

Waking Up Ojibwe *Anishinaabemodaa*



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Anishinaabemodaa initiative forging ahead

Rainy River District School Board, Seven Generations Education Institute, and SayITFirst partnered to implement the Ojibwe Language Strategy Anishinaabemodaa in 2017, with the main goal of helping to awaken the language that has seen fewer and fewer speakers over time. Now in 2021, the Ojibwe Language Strategy continues to forge ahead with clear evidence that Anishinaabemowin is being taken back by the Anishinaabe people.

Through Anishinaabemodaa, many educational resources have been developed, including books, videos, songs, and games, to help build Anishinaabemowin knowledge and fluency. As of this month, three free learning apps have been also created and released for use to improve vocabulary and communication. In addition, a Mentor-Learner program recently began with four students working in the Anishinaabemowin language for 15 hours per week. To become comfortable in the language, a learner needs to commit to 20 hours per week for three years.

The Anishinaabemodaa initiative is a two-pronged approach, designed to provide Indigenous language teachers with programming and materials, at the same time as increasing the numbers of students beginning schooling in formal Ojibwe language instruction.

Anishinaabemodaa creates and promotes four designated pathways focusing on language – families who want to teach their children the languages, students of all ages who want to learn Anishinaabemowin, individuals who want a career as a teacher or an Early Childhood Educator, and individuals who want to pursue other careers where knowledge of Anishinaabemowin is beneficial.

“By working together, we hope to address the increasing issue across the province of a teacher shortage, specifically, teachers of Indigenous language and teachers of Indigenous descent, so our students can learn Anishinaabemowin,” said Heather Campbell, Director of Education, Rainy River District School Board.

“The Ojibwe Language Strategy is built on the foundational support from our 10 First Nation communities of the Rainy River District. The language and knowledge that is provided by our Elders are the key elements to help young Anishinaabe people identify as an Anishinaabe person,” said Brent Tookenay, CEO of Seven Generations Education Institute.

“It is incredible seeing the hope developing into concrete action and success by the people learning their ancestral language. The unique partnership of a public school system, higher education institute, First Nation members and communities with private sector seems to provide the best help all of us can offer,” said SayITFirst Founder, Mike Parkhill.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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Visit wakingupojibwe.ca or anishinaabemodaa.ca for more information.