



WORKING GROUP ON THE REVIEW OF THE CREE EDUCATION ACT

**Cree School Board Regional General Assembly
Presentation by: Jeremy Diamond, Chairperson of the Working Group**

November 8, 2016



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Background on the Creation of the Working Group

- We have the right to control Cree education
- We are bound to follow the Quebec Education Act, an Act which does not reflect the culture, values, and principles of the Cree Nation
- At the time of the signing of the JBNQA, we did not have an opportunity to participate in the development of the Cree education system.
- The Cree School Board has created two Working Groups to assist in the review of the Education Act and the Cree Component of the Cree Education system.

Excerpted from the CSB Terms of Reference



Composition of the Working Group

- The group is comprised of 11 members, one member from community
- Selection criteria is education, experience, and knowledge of Cree culture and history
 - Jeremy Diamond, Chair (Nemaska)
 - William Mianscum, Co-Chair (Mistissini)
 - Dr. Philip Awashish (Mistissini)
 - Pauline Trapper-Hester (Washaw Sibi)
 - Abel Kitchen (Waswanipi)
 - Diane George (Whapmagoostui)
 - Steve Diamond (Waskaganish)
 - Daisy House (Chisasibi)
 - Daniel Mark-Stewart (Eastmain)
 - Randy Bosum (Ouje-Bougoumou)
 - Kenny Loon (Mistissini)



Our Mandate

The Working Group is to provide advice to the Cree School Board on how best to revise the Cree Education Act so that is relevant to today's society. This includes:

- Provide options for the revision of the Cree Education Act
- Ensure that the proposed revisions of the Cree Education Act will align with the Council Policy Manual and is consistent with the principles and values of the Cree School Board's Strategic Action Plan
- Incorporate the special powers the Cree School Board already has under Section 16 of the JBNQA



Challenges to Cree Education

The Working Group identifies with the challenges from “Spirit and Intent of Section 16” written by Dr. Philip Awashish and we have used these as the basis of our work. These are:

- Eeyou were ignored in the administration of the school and in the administration of the curriculum;
- The school curriculum ignored Eeyou language and culture;
- Eeyou children were punished for speaking their Eeyou language;
- Eeyou children were taken away from their families and communities;
- Many Eeyou children suffered from psychological, physical, and sexual abuse;
- A foreign worldview was imposed on the Eeyou as Euro-society assumed the superiority of its of its culture;
- The federal policy was to assimilate the Eeyou into Euro-society;
- Eeyou rights were denied and ignored.



Work Process of the Working Group

The work process has involved:

- Review legislative documents related to Cree Education
- Conduct literature review of other First Nations Education Acts and education models
- Identify Cree values, principles, and philosophy to be included in the Cree Education Act
- Identify aspects of the Quebec Education Act to be included in the Cree Education Act
- Alignment with Council Policy Manual
- Options Council of Commissioners should consider for the revision of present Cree Education Act



Work Process of the Working Group

Continued:

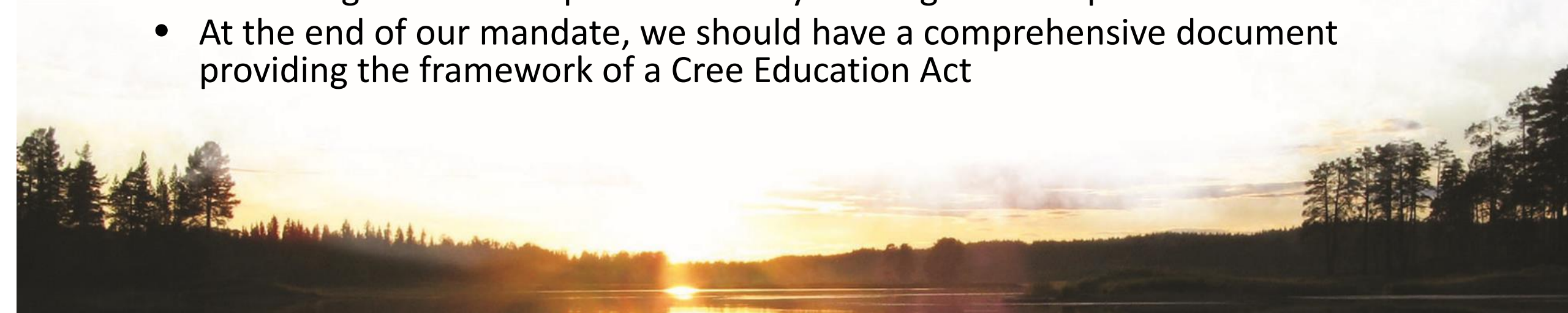
- Conduct legal research
- Review legislative documents
- Consultation with the Elder's Council, Cree Language Commission, local and regional entities, Cree Nation Government, etc.
- Work jointly with the Working Group on the Cree Cultural Component to develop a philosophy for Cree education





Principles Guiding the Working Group

- Understand Cree education encompasses many subject areas and components
- The framework needs to be adaptable so that it will work for all of our Cree students and communities
- The Working Group believes that there is a need to combine the best of worlds; the Cree way of life, language, culture, and modern education
- There is a need to learn Cree history and where the Cree Nation came from
- The Cree Education Act has to consider emerging realities such as special needs, adult education and training, high achieving students, and the increasing demand for post-secondary funding for example
- At the end of our mandate, we should have a comprehensive document providing the framework of a Cree Education Act





Our Vision of the Ideal Student

The Working Groups determined our vision of the ideal student. This is what we have based the work of developing a framework for the Cree Education Act on.

- The ideal student has a desire to learn that is rooted in a strong cultural identity
- Is fluent in the Cree language, and is equally competent in a second or third language
- Is taught culture through a land-based system with the support of their community and the teachings of our Elders
- Knows and respects the spiritual beliefs of the Eeyou/Eenou
- Has access to a high standard of education within a system that is culturally responsive and supported by communities who actively participate in education



Direction of the Working Group

The Working Group is finalizing the process of defining the levels of authority and engagement over Cree education, including;

- Ministry of Education
- Cree Nation Government
- Cree School Board
- Communities/Schools
- Council of Elders
- Parents



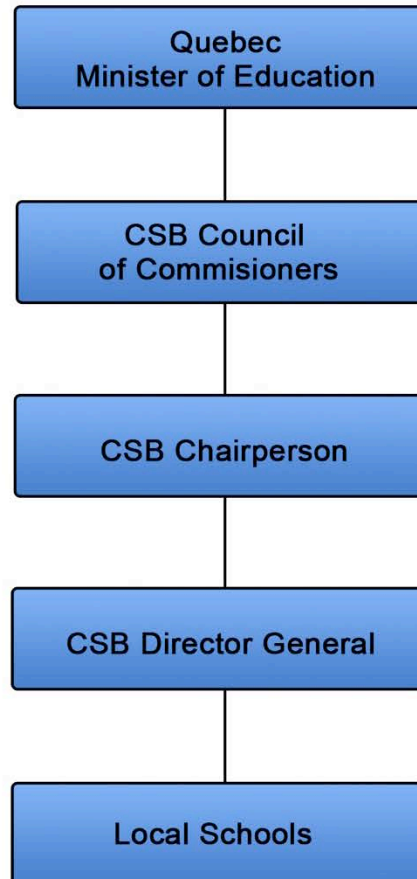


Proposed Structures

- The Working Group has examined these structures with a view to strengthening stakeholder engagement

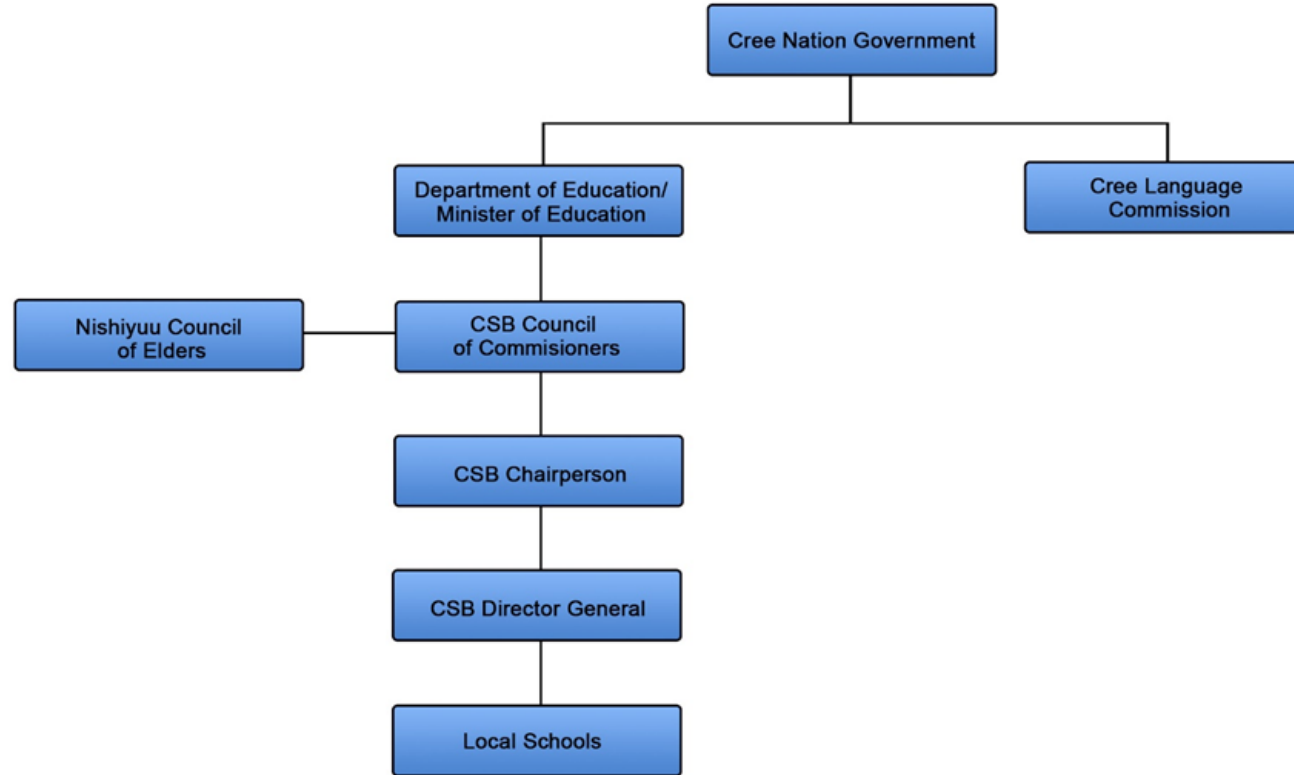


Current Structure



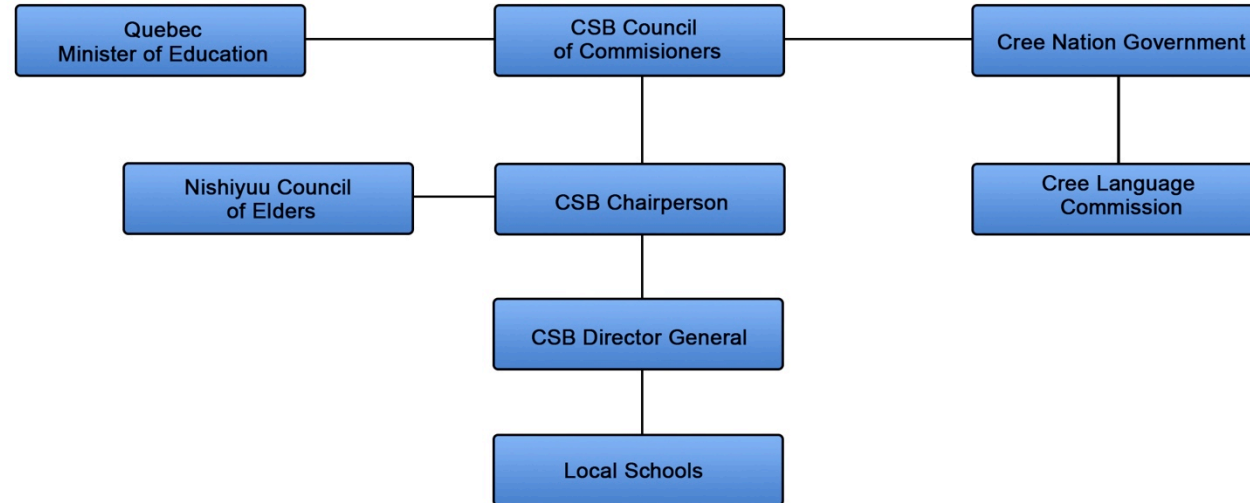


Nishiyuu Education Structure #1



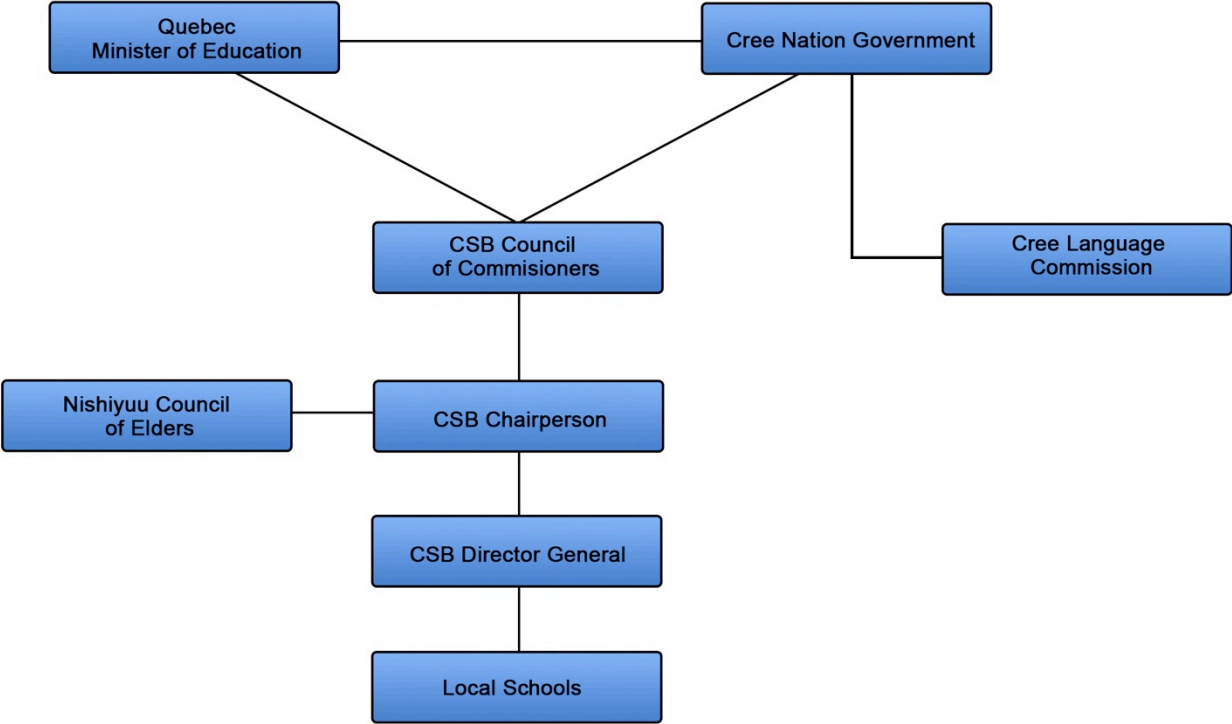


Nishiyuu Education Structure #2





Nishiyuu Education Structure #3





Other Considerations Under Review

- Cree cultural knowledge and methodology used in classrooms
- Integrate innovative teaching methodology for engaging learners
- Increase the delivery of cultural programs for youth
- Increase the delivery of cultural programs for adults
- Align framework with Council Policy Manual and CSB Strategic Action Plan
- Provide recommendations on the legislative process and implementation of the Cree Education Act



Next Steps

Conclusion of our mandate is nearing. Our next steps will involve these steps:

- Consultation with the Working Group on the Cree Cultural Component to align their work with ours
- Complete development of the framework (writing, research, and consultation)
- Critical review process
- Submit final copy to the Council of Commissioners for review (December 2016)



Meegwetch. Thank you. Merci.



The Working Groups developing the Cree Education Philosophy
and the Cree Education Model
- June 2015