



# AFN Education Forum: *Reigniting the Flames of our Ancestors*

## Forum sur l'éducation de l'APN : *« Raviver la flamme de nos ancêtres ».*

**Presentation Details and Bios – Click on a name to learn more!**

### **INVITED SPEAKERS**

VÉRONIK PICARD  
REGIONAL CHIEF BOBBY CAMERON  
NATIONAL CHIEF CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK  
OGIMAA KWE CLAIRE SAULT

### **KEYNOTE: TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION: WHAT WE INHERITED AND BUILDING A LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP**

CADMUS DELORME

### **NATIONAL K-12 TRANSFORMATION UPDATE**

RENEE ST. GERMAIN  
DAKOTA EDWARDS

### **NATIONAL UPDATE ON JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE**

JESSICA GOODMAN  
JESSICA QUINN

### **TRANSFORMING EDUCATION THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

THANE BONAR  
CONNOR MORRIS

### **A HEALING JOURNEY TO BECOMING A TRAUMA-INFORMED FIRST NATION SCHOOL**

RANDY CONSTANT  
PAULINE MCKAY

### **TAKING STOCK AND PAVING THE WAY FORWARD TO SUPPORT FIRST NATIONS K-12 EDUCATION SUCCESS**

KAREN CAMPBELL  
STEPHANIE O'BRIEN  
THIRZA BOYCHUCK  
JONATHAN ALLEN  
SHELLY BLIZZARD JONES

### **MANITOBA FIRST NATION SCHOOL SYSTEM (MFNSS)**

CHARLES COCHRANE  
CURTIS NEPINAK  
CHARISSE CYR





# AFN Education Forum: *Reigniting the Flames of our Ancestors*

## Forum sur l'éducation de l'APN : *« Raviver la flamme de nos ancêtres ».*

### **BRIDGING INDIGENOUS AND WESTERN STEM EDUCATION THROUGH COLLABORATION AND RELATIONSHIP**

TAMMY WEBSTER  
SIMON BRASCOUPÉ

### **NEGOTIATIONS SKILLS**

KHRYSTYNA OROBETS

### **PANEL: THE FUTURE OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION**

#### **LAND-BASED EDUCATION - LEARNING FROM THE PAST**

LIZA MCLAUGHLIN  
CHERYL TENASCO-WHITEDUCK

#### **CHARTING THE PATH: FNTI'S 40 YEAR JOURNEY TO RECOGNITION AND INNOVATION IN INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

SUZANNE BRANT

#### **PSE INSTITUTIONS REASERCH: MEDOW CONSULTING UPDATE**

JON MEDOW

#### **WHAT DOES IT COST TO DELIVER ADULT EDUCATION IN FIRST NATIONS?**

MOSTAFA ASKARI  
HELAINA GASPARD

#### **LAC SEUL'S LAND-BASED CURRICULUM FOR K-8**

SYLVIA DAVIS  
KRISTIN WARD

#### **ADVANCING INDIGENOUS HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING THROUGH ACCREDITATION AND CREDENTIALS**

STEPHANIE ROY  
SUE ECKENSWILLER

#### **THE ROOTS OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION IN FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES**

ANNE-MARIE ANGERS  
LIZA MCLAUGHLIN

#### **TAKING STOCK AND PAVING THE WAY FORWARD TO SUPORT FIRST NATIONS K-12 EDUCATION SUCCESS (REPEAT)**

#### **ENSURE 90% OF YOUR CHILDREN READ AT-GRADE LEVEL BY GRADE 3**

JARRETT LAUGHLIN





# AFN Education Forum: *Reigniting the Flames of our Ancestors*

## Forum sur l'éducation de l'APN : *« Raviver la flamme de nos ancêtres ».*

### INVITED SPEAKERS

#### VÉRONIK PICARD

##### **Master of Ceremonies**

Véronik Picard is originally from the community of Wendake. She is the co-chair of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Youth Council (NYC). She was also elected spokesperson for AFN Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL) in March 2023. Véronik works in the field of Indigenous arts and cultures as an editor, columnist, researcher, facilitator and consultant. For over a year, she has focused her research and writing on the decolonization of love and sexuality in order to better understand intimate relationships from the perspective of her ancestors as well as the impacts of colonization on these spheres of community life.

With a bachelor's degree in international studies and modern languages, Véronik has several years of experience in both the Canadian Indigenous community and in the Quebec journalistic and media world. She worked for several years for Tourisme Autochtone Québec, then at the Canadian Consulate in Sydney, Australia, where she supported Indigenous Canadian entrepreneurs wishing to export their products to Australia. Upon her return to Quebec, Véronik worked as a journalist for Radio-Canada where she covered political and cultural topics related to First Nations and Inuit.

#### REGIONAL CHIEF BOBBY CAMERON

As a member of Witchehan Lake First Nation located in Treaty Six territory (northern Saskatchewan), Regional Chief Bobby Cameron has spent the majority of his life maintaining strong ties to culture, language and identity. As an avid hunter, trapper, and fisherman – Chief Cameron advocates and understands the significance of First Nations culture and tradition with respect to keeping close ties to traditional lands. He is currently in his second term as Chief of Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations, a Treaty and Inherent Rights organization that represents 74 First Nations, and more than 160,000 First Nations people. He has also served one term as a Vice-Chief for Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN). Chief Cameron holds a Bachelor of Arts, with a major in Indigenous Studies from the University of Regina. He is a strong advocate for Treaty and Inherent Rights for future generations of First Nations people.

#### NATIONAL CHIEF CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK

National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak was born and raised in Pinaymootang First Nation, Manitoba. Her ancestor, Chief Richard Woodhouse, was an original signatory of Treaty No.2. She began her term as National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations on December 7, 2023, becoming the youngest woman and mother to hold the position.

National Chief Woodhouse Nepinak holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Winnipeg and has completed Harvard Business School's Tribal Leaders program.



# AFN Education Forum: *Reigniting the Flames of our Ancestors*

## Forum sur l'éducation de l'APN : *« Raviver la flamme de nos ancêtres ».*

In 2021, she was elected as the Regional Chief for the AFN Manitoba Region. During her tenure, she was the lead negotiator for the First Nations Child and Family Services and Jordan's Principle class action lawsuit, which resulted in over \$40 billion compensation for First Nations children and families.

Throughout her career, National Chief Woodhouse Nepinak has accumulated a wealth of experience lobbying the Senate, House of Commons, Cabinet Ministers, and the Prime Minister's Office to fulfill mandates from Chiefs. She continues to advocate for First Nations priorities, as directed by the First Nations-in-Assembly collaboratively with First Nations leadership, to protect collective rights—Treaty, inherent rights, title and jurisdiction, the right to self-determination, and all human rights.

### OGIMAA KWE CLAIRE SAULT

Claire Sault was elected Chief on December 9, 2023, and served on the Mississaugas of the Credit Council through a bi-election since October 22, 2022. She formerly worked as the CEO of Northwind Business Development, a company wholly owned by Caldwell First Nation. She was born and raised on the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation with deep roots and strong ties to her mother's First Nation (Six Nations) as well.





# AFN Education Forum: *Reigniting the Flames of our Ancestors*

Forum sur l'éducation de l'APN :  
*« Raviver la flamme de nos ancêtres ».*

## PRESENTATIONS

### KEYNOTE: TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION: WHAT WE INHERITED AND BUILDING A LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP

Wednesday, February 19, 9:45 am

CADMUS DELORME

Cadmus Delorme, a Cree and Saulteaux, is the former Chief of Cowessess First Nation in Southern Saskatchewan. Cadmus graduated from Cowessess Community Education Centre in 2000. He later moved to Regina to pursue a Bachelor of Business Administration and a Certificate in Hospitality, Tourism and Gaming Entertainment Management from the First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv), and a Master of Public Administration from the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy. He has also received an ICD.D. designation from the Institute of Corporate Directors and its affiliate institution, Kenneth Levene Graduate School of Business.

### NATIONAL K-12 TRANSFORMATION UPDATE

Wednesday, February 19, 11:00 am

**Description:** The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) commissioned the AFN First Nations K-12 Education Transformation Review and Costing Analysis to assess the implementation of K-12 Education Transformation six years after the reform of First Nations education. Join us for a presentation highlighting the study's key findings, including gaps and successes in provincial comparability and Regional Education Agreements (REAs). Participants will gain insights on recommendations for the Government of Canada to improve the process as well as key considerations to support First Nation's REA negotiations.

#### Presenters:

RENEE ST. GERMAIN

**Renee St. Germain** is a member of the Chippewas of Rama First Nation and is the acting Senior Director of the Social Branch at the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). Renee is an educator by trade and holds both a Bachelor of Education and a Master of Education through the University of Ottawa. During her time with the AFN, Renee has primarily focused on First Nations education and has worked on developing and implementing policies such as K-12 Transformation, Post-Secondary Policy proposals, and the ongoing development of the First Nations Education Toolkit.



# AFN Education Forum: *Reigniting the Flames of our Ancestors*

## Forum sur l'éducation de l'APN : *« Raviver la flamme de nos ancêtres ».*

### DAKOTA EDWARDS

**Dakota Edwards** is a member of the Listuguj Mi'gmaq First Nation, born and raised in the unceded territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation, known as Ottawa, Ontario. Dakota holds a Bachelor of Social Sciences from the University of Ottawa, specializing in Conflict Studies and Human Rights, with a Minor in Feminist and Gender Studies. With eight years of experience working with children in early learning environments, Dakota values culture, language revitalization, family, and quality education as essential pathways forward. Currently a Senior Policy Analyst at the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Dakota has dedicated seven years to advancing First Nations K-12 and post-secondary education policy priorities. Dakota also led the AFN's "It's Our Time" Education Toolkit and coordinated the AFN National Youth Council.

### NATIONAL UPDATE ON JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE

Wednesday, February 19, 1:00 pm

**Description:** The presentation provides an overview of the draft policy recommendations for a long-term approach to Jordan's Principle. It highlights the Assembly of First Nations' work since 2007, including efforts at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and ongoing advocacy to shape its future. Key concerns with the current approach are discussed, along with policy recommendations designed to address these issues.

#### Presenters:

### JESSICA GOODMAN

**Jessica Goodman** is a member of Animbiigoo Zaagi'igan Anishinaabek, located in Northwestern Ontario. Jessica graduated from Lakehead University in 2017. Since 2019, she has worked on the Jordan's Principle frontline as a Service Coordinator and now works as a Senior Policy Analyst at the Assembly of First Nations, leading the Jordan's Principle file. She is dedicated to advancing First Nations children's rights, policy reform, and social justice.

### JESSICA QUINN

**Jessica Quinn** is a member of Shawanaga First Nation and presently lives on unceded, unsurrendered Algonquin and Haudenosaunee territory near Ottawa, ON. Working as a Special Advisor at the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) since 2018, Jessica has spent most of her career focused on advocacy for First Nations children and families through Jordan's Principle and Early Learning and Child Care. Jessica graduated from the University of Ottawa in 2017.

### TRANSFORMING EDUCATION THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES





# AFN Education Forum: *Reigniting the Flames of our Ancestors*

## Forum sur l'éducation de l'APN : *« Raviver la flamme de nos ancêtres ».*

Wednesday, February 19, 1:00 pm

**Description:** The passing of Amendments to the BC School Act (Bill 40) in 2023 and the First Nations Mandated Post-Secondary Institutes Act (Bill 20) in 2024 represent a commitment from the Provincial Government to uphold First Nations control of First Nations education by ensuring that First Nations are meaningfully involved in the decision making of the school districts that operate on their territory, and by recognizing and committing to funding for First Nations mandated post-secondary institutes. The First Nations Education Steering Committee worked collaboratively with the Ministry of Education and Child Care and the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future skills on the development and now implementation of the legislation, consistent with the BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan. Thane Bonar, Director of Communications and Policy and Connor Morris, Senior Manager, Education Policy, at the First Nations Education Steering Committee will share insights into the co-development process and speak to the impact this legislation is having in BC.

### Presenters:

THANE BONAR

**Thane Bonar** is the Director of Communications and Policy for the First Nations Education Steering Committee. Prior to joining FNEESC, Thane has worked with the BC Ministry of Advanced Education and the University of British Columbia First Nations House of Learning.

CONNOR MORRIS

**Connor Morris**, Senior Manager, Education Policy, FNEESC: Connor grew up in Treaty 6 Territory, Edmonton, Alberta and comes from a family of lifelong K-12 educators. He has been with the First Nations Education Steering Committee for seven years.

## A HEALING JOURNEY TO BECOMING A TRAUMA-INFORMED FIRST NATION SCHOOL

Wednesday, February 19, 1:00 pm

**Description:** On September 4th, 2022, our community of James Smith became a catastrophic center of a tragic event, which resulted in the stabbing deaths of 11 victims, and the injuries of 17 others. This event changed our school, our First Nation, and our organization forever. This event shook us to the core. Clearly, we had to turn the trajectory of our education system immediately. How could we continue offering literacy and numeracy and regular programming when our staff, students and community members were grief stricken and completely traumatized.



# AFN Education Forum: *Reigniting the Flames of our Ancestors*

## Forum sur l'éducation de l'APN : *« Raviver la flamme de nos ancêtres ».*

At East Central First Nation Education Authority we had to answer the call. Our Education Authority became a hub of a powerful system for tracking our most struggling students, including staff. Our team began with intentional positive interventions and detailed implementation action plans. This story is about reaching out to partners from Washington State, Manitoba, and our Saskatchewan friends and neighbors. This session will teach the participants the “how to” in becoming a trauma-informed school. Participants will learn the basic concepts of implementing a trauma-informed school culture and how to become a fully trauma-responsive school. The participants will walk away from this session with the critical steps they need when returning to their schools to begin experiencing the significant outcomes that naturally come with a new mindset and a set of tools. Our First Nation schools and communities are no strangers to trauma, it is imperative to begin dealing with trauma in our communities and schools to truly being our healing. Our hopes in this presentation we will lay a power-play book on answering the trauma of your students, healing your schools, communities, and your First Nations.

### **Presenters:**

#### RANDY CONSTANT

My mother enrolled in the Indian Teacher Education Program. She laid the pathway for leadership in my family. Her belief to teach and train local people to work in the First Nation school became my inspiration. To this day her dedication and commitment to help indigenous children pursue a quality and meaningful education continues to play out in myself.

My journey began first as a volunteer in the school in charge of connecting with those students on the fringe of the student body, subsequently supervising classrooms as a substitute teacher, eventually becoming a Teacher Assistant, and finally, transitioning to the Community Liaison Worker addressing communication between the home and school. These experiences led me in completing Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education from the University of Regina. My passion for education brought me back to my community to serve in many capacities at our school. I began as a teacher, vice-principal, principal, which eventually led me in becoming the Director of Education for the East Central First Nations Education Authority. We began providing Nursery to Grade 12, Adult Education and second level services for James Smith CN, Peter Chapman CN, and Chakastaypasin Band of the Cree Nation.

However, the critical incident in my community of James Smith has turned the trajectory of our education system in our school and organization. With all the challenges of great suffering and losses of our community and school members we began the task of answering the needs of our parents, teachers, and students. Together with my colleagues we became heavily involved in becoming a trauma informed education system. We have now completed the second year of system-wide trauma-informed and trauma-sensitive education organization. First Nations have suffered many types of traumas from historical to addictions, and community violence. I believe our journey will set the standards and the foundations that will help other First Nations everywhere throughout First Nation country.





# AFN Education Forum: *Reigniting the Flames of our Ancestors*

## Forum sur l'éducation de l'APN : *« Raviver la flamme de nos ancêtres ».*

PAULINE MCKAY

My name is Pauline McKay (Carriere) I am a Swampy Cree originally from Cumberland House, Saskatchewan. I am a fluent Cree speaker and grounded in my culture. Currently I work for East Central First Nation Education Authority, I am the Superintendent of Education. Throughout my career I worked as an Administrator, a Provincial facilitator for Following Their Voices Initiative, an Aboriginal advisor for the Ministry of education in Saskatchewan, and a teacher for many years.

I graduated with a B.ED. from ITEP University of Saskatchewan. I completed my M.ED. with the University of Regina. One of my greatest achievements was receiving an Indspire award for Innovative practice in Indigenous education in creating the One Month Block System. My passion is to enhance academic achievement, mental health and wellness of First Nation students. I have dedicated my entire education career to the betterment of First Nation students throughout Saskatchewan and Manitoba. With the changing times and tides of the lives of our students our work must reflect the needs of our students.

My colleagues at East Central First Nation Authority have been working tirelessly on becoming a Trauma Informed and Sensitive School organization. Trauma is not new to our First Nations but dealing with trauma in schools are, my hope is that our story will help First Nation communities and schools throughout First Nations across our great land.

### TAKING STOCK AND PAVING THE WAY FORWARD TO SUPPORT FIRST NATIONS K-12 EDUCATION SUCCESS

Wednesday, February 19, 1:00 pm & Thursday, February 20, 2:30 pm

**Description:** This workshop is an opportunity for participants to hear from and collaborate with the Education Branch Executive team from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). In 2019, ISC transformed its K-12 funding approach from outdated proposal-based education programs to funding models aimed at providing more stable, predictable, and transparent core funding. In this workshop, we will look at the factors that led to the transformed approach and new interim regional funding models and provide a stock-take of what has been achieved, what has been transformed, and just as importantly what hasn't, and where the barriers and challenges remain. With a grounding in where we were, and where we are now, the workshop will then look at where we can go next, and how we can work together to effectively focus resources and effort where they will have the most impact. Finally, this workshop will provide an opportunity look at recommendations put forward in the AFN's First Nations K-12 Education Transformation Review and Costing Analysis report, released in December, 2024.

**Presenters:**

KAREN CAMPBELL



# AFN Education Forum: *Reigniting the Flames of our Ancestors*

## Forum sur l'éducation de l'APN : *« Raviver la flamme de nos ancêtres ».*

**Director General – Education Branch:** [karen.campbell@sac-isc.gc.ca](mailto:karen.campbell@sac-isc.gc.ca)

STEPHANIE O'BRIEN

**Director – Regional Partnerships Directorate :** [stephanie.obrien@sac-isc.gc.ca](mailto:stephanie.obrien@sac-isc.gc.ca)

THIRZA BOYCHUCK

**Senior Director – Policy Directorate :** [Thirza.Boychuk@sac-isc.gc.ca](mailto:Thirza.Boychuk@sac-isc.gc.ca)

JONATHAN ALLEN

**Senior Director – Programs Directorate :** [jonathan.allen2@sac-isc.gc.ca](mailto:jonathan.allen2@sac-isc.gc.ca)

SHELLY BLIZZARD JONES

**Deputy Director – Education Results :** [shelly.blizzardjones2@sac-isc.gc.ca](mailto:shelly.blizzardjones2@sac-isc.gc.ca)

### MANITOBA FIRST NATION SCHOOL SYSTEM (MFNSS)

Wednesday, February 19, 2:30 pm

**Description:** The Manitoba First Nations School System (MFNSS) was established to empower First Nations communities by restoring control over their education and fostering a culturally relevant, high-quality learning environment for students. Officially launched in 2017 and operating within Manitoba, the MFNSS is “Canada's first-ever First Nations School System” (PM Justin Trudeau, 2016). It was created to address the educational disparities First Nations students faced. It started with ten First Nations delegating the administration and management of their schools to the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Center (MFNERC). In 2019, an eleventh First Nations joined the School System. In August 2024, a twelfth First Nations joined, with another set to join in August 2025.

The MFNSS reflects a vision of self-determination rooted in the traditions, values, and languages of the First Nations it serves. As MFNSS advances into the future, its strategic priorities focus on strengthening academic achievement, enhancing language and cultural revitalization, building school capacity, and fostering holistic student success. It works with educational directors and school principals to create School Success Plans that create:

1. a culturally responsive environment;
2. environments that promotes health, safety, and well-being;



# AFN Education Forum: *Reigniting the Flames of our Ancestors*

## Forum sur l'éducation de l'APN : *« Raviver la flamme de nos ancêtres ».*

3. inclusive and respectful learning communities that are child-centred, responsive, and relevant; and
4. support student learning and engagement through improved instructional and assessment practices.

As MFNSS is in its eighth year of operation, it continues to refine its structure, policies, and best practices to maintain an efficient First Nations school system.

### Presenters:

CHARLES COCHRANE

**Executive Director, MFNERC**

CURTIS NEPINAK

**Assistant Director of Instructional Services, MFNSS**

CHARISSE CYR

**Inclusive Education Coordinator, MFNSS**

## BRIDGING INDIGENOUS AND WESTERN STEM EDUCATION THROUGH COLLABORATION AND RELATIONSHIP

Wednesday, February 19, 2:30 pm

**Description:** In collaboration with the First Nations Education Administrators Association, we at Let's Talk Science propose a workshop to enhance Indigenous engagement in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education. This workshop will focus on our free programming available for youth and educators from Early Years to Grade 12, emphasizing the importance of partnerships and relationships grounded in reconciliation.

### Objectives:

- To explore how partnerships can be leveraged to co-create meaningful professional learning opportunities and enrich student experiences in STEM fields.
- To present strategies for integrating Indigenous wisdom with Western science, fostering an inclusive and culturally relevant STEM learning environment.

### Content Highlights:

- Real-world examples of collaborative initiatives that empower Indigenous youth to thrive as confident bearers of tradition while becoming innovative trailblazers.
- Discussing STEM's potential for the benefit of all, fostering mutual respect and understanding.





# AFN Education Forum: *Reigniting the Flames of our Ancestors*

## Forum sur l'éducation de l'APN : *« Raviver la flamme de nos ancêtres ».*

### Target Audience:

This workshop is geared towards educators, administrators, and academics seeking innovative approaches to enrich Indigenous engagement in STEM education.

We invite you to join us in championing a future where all students can excel and feel empowered in their educational journeys. Together, we can create richer, more inclusive learning experiences.

### Presenters:

#### TAMMY WEBSTER

B.Sc, B.A, B.Ed, MA (Education) Director, Equity for Let's Talk Science

Tammy is Anishinabekwe from Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg and the Director of Equity for Let's Talk Science. Let's Talk Science helps children and youth fulfill their potential and prepare for their future careers and citizenship roles by supporting their learning through science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) engagement. Offering a robust suite of programming for youth, educators, and volunteers, the organization has impacted millions of people across Canada since its inception.

With a rich education background spanning over two decades, Tammy's expertise encompasses roles as an Indigenous Education & Equity Consultant, an elementary classroom teacher, a certified Ontario principal, and currently Director, Equity. She effectively utilizes her leadership skills in her role as a Council member for the Ontario College of Teachers, where she actively contributes to governance and oversight. Additionally, as Chair for Anishnabeg Outreach, she demonstrates her commitment to community engagement and advocacy, working to promote educational opportunities and support for Indigenous students and families. Her academic excellence shines through with qualifications including Ontario Principal Certification, a Master of Arts in Education, a Bachelor of Education, a Bachelor of Arts in Leisure and Recreation Studies with Business Option, and a Bachelor of General Science. Additionally, she holds a GEP through ICD.D.

#### SIMON BRASCOUPÉ

MA, CAPA, CFNHM

President and CEO, First Nations Education Administrators Association  
Adjunct Research Professor, Carleton University & Trent University

**Simon Brascoupé**, Bear Clan, Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, is a writer, academic and Indigenous leader with extensive experience in Indigenous knowledge systems, traditional medicine and food systems, and land-based healing. As an Adjunct Research Professor at Carleton University and Trent University, Simon has dedicated his career to advancing Indigenous education, focusing on integrating Indigenous knowledge into various fields, including health, food systems, and science.



# AFN Education Forum: *Reigniting the Flames of our Ancestors*

## Forum sur l'éducation de l'APN : *« Raviver la flamme de nos ancêtres ».*

Simon has actively promoted Indigenous Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) by participating in national forums, town halls, and collaborative projects. He is a frequent speaker and panelist on topics related to Indigenous Science, advocating for the recognition and incorporation of traditional knowledge in modern scientific practices. His work in Indigenous STEM bridges the gap between traditional and contemporary scientific approaches, promoting sustainability, community health, and resilience.

In addition to his academic contributions, Simon is a Certified First Nations Health Manager (CFNHM) and has significantly shaped Indigenous health initiatives across Canada. His expertise in traditional medicine and knowledge systems has been instrumental in shaping authentic health policies and programs that reflect Indigenous perspectives and values.

Through his leadership and advocacy, Simon Brascoupé plays a pivotal role in fostering a deeper understanding of Indigenous STEM and its essential role in addressing contemporary challenges in health, environment, and education.

### NEGOTIATIONS SKILLS

Wednesday, February 19, 2:30 pm

#### Description:

This presentation aims to provide an overview of key strategies and techniques for engaging in negotiations with government and provincial school boards. It will equip participants with practical tools to advocate effectively, build strong partnerships, and achieve better outcomes.

- Foundations of Interest-Based Negotiation – Instead of focusing on rigid positions, understand the underlying interests (why they want it) to create solutions that benefit all parties.
- Strategic Preparation – Learn how to analyze the context, prepare essential materials, and assemble a competent negotiation team.
- Negotiation Tips & Tactics – Acquire insider techniques to build rapport, navigate discussions confidently, handle challenges, and maximize your impact.

#### Presenters:

KHRYSTYNA OROBETS

MPA

Manager, MNP Indigenous Services National Leader, Indigenous Education



# AFN Education Forum: *Reigniting the Flames of our Ancestors*

## Forum sur l'éducation de l'APN : *« Raviver la flamme de nos ancêtres ».*

Khrystyna Orobets is a Senior Manager in the Indigenous Services Consulting Practice based in Calgary. She holds a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree and a Master's Degree in Public Administration.

With over 12 years of experience working with Indigenous communities, Khrystyna specializes in assisting K-12 education clients, which include First Nations education departments, education authorities, and regional education organizations. For the past six years, she has led MNP's Indigenous Education Service line, focusing on quality assurance for education engagements and expanding the practice nationwide.

Her work encompasses project management support, funding analysis, business case development for improved funding, agreement negotiations with federal and provincial governments, strategic and operational planning support, governance training, policy development, and education needs assessments.

Khrystyna and her team have supported the development of Regional Education Agreements across Canada and Education Service Agreements with provincial school boards. She has also led various cost studies for the Assembly of First Nations, including those on Inclusive Education, Transportation, and the recent K-12 Education Transformation review.

In her personal time, Khrystyna enjoys spending time with her husband and two children, hiking, traveling, skiing, and cooking.

### PANEL: THE FUTURE OF FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

Thursday, February 20, 9:30 am

**Description: To be announced.**

**Presenters: To be announced.**

### LAND-BASED EDUCATION - LEARNING FROM THE PAST

Thursday, February 20, 10:45 am

**Description:**

At FNEC, we believe land-based education trainings should be delivered by and for First Nation and First Nation organizations. Communities that we support have been going back to learning with the land and were not finding proper, culturally significant training to equip teachers in their specific realities. We developed a training that is holistic and is rooted in local community knowledge and involvement. It equips teachers in teaching approaches (experiential, inquiry, sustainability, etc.), evaluation, safety and community involvement. We would like to present the training and the process to building it.



# AFN Education Forum: *Reigniting the Flames of our Ancestors*

## Forum sur l'éducation de l'APN : « Raviver la flamme de nos ancêtres ».

### Presenters:

LIZA MCLAUGHLIN

First Nations Education Council (FNEC)

is a student success advisor at the first nation education council. She specifically supports communities in their revitalization of land based education within their schools. She has been working at FNEC for 2 and a half years in diverse portfolios such as math, english language arts, first peoples literature, and their very own qualifying teacher training. Before her role as an advisor, she worked for 7 years at Ratihente High School, a Kanienkeha:ka high school as a psycho social worker and special education technician. She is of Scottish and French descent and has been living in Kanesatake with her partner and their son for 10 years. Working towards reconciliation on her Instagram platform on the side, she has been educating province schools teachers on how to decolonize, as much as possible, the curriculum, approaches, and content.

CHERYL TENASCO-WHITEDUCK

Cheryl Tenasco-Whiteduck is a proud First Nations member of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg community. She currently serves as a Student Success Advisor – Culture and Language for the First Nations Education Council.

With a wealth of traditional knowledge and experiences gained from living among the Anishinabe Nation and over 10 years of experience as a regional advisor for First Nations communities in Quebec, Cheryl offers a deep, culturally rooted perspective to her role.

She holds a background in Early Childhood Education and First Nations Special Needs, equipping her to effectively support the development of culturally based learning programs.

Cheryl plays a key role in integrating traditional knowledge and practices into these initiatives, while also fostering the inclusion of language and cultural teachings.

This holistic approach empowers both students and educators to connect with the land, strengthening cultural identity and deepening understanding of ancestral teachings.

### CHARTING THE PATH: FNTI'S 40 YEAR JOURNEY TO RECOGNITION AND INNOVATION IN INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Thursday, February 20, 10:45 am

**Description:** This presentation explores the 40-year legacy of FNTI (The First Nations Technical Institute) and its evolution into a learner-centered Indigenous Institute. This presentation highlights FNTI's pivotal role in advancing Indigenous education, including its contributions to the Ontario Government Co-Creation Table, which led to the groundbreaking



# AFN Education Forum: *Reigniting the Flames of our Ancestors*

## Forum sur l'éducation de l'APN : *« Raviver la flamme de nos ancêtres ».*

passage of the Indigenous Institutes Act in 2017. Discover how this transformative milestone has shaped FNTI into a vibrant hub of innovation, offering new degree programs, fostering growing enrollment and diverse student demographics, and celebrating strong graduation rates. We'll also explore FNTI's ambitious research agenda and its enduring impact on Indigenous education systems, reigniting the flames of our ancestors to guide future generations.

### Presenters:

SUZANNE BRANT

#### President, FNTI (The First Nations Technical Institute)

Suzanne provides leadership, vision and innovation in Indigenous post-secondary education at the First Nations Technical Institute (FNTI). She is Bear Clan and a member of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, located along the shores of the beautiful Bay of Quinte.

### PSE INSTITUTIONS REASERCH: MEDOW CONSULTING UPDATE

Thursday, February 20, 10:45 am

### Description:

#### Building the Case for Equitable Funding for First Nations Institutes: Research Update and Discussion

Medow Consulting, with special advisory support from the Indigenous Institutes Consortium (IIC), is currently undertaking a comparative study of funding mechanisms for First Nations post-secondary Institutions (FNIs) compared to non-Indigenous post-secondary institutions. The findings of this study will contribute to advocacy efforts for stable and equitable funding for FNIs. This session will include:

- An introduction to the role of FNIs
- Background on the current research and past initiatives
- A brief update on the PSE policy context from AFN
- Interactive discussion on the role of adequately funded FNIs

### Presenters:

JON MEDOW







# AFN Education Forum: *Reigniting the Flames of our Ancestors*

## Forum sur l'éducation de l'APN : « Raviver la flamme de nos ancêtres ».

### **Jon Medow, President (Medow Consulting)**

Jon founded [Medow Consulting](#) in 2017 as a purpose-driven consulting practice. He brings a multi-dimensional perspective to the practice based on sixteen years of public policy analysis, engagement, and strategy experience on the political and bureaucratic sides of government, in the think tank and non-profit sectors, and in consulting.

Prior to launching Medow Consulting, Jon held civil service and political roles with the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities in the Minister's Office, Deputy Minister's Office, and Indigenous Education Branch. Before joining government, he held policy, research, and government relations roles with Higher Education Strategy Associates, the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, and the Mowat Centre.

In the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Indigenous Education Branch, Jon was involved in policy and engagement processes leading to development of the *Indigenous Institutes Act, 2017* which recognized the role of Indigenous Institutes in the post-secondary education system. As a consultant, he has continued to focus upon initiatives aimed at achieving a funded and recognized First Nations Institutes (FNIs) sector.

## WHAT DOES IT COST TO DELIVER ADULT EDUCATION IN FIRST NATIONS?

Thursday, February 20, 1:00 pm

**Description:** The Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy (IFSD) was asked by AFN to analyze the costs of delivering adult education in First Nations. This presentation will review interim findings on approaches to adult education and indicative costs.

### **Presenters:**

MOSTAFA ASKARI

Chief Economist

As a trusted leader in Canadian economics and public finance, Mostafa Askari brings a wealth of experience in economic and fiscal forecasting, budget analysis, model building and program costing to IFSD.

In 2019, Mostafa joined IFSD following an extensive career that saw him hold key fiscal, analytical and managerial positions in the Department of Finance as the Senior Chief of Economic Analysis, Chief of Economic Forecast, Chief of International Policy Analysis, and Chief of Model Development, and at Health Canada as the Director General of the Applied Research and Analysis Directorate. His final ten years working in government were spent



# AFN Education Forum: *Reigniting the Flames of our Ancestors*

## Forum sur l'éducation de l'APN : *« Raviver la flamme de nos ancêtres ».*

alongside his colleagues Kevin Page and Sahir Khan helping to establish Canada's Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) as the Assistant PBO and then the Deputy PBO.

Mostafa earned his PhD from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. He has held appointments as a senior advisor to Canada's Executive Director at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and as an assistant professor of economics at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario.

A frequent media contributor on economic issues, Mostafa is regularly sought out for his analysis on CTV News, CBC News and Global TV and in publications such as the Canadian Tax Journal, Policy Magazine, OECD Journal on Budgeting, and the Journal of Econometrics.

### HELAINA GASPARD

Managing Director

Helaina is a co-founder of IFSD and leads the organization's work in governance, institutional and policy assessment and design and decision support. Helaina's approach to advisory work applies disciplined research design, methodology, data collection and analysis, integrated with a results-focus, reflecting real-world client needs. She has led engagements supporting some of IFSD's biggest client successes particularly as it relates to Indigenous reconciliation and independent fiscal institutions.

Helaina has a BA (Hons) from The University of Western Ontario, an MA from Queen's University, and a PhD from the University of Ottawa.

### LAC SEUL'S LAND-BASED CURRICULUM FOR K-8

Thursday, February 20, 1:00 pm

**Description:** During the 2023-2024 school year, a team of educators in LSFN developed a Land-Based curriculum which connects outdoor/area resources and land-based activities into the Ontario curriculum. It was introduced to the community and classrooms in the fall of 2024 and has been well-received.

#### Presenters:

### SYLVIA DAVIS

Sylvia is Anishinaabe-kwe, mother, auntie and Education Director in Obishikokaang (Lac Seul) First Nation. She is committed to creating meaningful learning opportunities that celebrate culture, community, and connection to the land.

### KRISTIN WARD



# AFN Education Forum: *Reigniting the Flames of our Ancestors*

## Forum sur l'éducation de l'APN : *« Raviver la flamme de nos ancêtres ».*

Kristin Ward is the Assistant Director of Education in Lac Seul. She is passionate about ensuring students receive an inclusive, trauma-informed and culturally rich educational experience in Lac Seul First Nation.

### ADVANCING INDIGENOUS HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING THROUGH ACCREDITATION AND CREDENTIALS

Thursday, February 20, 1:00 pm

**Description:** In this presentation, the Indigenous Advanced Education and Skills Council (IAESC) will discuss the opportunities that recognized the Indigenous Institutes as the third pillar of the post-secondary sector in Ontario as a result of the Indigenous Institutes Act 2017. Currently there are nine Indigenous Institutes in Ontario providing post-secondary education and the role of IAESC in implementing the Indigenous Institutes Act, 2017 includes establishing an Indigenous quality assurance framework for the Indigenous Institutes. This Indigenous quality assurance framework is the basis to approve independent higher education and training programs and credentials by Indigenous Institutes in Ontario. Assuring the highest quality of education at Indigenous Institutes aims to support the interests of learners as they work to achieve their lifelong learning goals within higher education and training.

IAESC's work under the Indigenous Institutes Act 2017, is informed by the principles articulated in the Indigenous control of Indigenous education policy document and the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; which recognizes the autonomy of Indigenous Institutes in their own programming. The presentation will also highlight IAESC's use of a consultative process through dialogues to develop and Indigenous quality assurance framework that reflects Indigenous knowledge, languages, worldviews, and Indigenous ways of knowing and living.

#### Presenters:

STEPHANIE ROY

Ms. Roy is Anishinaabe kwe, a member of M'Chigeeng First Nation on Manitoulin Island, Ontario, Canada, and is from the Crane clan. Stephanie is the Director of Development, Innovation and Research with the Indigenous Advanced Education and Skills Council (IAESC) with extensive experience in the Indigenous education and training sector in Ontario for more than 20 years. She is a member of the Ontario College of Teachers and is a certified principal in Ontario. Stephanie holds a Doctorate in Leadership, Higher and Adult Education from the University of Toronto.

SUE ECKENSWILLER



# AFN Education Forum: *Reigniting the Flames of our Ancestors*

## Forum sur l'éducation de l'APN : *« Raviver la flamme de nos ancêtres ».*

Sue Eckenswiller is a Senior Quality Assurance Advisor at the Indigenous Advanced Education and Skills Council. Sue has worked for several years in the quality assurance and regulatory sector in addition to teaching in the post-secondary sector for 17 years. Sue holds a Doctorate in Post-secondary Education Leadership from the University of Calgary and her research specialized in Education Quality Assurance and Regulatory Bodies.

### THE ROOTS OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION IN FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

Thursday, February 20, 2:30 pm

**Description:** The FNEC Preschool Education Cycle Program developed by and for FNEC member communities, and launched in 2022, recognized various sources of knowledge as the roots of each child's development. In this presentation, we will show how the preschool teachers of Awacak Okikkinohamatowikamikowaw school in Manawan use that program to integrate their traditions, territory and community with formal education. We will present a global planning based on their cultural calendar that allows children to develop various skills in the Atikamekw language through blueberry picking, moose hunting, and celebrating children's rights day.

#### Presenters:

ANNE-MARIE ANGERS

Student Success Advisor, FNEC

LIZA MCLAUGHLIN

Student Success Advisor, FNEC

### TAKING STOCK AND PAVING THE WAY FORWARD TO SUPPORT FIRST NATIONS K-12 EDUCATION SUCCESS (REPEAT)

Thursday, February 20, 2:30 pm

### ENSURE 90% OF YOUR CHILDREN READ AT-GRADE LEVEL BY GRADE 3

Thursday, February 20, 2:30 pm

**Description:** There are over 200 skills a child needs to master in order to learn to read by the end of grade 3. Understanding these skills, tracking them and monitoring progress throughout a child's reading journey is critical for success. Explore the latest digital progress monitoring tool that has helped First Nations educators ensure 90% of their students learn within two years of





# AFN Education Forum: *Reigniting the Flames of our Ancestors*

## Forum sur l'éducation de l'APN : *« Raviver la flamme de nos ancêtres ».*

implementation. Participants will interactively explore [Sprig Reading](#), and how it is changing the way classrooms approach evidence-based reading instruction. All participants will receive a code for a FREE subscription.

### **Presenters:**

#### JARRETT LAUGHLIN

Jarrett Laughlin is the Founder and CEO at Sprig Learning, leading the company in its mission to ensure all children receive a fair shot at success in school and in life. Jarrett comes from a family of educators and has been engaged in education research and policy development for nearly 25 years. Prior to Sprig Learning, Jarrett has worked for several national, provincial and regional education organizations and governments in support of designing holistic and innovative approaches to measuring success in learning. Jarrett received his Bachelor's Degree in Concurrent Education from Queen's University and his Master's Degree at the University of South Carolina. He currently resides in Ottawa, Ontario with his wife and four children.

