

THE FIRE WE CARRY

NNCEA Strategic Plan

"NOW IT IS OUR TURN TO FUEL THAT FIRE SO IT KEEPS BURNING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION."

Message From The Board of Trustees

Every generation of Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation has carried the responsibility of preparing the next generation. For over forty years, leaders, Elders, educators, families, and community members have worked together to build an education system that reflects the many milestones and aspirations of our Nation. Our relatives established First Nations control of First Nations education, invested in schools and language teaching, strengthened land-based learning, and created opportunities that previous generations could only imagine. They built the fire that we have inherited.

Our responsibility is not simply to maintain the fire that has been built. It is to carry it forward, to fuel it, and to prepare future generations to be leaders. To do this, we need to ensure they are grounded in who they are, proud of where they come from, and equipped to pursue whatever future they choose – with our language and culture at the heart of their identity.

This plan is about more than strengthening education. It is about fulfilling the promise of First Nations control of First Nations education by creating a system where the Nehetho language, culture, land, history, and ways of knowing are at the heart of learning. This is a system that ensures every learner develops the knowledge, skills, and confidence to thrive in two worlds.

Like those who came before us, we are fueling this fire with intention. Over the next five years, this plan will guide us so that future generations inherit an education system that burns brighter because of the work we continue today.

2026 Board of Trustees
Nisichawayasi Nehetho Culture and Education
Authority



Purpose

To transform education by placing the Nehetho language, culture, land, history, and identity at its heart, preparing every learner to grow, contribute their gifts, and pursue the future they choose.



Vision

By 2040, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation has built an education system that is among the best in the world. It is rooted in who we are and prepares every learner to thrive wherever their life leads.

We will focus on three priorities:

1

Centre our language, culture, and identity at the heart of education

2

Build an education system that serves future generations

3

Restore shared responsibility for education across families, community, and partners

PRIORITY 1: Centre our language, culture, and identity at the heart of our education system

This priority reflects our commitment to building an education system that is rooted in the Nehetho language and culture. It is about strengthening and connecting the good work that already exists while continuing to transform education so that our language, culture, history, values, and ways of knowing become the foundation of every learner's experience. At the same time, learners will continue to develop the knowledge and skills needed to succeed wherever life takes them.

STRATEGY 1: Build an NCN-centred curriculum for every learner

Develop a comprehensive K-12 curriculum that reflects the language, history, culture, traditions, and knowledge of Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation across every stage of learning. This includes strengthening Nehetho language learning, expanding land-based learning, preserving community history, connecting existing resources into a coherent learning journey, and ensuring western curriculum strengthens, rather than defines, the educational experience.

STRATEGY 2: Support excellence in teaching and learning

Support teachers, Elders, knowledge keepers, and land-based educators to confidently deliver an education that reflects our community's vision. This includes strengthening instructional practice, increasing opportunities to learn through Nehetho language and culture, recognizing and valuing community educators, and ensuring every learner experiences teaching that reflects both educational excellence and the knowledge of the Nation.

STRATEGY 3: Help every learner know who they are and who they can become

Ensure every learner develops a strong sense of identity, belonging, confidence, purpose, and pride. Education should help learners understand where they come from, recognize their gifts, value their language and culture, and develop the confidence to walk in two worlds while remaining grounded in who they are as NCN people.

PRIORITY 2: Build an education system that serves future generations

This priority is about building an education system that is connected, responsive, and prepared for the future. It recognizes that every stage of learning should contribute to one lifelong educational journey and that today's decisions must strengthen opportunities for generations to come. It is also about creating an education system that continues to learn, improve, and lead.

STRATEGY 1: Strengthen learning pathways across every stage of life

Create stronger connections between early learning, elementary and secondary education, Atoskiwin Training and Employment Centre, post-secondary education, and lifelong learning so that learners experience education as one connected journey. This includes strengthening transitions, expanding opportunities for learners to enter and re-enter education throughout their lives, and creating pathways that encourage more NCN members to become future educators and leaders.

STRATEGY 2: Grow the capacity to meet the needs of future generations

Invest in the people, facilities, and systems we need to support a strong and growing education system. This includes developing local capacity, planning future educational facilities, strengthening workforce development, creating opportunities for post-secondary growth within the community, and making thoughtful investments that will benefit learners for generations.

STRATEGY 3: Lead through knowledge, evidence, and continuous improvement

Strengthen the systems that help the Education Authority learn, adapt, and make informed decisions. This includes building strong planning, research, evaluation, data, community archives, staying current with trends in First Nations and western education, and sharing knowledge so that future decisions continue to strengthen educational excellence and position NCN as a leader in First Nations education.

PRIORITY 3: Restore shared responsibility for education across families, community, and partners

This priority recognizes that education belongs to the whole community. Learner success depends upon strong relationships among families, schools, Elders, leadership, community organizations, and service providers. By working together, the community can create the conditions that allow every learner to succeed.

STRATEGY 1: Partner with families to encourage learning

Work alongside families to improve attendance, encourage participation in learning, understand and remove barriers, and celebrate progress. This work recognizes parents and caregivers as essential partners in education and seeks to build relationships that help every learner thrive.

STRATEGY 2: Help families build confidence, resilience, and community connection

Create opportunities for parents, caregivers, and community members to build knowledge, practical skills, confidence, and self-reliance. This includes parenting supports, community learning opportunities, and initiatives that strengthen responsibility, pride, and the capacity of families to support future generations.

STRATEGY 3: Work in partnership to create the conditions for learner success

Strengthen partnerships across community organizations, leadership, and services to ensure learners and families experience coordinated support throughout their educational journey. By aligning efforts, sharing responsibility, and working toward common goals, the community can remove barriers, expand opportunities, and create the conditions that allow every learner to succeed.