



2020

Event Report:



Cree School Board

The 3rd Cree School Board General Assembly took place on February 26-27, 2020, in the Cree Nation of Oujé-Bougoumou. The theme of this event was “Let’s Strengthen Cree Language and Culture.” This report includes an overview of the event, including goals, schedule, and presentation summaries.



Regional General Assembly 2020

EVENT REPORT

Dates: February 26-27, 2020

Theme: Let's Strengthen Cree Language and Culture

Location: Cree Nation of Oujé-Bougoumou

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Regional General Assembly takes place every two years. Staff from across the Cree School Board, primarily Coordinators, Managers, and Directors, come together at the Regional General Assembly to share information about progress and strategic direction.

The 2020 Regional General Assembly was the third event of its time. The event focused on sharing projects and initiatives aimed at strengthening Cree language and culture. Cree School Board sectors (Youth, Adult, and Post-Secondary Student Services) and schools were also able to share updates, current projects, and plans.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

As with past Regional General Assemblies, a committee of representatives from the Cree School Board and the host community worked to plan the event. The committee met for six half-day planning meetings between June 2019 and February 2020. The committee worked to finalize the following in advance of the event:

- Invitation and registration of delegates
- Lodging for delegates
- Pre-conference communication with delegates
- Designating and setting up venue (stage, booths, chairs and tables)
- Set-up of booths and communication with schools/departments about booths
- Stage and room décor (decorator: Gloria Shecapio-Blacksmith)
- Ordering and packaging of gifts and promotional items for delegates
- Coordinating catering for breakfast, lunch, and banquet
- Speakers and entertainment for banquet
- Coordinating branding/design look and feel for event (PowerPoint template, agenda, etc.)
- Developing the agenda and coordinating presentations
- Event video and photography
- Livestreaming, media access, and technology set-up



Schedule

High-level notes:

- Both days started and ended with a prayer from a local Elder
- School Commissioners rotated as Masters of Ceremony (four total)
- The below agenda is based primarily on the planned schedule, with some changes based on event minutes. Timeframes may not be exact.

DAY ONE:

7:30 – 8:15 (0:45)	REGISTRATION/BREAKFAST	Day 1 Morning:
8:30 – 8:45 (0:15)	Call to Order - <i>Daisy Shecapio, School Commissioner of Oujé-Bougoumou</i>	Welcome
	Opening Prayer – <i>Elder Suzanne Bush</i>	Presentations from CSB Chairperson + Director General
8:45 – 9:30 (0:45)	Welcoming Remarks – <i>Chief Curtis Bosum</i>	
9:30 – 10:15 (0:45)	<u>Chairperson’s Remarks - Envisioning Eeyou Education</u> – <i>Dr. Sarah Pash, CSB Chairperson</i>	
10:15 – 10:30 (0:15)	HEALTH BREAK	
10:30 – 11:30 (0:45)	<u>Director General’s Remarks</u> – <i>Abraham Jolly, CSB Director General</i>	
11:30 – 12:00 (0:30)	Visiting of Booths	
12:00 – 13:25 (1:25)	LUNCH BREAK (+ presentation from Pre-Kindergarten, Elementary, and School staff)	Day 1 Afternoon:
13:00 – 13:05 (0:05)	Call to Order – <i>Emily G. Miansum, School Commissioner of Waswanipi + Vice-Chairperson</i>	Revealing of new website
13:05 – 13:20 (0:15)	Revealing of new website – <i>Cynthia Taylor, Director of Communications and Community Relations</i>	Presentations from 3 sectors
13:20 – 14:05 (0:45)	<u>Youth Sector Update</u> – <i>Kim Quinn, Director of School Operations and Angela Gates, Director of Education Services</i>	
14:05 – 14:50 (0:45)	<u>Adult Sector Update</u> – <i>Nian Matoush, Director of Adult Education</i>	
14:50-15:05 (0:15)	HEALTH BREAK	
15:05 – 15:35 (0:30)	<u>Post-Secondary Student Services Update</u> – <i>Pauline Trapper-Hester, Director of PSSS</i>	
15:35 – 16:00 (0:25)	Q & A for Director General and 3-Sectors	
		Day 1 Evening:
16:15 – 18:00	Aaniskchaaukamikw Visit or Cultural Visit	Banquet and cultural activities
18:30 – 21:00	Banquet	
	Opening Remarks – <i>Chief Curtis Bosum</i>	
	Special guest speaker – <i>Dr. Kevin Brousseau</i>	

DAY TWO:

7:30 – 8:30 (1:00)	REGISTRATION/BREAKFAST	Day 2 Morning:
9:00 – 9:05 (0:05)	Call to Order – <i>Rachel Pachanos, School Commissioner of Chisasibi</i>	School Presentations
9:05 – 10:20 (1:15)	Opening Prayer – <i>Elder</i> School Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waskaganish• Eastmain• Chisasibi – Elementary School• Chisasibi – Secondary School• Mistissini – Elementary School• Mistisissini – High school• Wemindji• Whapmagoostui	Spotlight on Cree culture, language, and history projects
10:20 – 10:35 (0:15)	HEALTH BREAK	
10:35 – 12:00 (0:30)	School Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waswanipi• Nemaska• Oujé-Bougoumou	
12:00 – 13:00 (1:00)	LUNCH BREAK (+ Secondary student presentations from Raven Capissit (Oujé-Bougoumou), Ashley Bosum (Oujé-Bougoumou) and Crystal Swallow (Chisasibi).	Day 2 Afternoon:
13:00 – 13:05 (0:05)	Call to Order – Brenda Hester, School Commissioner of Waskaganish	Spotlight on Cree culture, language, and history projects
13:05 – 14:50 (1:45)	Cree Language and Culture Initiatives – Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cree Language and Culture Strategy – <i>Abraham Jolly, Director General</i>• Cree Language and Culture Engagement Session (Caribou Teachings) – <i>Angela Gates, Director of Education Services and Judy Wash, New Paths Regional Coordinator</i>• Land-Based Pilot Project (Chisasibi) – <i>Catherine Rutherford, Coordinator of Response to Intervention</i>• Cree History Program Secondary III-IV – <i>Sherry Weistche, Coordinator of Instructional Services</i>	Cree Cafe
14:50-15:05 (0:15)	HEALTH BREAK (+ Secondary Student Presentations from Bob E. Diamond (Waskaganish) and Julianne Neeposh Gunner (Waswanipi)	
15:05 – 15:50 (0:45)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cree Teacher Training Program – <i>Mary Bear, Coordinator of Professional Development</i>• Cree Adult Learning Framework – <i>Nian Matoush, Director of Adult Education</i>	
15:50- 16:30	Cree Café (moved from interactive discussion to written answers on flip charts due to time constraints)	
16:30 – 17:00 (0:30)	Cree Nation Government – Grand Chief Abel Bosum	
17:00 – 17:25	Closing Remarks – <i>CSB Chairperson, CSB Director General</i> Closing Prayer – <i>Elder Jean Denis Cananasso, Washaw-Sibi</i>	



Summary of Presentations

Below is a brief overview of presentations from the Regional General Assembly.

For Q&A notes, student speeches, and Cree Café responses, please see full event minutes.

Opening Remarks – Chief Curtis Bosum, Oujé Bougoumou

Chief Bosum welcomed delegates and shared that the community was honoured to be hosting the Cree School Board's Regional General Assembly. He iterated that education is vital to prepare children and the Nation to face the challenges of the future and become "masters of our destiny." He commended the theme for the Regional General Assembly and shared thoughts on the importance of Cree language and culture within the overall scope of education and capacity building.

Chairperson's Remarks – Dr. Sarah Pash, CSB Chairperson

Dr. Pash updated delegates on Council's recent activities and priorities, including: the reactivation of the Cree CEGEP file, the new Adult Learning Centre in Mistissini, Cree Nation History program and Cree culture curriculum, and data-driven decision making. She also presented KPI goals established by the Council of Commissioners, including increases in graduation rates and Cree teachers within community schools. In addition, she shared areas of importance recognized by the Council of Commissioners including Cree culture and language, development of adult education, access to vocational training and post-secondary education, and enhanced inter-entity communication and collaboration.

Director General's Remarks – Abraham Jolly, CSB Director General

Mr. Jolly updated delegates on the Cree School Board's recent strategic priorities, including: the engagement strategy, departmental assessments, capacity building, competency development, and digital transformation. He iterated the importance of a high success rate (graduation rate) and enhanced accountability. He noted some promising projects and undertakings in this effort, such as the reinstating of the Cree CEGEP File, the Cree teacher training program, the Cree History program, Adult Learning Centres, and the expansion of the Chisasibi Elementary school + CSB head office.

Introduction to New CSB Website (eeyoueducation.ca) – Cynthia Taylor, Director of Communications and Community Relations

The Communications and Community Relations team announced the launch of eeyoueducation.ca, a refresh of the Cree School Board website designed to be more user friendly for parents, students, and community members.

Updates from 3 Sectors (Youth, Adult, Post-Secondary Student Services)

YOUTH SECTOR – Kimberly Quinn, Director of School Operations and Angela Gates, Interim Director of Education Services

The Youth sector shared some of the activities overseen by Education Services and School Operations over the past two years, including: teacher training, supporting school leadership, developing the guaranteed and viable curriculum, land-based activities, special programs like Mikw'Chiyam, and the Response to Intervention literacy program. They presented 2018-19 data on the student attendance rate, retention rate, and graduation rate. They shared their plans for the coming school year, including: expanding land-based learning, Cree teacher training, the Cree culture policy, school leadership development, e-learning/digital action plan, teacher portals and the engagement strategy.



SABTUAN ADULT EDUCATION SERVICES – *Nian Matoush, Director of Adult Education*

The Adult Sector shared highlights from its departmental strategic plan, linked to key initiatives in the Cree School Board's Strategic Action Plan 2016-2021. Projects included: Preparation stream approach, student allowances, new branding, new intake and branding to promote adult education, a Cree Adult Teaching and Learning Framework, and the addition of approximately 20 new positions to Sabtuan Adult Education Services. Matoush introduced data on student enrollment for 2018-19.

The Post-Secondary Sector presented projects linked with the Cree School Board's Strategic Action Plan 2016-2021. She shared student demographic data for 2018- 2019, and provided plans for strategic, tactical and operational phases for the future of post-secondary student services.

School Presentations

In these presentations, each school had an opportunity to showcase data, success stories, activities, and initiatives. For specific presentation content, please see the individual slideshows.

Cree Language and Culture Initiatives

CREE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE STRATEGY – *Abraham Jolly, Director General*

Mr. Jolly reviewed the Organizational Priorities and Strategic Themes for the Cree School Board, highlighting the cultural elements in each. He shared six initiatives under the Cree Language and Culture Strategy: The Cree Working Group, Teacher Education Program, Research & Development Department, Cree Language Engagement, Cree History Program, and Land-Based Program. He also shared a framework that communicated the strategy and concepts behind the Cree Component of Cree Education.

CREE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE ENGAGEMENT SESSION – *Angela Gates, Director of Education Services and Judy Washipabano (Judy Wash), New Paths Regional Coordinator*

Ms. Gates and Ms. Wash shared various workshops they had conducted, including a root words workshop, spruce bark basket marketing, and feast preparation. They explained the overall value of land-based cultural programs and curriculum. They are planning a conference for September 16-18 2020 and working on an Elders video project at present.

LAND-BASED PILOT PROJECT (RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION) – *Catherine Rutherford, Coordinator of Response to Intervention*

This pilot project aims to create oral language learning opportunities in Cree, English, and French on the land. The pilot project will conclude in June 2020 and a report will be presented to the Youth Pedagogical Management Team to determine next steps.



CREE HISTORY PROGRAM – LEVELLED SERVICES - SECONDARY III-IV HISTORY – Sherry Weistche, Coordinator of Instructional Services

Ms. Weistche presented the results of five working sessions aimed at developing curriculum for a Cree History Program. A sample timeline of Cree history was shown to delegates as a sample of the course content. Ms. Weistche also shared a framework of the competencies this course would aim to develop in students.

CREE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM – Mary Bear, Coordinator of Professional Development

The Cree Teacher Training Program helps Cree people to become certified teachers in their communities. This program aims to create a long-term, sustainable source of qualified, competent, and engaged Cree educators. Ms. Bear introduced a 30-credit, 60-credit and 120-credit version of the program, each aiming to prepare a different level of educator. A total of 128 students are enrolled across the three programs

CREE ADULT TEACHING & LEARNING FRAMEWORK – Nian Matoush, Director of Adult Education

Ms. Matoush introduced an early stage project to better integrate Cree culture into adult education programming. She introduced some key questions the framework aims to answer and the consultative process involved in developing a Cree Teaching and Learning Framework. Next steps are to bring teachers into discussions and identify opportunities to integrate the framework into programming

Cree Nation Government Remarks – Grand Chief Abel Bosum

Grand Chief Bosum commented on the ambitious scope and vision of the Cree School Board. He shared the alignment between the Cree Nation Government's direction and the CSB's Strategic Action Plan 2016-21, particularly with regards to the importance of Cree identity, culture, and language. He shared the importance of equipping youth with the skills to seize upcoming jobs and opportunities, clarifying the importance of capacity building and the Cree School Board's critical role therein.

Banquet

Pre-Banquet Activities: Prior to the banquet, attendees had the option to visit either the Aaniskchaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute or a local cultural camp. In both locations, demonstrations and activities were provided aligned with the Regional General Assembly's theme.

Meal: Three course dinner prepared by Sabtuan Regional Vocational Training Centre Pastry students. The first course was a salad topped with baked brie. This was followed by a surf and turf dinner of beef tenderloin and lobster tail. Dessert was blueberry bavaois.

Speakers: Deputy Chief of Oujé-Bougoumou, Lance Cooper, welcomed everyone to the banquet. The introduction was followed by an inspiring address from Dr. Kevin Brousseau, who shared his thoughts on the preservation and teaching of Cree language.

Entertainment: Following the meal, guests were transported back to the RGA venue for music provided by local artists Josee Bernier, Glen & Richard Polson, and Seven Diamond. A tribute to the late George Blacksmith was also presented, with his family in attendance as special guests.



Response

A survey of seven (7) attendees was taken following the 2020 RGA. Five (5) of the respondents attended the events on both days, while the remaining two (2) only attended part of the event. Attendees were highly satisfied with the venue and accommodations (4.50 and 4.40 out of 5, respectively), sharing that Ouje-Bougoumou was a very welcoming host community. Overall, respondents were satisfied with the event.

Below are their comments and rankings on the main aspects of the event, including presentations and productivity. All rankings are on a scale of 1-5.

Overall, how productive do you think the assembly was? – 4.14

Respondents particularly enjoyed the school presentations and videos. Hearing from different departments about their various projects and data was also helpful for some, though others found it fairly content-heavy. One commenter suggested making information more tangible (for example, providing in-school resources and shared action plans). Many were disappointed that the Cree Café was adapted due to time, as they thought this activity would have been valuable in its original format.

How comfortable did you feel sharing your opinions at the assembly? – 4.14

Some reasons for holding back on sharing included: shyness, not wanting comments to be broadcast on livestream or radio, and fear of being judged for not having a proactive enough school. One suggested they would prefer to share feedback/opinions in a more private way, such as a written form following the event. Overall, people felt comfortable and thought it was important to use the RGA for the purpose of discussion and sharing.

Pre-conference communications – 4.33

The only comment in this category was as follows: “I did not have to worry about where I was staying but followed up with Shawn’s email with the Excel sheet. It was a great way for me to check the status of my situation.”

Presentations (no ranking provided)

Most people responded favourably to the presentations and felt they offered a “great snapshot.” Highlights included presentations from the schools, Mary Bear’s presentation on the Cree Teacher Training Program, and Cynthia Taylor’s “dance break” activity. One respondent shared they felt there was “too much talking.”

Additional Feedback (direct quotations from surveys)

- Perhaps students giving their feedback could use some coaching for next year’s RGA, or it could be a panel discussion format.
- I would have like for students to be better prepared or informed about what would be expected of them. I would have also liked to hear from every student present and not only a few. I would have like to speak on the first day after the Chairperson and the Director General to let them know that they are our priority.
- More time in working groups having discussions
- Not to have in the wintertime.
- I think there would be more participants interaction if we had provided the Cree cafe.
- I would recommend working with the local commissioners to connect with the band councils to have more community members to attend these types of events. It was a great way to communicate through Livestream or radio, but the engagement would have been better if we had more members from the community participating. Not just the local parent committee and students. We had some and it was a great start. I’m hopeful we can also have post-secondary students attend these events as well so they can voice their concerns to post-secondary.
- Clearer communication about the event as teachers and support staff understood that they would be allowed to go after the save the Date email sent to all.
- Make it 3 days, give delegates an opportunity to have dialogue. Try to respect the time allowed for each presentation.