

November 1-2, 2018

Manoir Saint-Sauveur

3rd CONFERENCE

on the First Nations Parental and Community Involvement

FINAL REPORT



I'M INVOLVED!

"Collaborating for the Future"

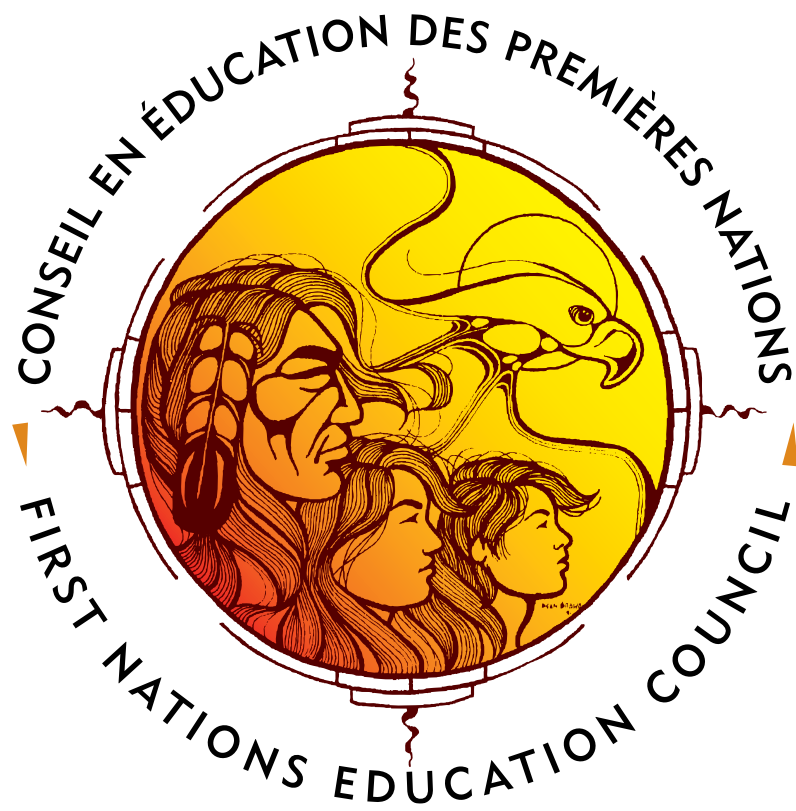




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Introduction

One of the FNEC's primary objectives is to support and implement measures to improve the quality of educational services for First Nations children. Parental and community involvement plays a key role in reaching this goal.

For the last three years, as part of the First Nations education governance project, the FNEC has organized an annual conference on First Nations parental and community involvement.

This year's conference aimed to:

- promote the importance of the role of parents and the community in taking responsibility for and control over their respective education system;
- raise awareness among parents, school teams, and First Nations communities of the importance of parental and community involvement;
- further mobilize education stakeholders so that the level of education and success rate among First Nations students can be increased;
- reinforce parenting skills so that parents can fully participate in their children's education;
- develop a network of parents in First Nations communities so that they can generate discussion.

The third edition of the Conference on First Nations Parental and Community Involvement was held November 1 and 2, 2018, at the Manoir Saint-Sauveur. The theme of this year's conference for parents, teachers and school principals was I'M INVOLVED!: Collaborating for the Future. The goal of the presentations and workshops was to mobilize participants so that they can better support children in our schools.

Over 130 people representing eight Quebec First Nations participated in this event. This represents a 44% increase in attendance over last year.

Workshops and presentations were given on over a dozen different topics, the consistency of which with the above-mentioned objectives was verified by the FNEC team. Suggestions made by 2017 conference attendees were also taken into consideration in this year's selection of topics, which were:

- Governance in parental and community involvement
- Home-school-community partnerships
- The parent-teen relationship
- Cyberbullying
- Parenting skills
- Student motivation and success
- Student retention and its challenges
- Teens and marijuana
- Transition to kindergarten
- Jordan's Principle
- Developing confidence in our children
- The role of parents in "effective schools"

In addition to the presentations on standards of governance, different approaches to parenthood, and other contemporary issues, the FNEC featured participant testimonials and networking in this year's conference. Several presenters from First Nations communities shared their personal stories demonstrating the need to have support from family through academic and career choices.

Over the years, parents, schools and community resources have developed an understanding of the role parents play in the education of First Nations children. Through their attendance and participation, attendees and presenters contribute to building and developing a



school culture in the First Nations education community. The FNEC is continuing its study of approaches to parental and community involvement, and is constantly improving the services provided to member communities.

NEW FEATURES AT THE THIRD EDITION

Participants enjoyed a few new additions to this year's conference!

The Parents' Café, where parents and school staff could get together to discuss issues, share information and network with each other, was set up for conference attendees. The Café hosted several activities throughout the conference, and participants were invited to drop by. The Parents' Café is an example of the kind of collaborative project schools can put in place. Many studies show that creating a place in the school that is specifically for parents encourages parent-teacher communication, fosters successful parent-school collaboration, and develops a sense of belonging among parents. This place could be a lounge or a resource/family room.

The use of Facebook Live and YouTube Live to broadcast the conference across social networks was very successful, and gave even more parents the opportunity to have access to content.



Impact of this year's conference

1. INCREASED TURNOUT

More than 130 participants, including 110 parents, attended the third edition of the Conference on First Nations Parental and Community Involvement. This represents a 44% increase over attendance in 2017 when there were 90 participants.



The second edition of the conference was attended by 90 participants, which is approximately a 50% increase compared to the first edition that attracted 60.

Since the first edition in 2016, the number of participants has at least doubled, representing an increase of 117%.

2. INCREASED OUTREACH

The success of the last two conferences and the promotion of the event has enabled us to reach our objectives for 2018, including the number of participants expected for the third edition.

The vox pop on Facebook Live and the YouTube Live broadcast achieved good viewing statistics giving parents in all First Nations communities access to the presentations. We hope to maintain the culture of parental support for student success established in member communities.

3. STRONG REPRESENTATION ACROSS FIRST NATIONS IN QUEBEC

Eight nations across Quebec were represented at the third edition of the conference, which shows firm commitment and significant social awareness of parental guidance toward Aboriginal youth.



Twenty communities (FNEC member and non-member) across Quebec were represented.



4. DIVERSITY OF PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS

Over twenty presenters, six from the FNEC, and sixteen guest speakers, took the stage over the two-day conference.

Over a dozen topics were addressed, including governance in parental and community involvement, home-school-community partnerships, the parent-teen relationship, cyberbullying, parenting skills, student motivation and success, student retention and its challenges, teens and marijuana, transition to kindergarten, Jordan's Principle, developing confidence in our children, and the role of parents in "effective schools".

This year's conference was bigger than ever with multiple presentations and activities being held simultaneously in four meeting rooms consisting of three conference rooms and the Parents' Café.

5. HIGH LEVEL OF SATISFACTION AMONG PARTICIPANTS

The vast majority of participants, 90.5%, said they were very satisfied with the organization of the conference (meeting location, information and registration table, and FNEC staff), 9% were "satisfied" and 1.5% were "OK". None of the respondents said they were dissatisfied.

In terms of the content of the event (format of the conference, impression that something learned could be put into practice, and whether they would recommend the conference to others), 79% of participants said that they were very satisfied, 28% were "satisfied" and 4% "OK". None of the respondents said they were dissatisfied.

6. EXPANDED PARENT DATABASE

Since 2016, we have gathered 220 e-mail addresses of parents to whom we send our parental and community involvement newsletter. We are taking advantage of this contact to conduct parent surveys on specific issues.

The survey conducted at the conference has enabled us to learn more about parents' needs and expectations, which will help guide regional and local work.



Summary of the presentations and workshops

HOW TO MAKE TIME FOR OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN – Ghislain Picard

Mr. Picard gave participants his view of parental involvement: “I feel very privileged to be close to my three daughters, my six grandchildren, and soon my two great-grandchildren! They give me just what I often need in my hectic life by offsetting the demands of my political duties. Whenever I can, I take the opportunity to spend some time with them and talk about their place on this earth, of our identity and our responsibility to proudly show the world who we are. We take advantage of every moment, and organizing our family get-togethers for an activity or a meal is the most satisfying thing we can accomplish.”



STANDARDS IN PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT – Mira Levasseur-Moreau and Eve Lapointe



Participants had the opportunity to discover the standards in parental and community involvement developed as part of the “Supporting Strong First Nation Education Governance” project.

The underlying objectives are to structure parental involvement and make it a priority for FNEC-member communities. Participants also became familiar with what the FNEC and its member communities are doing to meet these objectives.



WHY DO MY CHILDREN TRY MY PATIENCE? – Marie-Hélène Chalifour

Why are there days when I can react calmly and in an appropriate way to my child's behaviour, and other days I feel completely overwhelmed and incapable? This presentation helped participants make sense of it all through an empathetic approach so they can:

- understand why we as parents sometimes lose our patience with our children;
- understand the effects on the parent-child relationship;
- learn how to stay calm and handle the situation differently.

THE PARENT-TEEN RELATIONSHIP – Eva de Gosztonyi and Valérie Fortin

The task of turning children into adults has never been more daunting. An adolescent is neither child nor adult. They need us, yet do not want to need us. We are their best bet, yet their instincts are to resist us. This presentation helped parents understand what is going on inside the teen brain. Parents went home with a few tips on how to keep guiding their teens during this challenging time.



CYBERBULLYING – Martin Bertrand

In less than 15 years, Facebook has succeeded in completely changing the way we communicate and even approach people. We now live in a digital world; a strange world for us adults, but one that our children see as totally normal. In this context, parents can feel powerless in relation to their child's online presence and in dealing with the numerous problems they are faced with: cyberbullying, cyberpredators, identity theft, phishing, sexting, luring, etc.



Even so, kids can stay safe online in the same way as they do in the “outside” world by:

1. using self-assertion techniques and telling someone;
2. knowing the difference between keep (safe) and speak (unsafe) secrets;
3. avoiding going somewhere alone;
4. following their instincts;
5. recognizing their self-worth and dignity;
6. letting family know their whereabouts;
7. never sharing personal information.

This presentation took a closer look at the kinds of problems that are experienced online and shared some online safety resources available to children and parents.



HOW TO BE A PERFECTLY IMPERFECT PARENT – Mitsiko Miller

We are perfect in our imperfections and we always do our best with what we have. Participants shared their thoughts on the learning process, individualization, self-acceptance, letting go, listening to your inner voice, and assumptions that prevent us from being the calm, caring and happy parent we want to be.



SCHOOL-HOME-COMMUNITY COOPERATION: FOOD FOR THOUGHT AND ACTION – Corina Borri-Anadon

Stakeholders in education, decision makers, researchers and citizens all agree that schools cannot fully support student success without the active involvement of families, the community, and students themselves. But what does school involvement really mean? How can it be achieved while taking the interests and identities of individuals into consideration? This presentation addressed different models of school-home-community cooperation found

in research studies. Their potential to prevent communication breakdowns between educators and parents while respecting their roles and responsibilities in ensuring student well-being were also discussed.

MOTIVATION AND STUDENT SUCCESS: INSTILLING GOOD WORK ETHICS, THE DESIRE TO SUCCEED AND EXCEL – Mélanie Dugas

Motivation, success and self-esteem are closely related. The more motivated you are, the more success you have, and the more positive a self-image you have, the more motivated you are. How can you build on this to help your child?

This presentation addressed:

- Importance of parental involvement in school
- Parent-teacher communication
- Thoughts on attitudes that encourage or hinder motivation
- Other factors that can have an influence on motivation
- The art of setting personal goals
- Frequently encountered difficulties and potential solutions
- Tips on how to foster motivation and success





TESTIMONIAL: FOUR GENERATIONS OF PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT – Marie-Ange Malec, Yvonne Mestenaepo, Daisy Bellefleur & Raphaelle Mestenaepo Kaltush



Four generations shared how they have successfully navigated their way through some difficult times despite the issues their community has had to deal with. They also shared their school experience over the years.

WHAT IF WE TOOK THE TIME TO TALK? – Lorraine Robertson-Moar

This testimonial presentation encouraged participants to reflect on the importance of taking the time to talk with members of their family and community. In this fast-paced world where information and communications technologies are too often substitutes for real connections and interpersonal relationships, we have to give our children and grandchildren opportunities for dialogue and discussion.

We all have our own story to tell. Our First Nations children face numerous challenges in an environment still too often filled with suffering and isolation. Essential and overt resilience on our way toward individual and collective wellness cannot be fostered without taking the time to talk to each other.





TEACHING AND COACHING INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL KINDS OF MINDS – Earlyn Sharpe



Many students struggle in school today. In classrooms in your school, these students will feel discouraged, misunderstood, and alone. Not because they can't learn, but because the way they learn doesn't align with the way they are taught.

Thousands of teachers will struggle today. Just as they do every day. In your school, these teachers will feel discouraged, inadequate and alone. Not because they can't teach, but because they have not been able to target their teaching strategies to the varied learning profiles of their students.

In this workshop, the following subjects were explored:

- A model of education centered around learners and learning
- The rationale of embracing the science of learning
- The role of learning leaders versus school leaders
- Coaching that leads to "small wins" strategy to support change in school practices

LEGAL INFORMATION WEB CLIPS – Jésus Jérôme Lacroix

In partnership with the Québec Community Justice Centre, the FNEC created ten Web clips to promote access to justice through community involvement. They also provide legal information to Aboriginal teens and their parents in clear and easy to understand terms. The content of the clips was adapted to their reality and approaches to learning.

The goal of these clips, which were presented to participants, is to improve the school climate, facilitate the transition to urban centres, and reduce the risks associated with cultural differences.





**TEENS AND MARIJUANA –
Jésus Jérôme Lacroix and Cédric Gray
Lehoux**



This seminar provided an update on the situation, presented the effects and risks associated with cannabis use, and the cornerstones of prevention. By introducing the context that led the federal government to legalize marijuana, the presenters answered the most common questions raised by the impending legalization of cannabis. This presentation aimed to circulate verifiable information and encourage parents to explore ways to guide their children in a country where cannabis can be legally purchased and consumed.

**GUIDING YOUR CHILD THROUGH
THE TRANSITION TO SCHOOL –
Valérie Fortin and Valérie Gagné-Vollant**

The FNEC, the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC), and Institut Tshakapesh collaborated on this presentation to highlight the importance of parental support through the school transition. A story was used to fuel discussion on good practices parents can use to guide their children throughout their academic career while fostering a caring parent-child relationship.





JORDAN’S PRINCIPLE – Jessie Messier

Jordan’s Principle, which resulted from an order issued by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT), gives priority to the best interests of Indigenous children. It was named in memory of Jordan River Anderson, a young boy from Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba. Born with complex medical needs, Jordan spent more than two years in hospital. During that whole time, provincial and federal governments argued in court over who would pay for his at-home care. Jordan passed away in the hospital at the age of five. Following the Court ruling, Jordan’s Principle was established to ensure that all First Nations children have immediate access to ongoing public services no matter where they live.



HOW TO GIVE CONFIDENCE TO OUR YOUNG PEOPLE – Natasha Blanchet-Cohen



This presentation drew on experiences from here and elsewhere to present approaches, tools, and tips for engaging with indigenous young people. Too often, young people are viewed as lacking motivation to engage in their communities, but do we provide them the opportunities to engage in issues that matter to them? Do we sufficiently recognize and allow for the assets of young people to have their place? Natasha shared good practices for building confidence and engaging with young people, and gave some examples from action research projects with youth. She also discussed how we, as family member communities and allies, can help young people thrive and become autonomous and fulfilled. Opportunities for some interactive activities were also provided.



HOW CAN PARENTS FIT IN AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL? – Annie Gros-Louis

FNEC-member schools have been working together for many years to ensure the success of each student. This has generated an interest in effective schools, and more specifically in the various correlates that have a bearing on student performance.

But what is an effective school exactly, and what role do parents play in this kind of school? That is what this presentation enabled participants to discover.



Conclusion

NEED TO CONTINUE WORKING WITH PARENTS

We are proud of the success of this event. It reinforces our sincere belief that parents in First Nations communities must be given the opportunity to discuss parental and community involvement issues, and be included in their children's education. This conference succeeds in informing and rallying key players in First Nations education, including school principals, who are increasingly aware of the importance of building strong partnerships with parents, Elders, cultural leaders and community members.



Every edition of the conference has exceeded expectations and has been an occasion for expertise to be shared for the benefit of parents, the communities, and the FNEC. Ensuring the conference remains an ongoing event is more important than ever considering its growing success, and positive impact in schools and the communities. The FNEC is maintaining its commitment to developing and supporting governance in parental and community involvement by organizing the fourth edition of the conference.

We need to maintain current momentum and continue our efforts because the conference is creating a change in school culture and the parent-child relationship. Schools are in the process of redefining their needs, expectations and approach in their dealings with parents. Parents in First Nations communities need this forum to get together and discuss. This conference is definitely one of the best ways to guide and support parents and break them out of their isolation in their community. This event is part of the progress being made toward achieving student success and the overall well-being of First Nations in Quebec.



Next steps

The participation of parents and school principals in the conference reflects the strong interest and need for parental and community involvement. We are observing an increase in the number of requests for support in the area of parental and community involvement from FNEC-member communities.

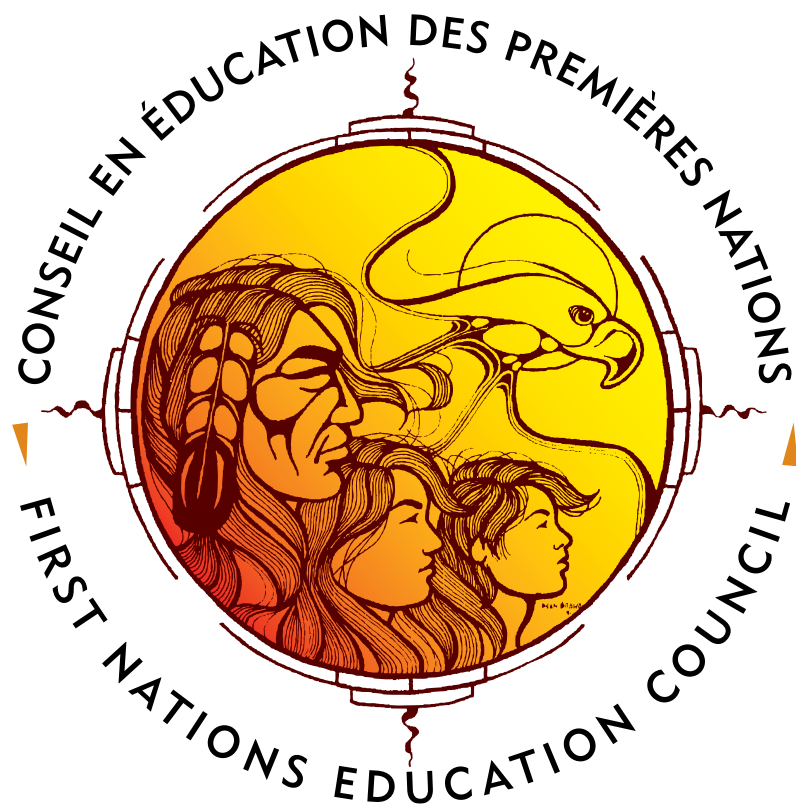
To support the communities in their efforts and to follow up on requests made by parents, the FNEC intends to continue implementing several regional parental and community involvement initiatives including:

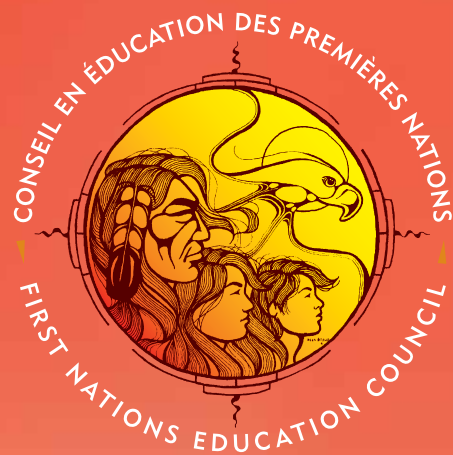
- Encouraging the implementation of parental and community involvement structures and supporting those already in place.
- Supporting parents in FNEC-member communities through our parental and community involvement workshops (parental and community involvement awareness, parents committee, policy development, etc.).
- Organizing the fourth edition of the Conference on First Nations Parental and Community Involvement and continuing the development of a network for parents.
- Raising school principals' awareness of the importance of making parents feel more welcome in school.

- Encouraging principals to use the *Toolbox* for parental and community involvement, which has been available since November 2017.
- Creating a parental and community involvement resource guide for parents.

Thanks to all the participants who made the conference a resounding success! Let's work together for our children's future!

The FNEC team





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