights - Service denials/delays violate constitutional protections of equality.
5. CHRT rulings legally enforce JP - Boards must act immediately, not delay supports.

Rights/Frameworks

1. Ontario Human Rights Commission
2. UNDRIP, Article 14, 21-24
3. TRC: 94 Calls to Action, 7-12, 18-24, 62-65
4. Ontario Ministry of Education: Indigenous Education
5. Ontario College of Teachers (Standards & Obligations)

Ontario's Policies and Bodies

1. PPM 119, board equity policies
2. Ontario UNDRIP Act, Bill 76
3. FNMI Curriculum, 2017-19
4. FNMI Education Policy Framework; PPM 159
5. OCT Professional Standards/Ethics

Intersections with Jordan's Principles

1. OHRC enforces anti-discrimination in education - JP ensures systemic inequities are challenged.
2. Right to education, health, culture - JP is the mechanism for access when stalling occurs.
3. Calls for equitable funding, languages, culturally relevant curriculum - JP ensures funding/services flow.
4. Ontario mandates Indigenous education supports - JP is leverage when boards don't deliver.
5. Teachers are obligated to uphold equity & cultural responsiveness - JP reinforces professional duty to advocate for students.

Tools for Advocacy

Speaking up in decision making spaces:

- Hiring panels, policy meetings, school board trustee meeting, our voices matter - especially you all here today - without you this wouldn't be happening.
- Silence maintains the systems, but speaking up disrupts it.

Building Alliances:

- Understanding that some voices hold greater impact, something that I've learned.
- Family, Elders, C&C, unions, allies are key for advocacy - our community is only as strong as a collective.

Stories + Data:

- Our stories is autoethnography, to be heard honours our oral traditions and the data we collect with these stories proves its systemic.
- Street Data - great book for referencing what that looks like.

What advocacy tools have you already used and what's missing in your toolkit?

How do you create brave spaces in your role for advocacy to take place?

Relationality & Resurgence

Relational Accountability

- Understanding we our first and foremost for our communities, we have been given the privilege to do this work and we have to do it the right way and be 1000% in it - I always say I'm done, but I just know it is the burning out talking.
- Silence maintains the systems, but speaking up disrupts it.

Resurgence in Practice

- Centering **Joy & Strength** and not just deficit thinking and trauma
- This may look like language revitalization, cultural safety/humility, and land-based programing that connects us back to our ways.

Shift in Framing

- Knowing we aren't just service providers, but partners in challenging the system to be apart of the resurgence!

Think of a time when a familys wellness strengthen due to your support.

How do you celebrate Indigenous joy and strength at work? If not, what would that look like in your work place/community?

Shinwauks Vision



Indinawemaaganidag, all my relations. My 4th Great Grandfather was a Medicine man, his vision alongside his relations when the Robinson-Huron Treaty was established was to have a Teaching Wiigwam - a place where our people can learn our ways as Anishinaabeg and also learn their ways. I carry the last name Zhingwauk, Pine in all the rooms I enter. As a Ojibwe-Anishinaabe, we are part of the 3 fire confederacy (Ojibwe/Odawa/Potawatomi) and my responsibilities is to keep our faith and stories alive.



If you enjoy reading...

Recommended:

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). American Psychological Association.

Chrona, J. (2022). *Wayi Wah!: Indigenous pedagogy on the land*. HighWater Press.

Davidson, S. F., & Davidson, R. (2018). *Potlatch as pedagogy: Learning through ceremony*. Portage & Main Press.

Muhammad, G. (2023). *Unearthing joy: A guide to culturally and historically responsive teaching and learning*. Scholastic.

Safir, S., & Dugan, J. (2021). *Street data: A next-generation model for equity, pedagogy, and school transformation*. Corwin Press.

Absolon, K. E. (2011). *Kaandossiwin: How we come to know Indigenous re-search methodologies*. Fernwood Publishing.

Sabzalian, L. (2019). *Indigenous children's survivance in public schools*. Routledge.

McCoy, M. L. (2023). *On our own terms: Indigenous histories of school funding and policy*. University of North Carolina Press.

Ministry Documents - What does your province have?

Texts

Required (Including Ministry Documents):

Government of Canada. (2019). *Indigenous Languages Act*. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/I-7.85>

Government of Canada. (2017). *Jordan's Principle*. Indigenous Services Canada. <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1568396042341/1568396159824>

National Indian Brotherhood/Assembly of First Nations. (1972). *Indian control of Indian education*. National Indian Brotherhood. <https://oneca.com/IndianControlofIndianEducation.pdf>

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to action*. <https://www.trc.ca>

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2010). *Growing success: Assessment, evaluation, and reporting in Ontario schools*. Queen's Printer for Ontario. <https://www.ontario.ca/document/growing-success-assessment-evaluation-and-reporting-ontario-schools>

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014). *Achieving excellence: A renewed vision for education in Ontario*. Queen's Printer for Ontario. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/achieving-excellence-vision-ontario>

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2017). *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit education policy framework (2007) — Implementation plan*. Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2019). *First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education policy framework: Progress report*. Queen's Printer for Ontario. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/first-nations-metis-and-inuit-education-policy-framework>

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Q & A



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Miigwetch
gakina awiya



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