



ANISHINABEK EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE

NEWS RELEASE

Anishinabek Educational Institute achieves accreditation as an Indigenous Institute

NIPISSING FIRST NATION (September 14, 2026)—The Anishinabek Educational Institute (AEI) has achieved accreditation as an Indigenous Institute through the Indigenous Advanced Education & Skills Council (IAESC). The accreditation recognizes AEI's commitment to quality assurance, culturally grounded education, and learner success, allowing AEI to pursue accreditation of its own academic programs in the future.

"This accomplishment reflects the vision of an institute created by and for Anishinabek people, where our students could access post-secondary education grounded in our culture, knowledge, and communities, and the work of Anishinabek leadership who brought this vision to life more than 30 years ago," states AEI Education Director Mindy Taylor. "Receiving accreditation honours that original vision and strengthens AEI's ability to continue growing and creating new opportunities for Anishinabek learners for generations to come."

Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Linda Debassige congratulates AEI on this significant milestone in its continued growth as an Indigenous-led post-secondary institution.

"It is with great pride and recognition that the Anishinabek Nation celebrates the successful accreditation of AEI. Since its establishment in 1994, AEI has been steadfast in upholding its mandate to deliver Anishinaabe-based, holistic education rooted in our Seven Grandfather Teachings. AEI embodies a vision that nurtures the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being of its students, fostering an environment of respect, honesty, love, and bravery. This accreditation affirms the AEI's unwavering commitment to creating a safe, respectful, and empowering learning space where our First Nations' values and knowledge are honoured and preserved. Congratulations on this significant achievement; it is a testament to AEI's enduring dedication to educational excellence!"

Anishinabek Nation Southwest Regional Chief Joe Miskokomon made significant contributions to the establishment of AEI, and shared some reflections on this monumental accomplishment.

"I'd like to congratulate the hard work that multiple people have contributed over the years. Without having the *Indigenous Institutes Act of 2017*, this wouldn't have even been possible. It was part of the backdrop story of creating pillars of self-governance: teaching curriculum to prepare our youth through all sectors. We wanted education that was heavily influenced by the Anishinabek worldview instead of the Western education system. It was created not to mirror other institutions, but to envision what Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, would look like with the application of our worldview. And here we are today, so many years later, now with government at both levels saying that we can't move forward without First Nation involvement. It is time to dream big."

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With accreditation now in place, AEI can begin bringing independently developed programs through the IAESC program approval process. The accreditation follows a comprehensive assessment process conducted through IAESC. The recommendation was made following a review by the Indigenous Institutes Quality Assurance Board (IIQAB), an independent committee of post-secondary experts and Knowledge Keepers responsible for assessing applications against established accreditation standards and benchmarks.

"One of the most important steps a post-secondary institution can take is to undergo a rigorous quality assurance process and hold itself to the highest standards of accreditation," said Sean Monteith, Executive Director of the Indigenous Advanced Education & Skills Council. "First Nation learners deserve nothing less than excellence. Throughout its accreditation review, Anishinabek Educational Institute never lost sight of its commitment to high standards or the needs of its students. This is a tremendous and well-deserved accomplishment."

The AEI program development team is currently advancing the development of four priority programs, including Community Resource Worker (Neurodiversity/Exceptionalities), Childcare Management, Community Development Worker, and Anishinaabemowin, with the input of Program Development Advisory Committees consisting of Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, academics, and professionals in their field across Anishinabek Nation. Through this work, AEI is creating new opportunities for learners and communities while continuing to strengthen Indigenous-controlled post-secondary education.

AEI is one of seven Indigenous-owned and operated post-secondary institutions that comprise the Indigenous Institutes Consortium (IIC), a collaborative organization that supports and advances Indigenous-controlled post-secondary education across Ontario. With AEI's accreditation now confirmed, all nine Indigenous Institutes in Ontario have achieved accreditation status.

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About the Anishinabek Educational Institute (AEI)

The Anishinabek Educational Institute (AEI) is an Indigenous-led and accredited post-secondary institute mandated by the Anishinabek Nation. Through campuses in Nipissing First Nation and Munsee-Delaware Nation, as well as community-based delivery across Ontario, AEI provides culturally grounded education rooted in Anishinaabe knowledge, language, and ways of being.

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