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Cree School Board  
Commission scolaire crie

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## Issue 10 - Cree School Board Newsletter



This issue highlights steady progress across the Cree School Board and continued efforts to strengthen iiyiyu education at every level.

Early results from the Grade 1 iiyiyuyimitaaau / iiyiyu ayimitaaau / iinuu ayimitaaau program are encouraging. Teachers and mentors in pilot communities are reporting increased student engagement and growing confidence in Cree language use through daily, practical application. The program will continue to expand in the coming years.

We also mark the introduction of new logos for several schools and the Department of Higher Learning. These updates create stronger visual alignment across elementary, secondary, and in-community post-secondary education, reinforcing a shared commitment to student success.

Student safety remains a priority. Free driving lessons and the development of a CSB-wide bus safety video reflect ongoing collaboration to promote responsible driving and safe transportation practices.

In Adult and Higher Learning, the launch of a new one-stop webpage improves access to programs, advising, and financial support services. The goal is to have clear access to information and stronger pathways for learners across iiyiyu aschii and beyond.

Finally, this issue recognizes the importance of community connection. From regional wellness initiatives to students learning alongside Elders, iiyiyu education continues to reflect language, culture, and lived experience through these initiatives.

Thank you to the staff, students, families, and partners who continue to advance iiyiyu education.

## Early Signs of Success in Grade 1 Classrooms

Halfway into the Grade 1 *iiyiyuyimitaa* / *iiyiyu ayimitaa* / *iinuu ayimitaa* program, teachers and mentors across five pilot communities are seeing encouraging signs of Cree language adoption among students.

At a gathering in mid-October in Val-d'Or to review Term 2 curriculum, educators from Mistissini, Waswanipi, Waskaganish, Chisasibi, and Whapmagoostui, reported early success using the neurolinguistic approach to build students' vocabulary. This approach helps students learn the Cree language by **listening, speaking, and using the language in real life.**

**“They were able to share ideas about how they got started, their challenges and how they came through.”**

**Angela Bearskin-Gates**

Director of *iiyiyuyihtiw* Research and Development

With support from mentors, teachers guide students in simple daily activities, like morning greetings, to help children learn new words in a familiar setting, so they can eventually use them in a new setting—at home, in the playground, or other classes, which teachers are starting to see.

“It’s a small but positive impact,” said Ms. Bearskin-Gates.

Alongside new language learning materials and techniques, classroom mentors — retired teachers, are reviving simple group activities, like circle time, offering another way for children to practice new words and phrases with friends.

Mentors have accompanied teachers in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes in nine communities for the past three years. This is the first year they are working in Grade 1 classes as part of the new language revitalization program, and they are expected to join teachers as the program expands to Grade 2 reaching all communities by 2027.

Youth sector colleagues will be touring pilot program communities over the next few months to gather feedback and prepare a report on the rollout of the *iiyiyuyimitaa* / *iiyiyu ayimitaa* / *iinuu ayimitaa* initiative.





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Joy Ottereyes Rainbow Memorial School

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Maquatua Eeyou School



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Badabin Eeyou School



Higher Learning  
Enseignement supérieur

## New School and Higher Learning Logos Unveiled

Three new logos are now part of the Cree School Board, giving students and communities fresh symbols that reflect who they are and where they are headed.

**Joy Ottereyes Rainbow Memorial School** and **Maquatua Eeyou School** combined, and **Badabin Eeyou School** each launched a new design shaped by their school. The logos represent students at every stage, from early learning to high school, while reinforcing a sense of belonging.

The **Department of Higher Learning** also revealed a new logo for its in-community post-secondary programs. The design aligns visually with the department and their students, creating a consistent look across iiyiyu education.

Together, these new logos strengthen the connection between elementary, secondary, and in-community post-secondary education, reflecting a shared commitment to supporting students throughout their learning paths.

# ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY

## Free Driving Lessons to Keep Youth Safe on the Road

Safe driving skills are essential skill in our communities, where long distances, harsh weather, and truck traffic pose unique risks, especially for inexperienced drivers.

To support the youth, Cree School Board is partnering with certified driving schools to offer free drivers' education in every community. Students will learn:

- Defensive and safe driving habits
- How to handle various weather conditions
- Respectful sharing of the road

The 12 module program—some online, some in car—leads students to their Learner's License when completed.

By the end of the 12-module program, some of which may be completed online, students will earn a Learner's License allowing them to get behind the wheel when accompanied by a licensed driver.

### Eligibility:

- At least 16 years old (or within three months of turning 16)
- Registered in a Youth Sector school
- Must remain in school throughout the program (graduates mid session remain eligible until fully licensed)

Registration forms are available from each school's Administrative Officer.





## Safe Travels: Bus Safety Video Coming in 2026

A new CSB-wide school bus safety video will be launched in 2026 to promote safe travel for students across all communities.

The project was inspired by a local initiative at Wemindji, including the school, community members, and students, to raise awareness to drivers who share the road with school buses.

Starring local staff and students, the videos demonstrate safe boarding, riding, and disembarking and reminds drivers to stop when buses flash red lights so children can cross safely.

LeeAnn Gilpin, Superintendent-Cultural and Strategic Action Projects, led the original Wemindji effort to deal with traffic chaos during pick-up and drop-off times. Traditional reminders hadn't worked, so she formed a working group with Public Safety to create a short video showing drivers where to park without blocking the fire lane, bus stop, or staff lot.

A great community response led to a regional billboard campaign and, eventually, the expansion of the local campaign to all CSB schools. The new video will be available in English and Cree, with short clips to be shared on the CSB's Facebook page.

LeeAnn hopes they will be shared widely to help make riding and sharing the road with the school bus safe for everyone.

**"We know parents are in a rush, but safety needs to come first."**

**LeeAnn Gilpin**

Superintendent-Cultural and Strategic Action Projects

# Safe Travels



# ADULT AND HIGHER LEARNING

## New One-Stop Shop for Adult Learners in iiyiyiu aschii

The Cree School Board has launched a new Adult and Higher Learning webpage, a single place to explore education and training options for adult learners across iiyiyiu aschii.

Whether you are still in high school, recently graduated, or thinking about a career change, the page helps you find programs based on your school level, goals, and where you want to study. Enter your current situation, choose in-community or off-territory learning, and the tool shows options that fit your needs.

All programs are developed with education partners and regional employers, and reflect Cree culture, language, and community realities.

On-territory options allow learners to study while balancing work and family.

Through **Sabtuan Adult Education Services**, learners can:

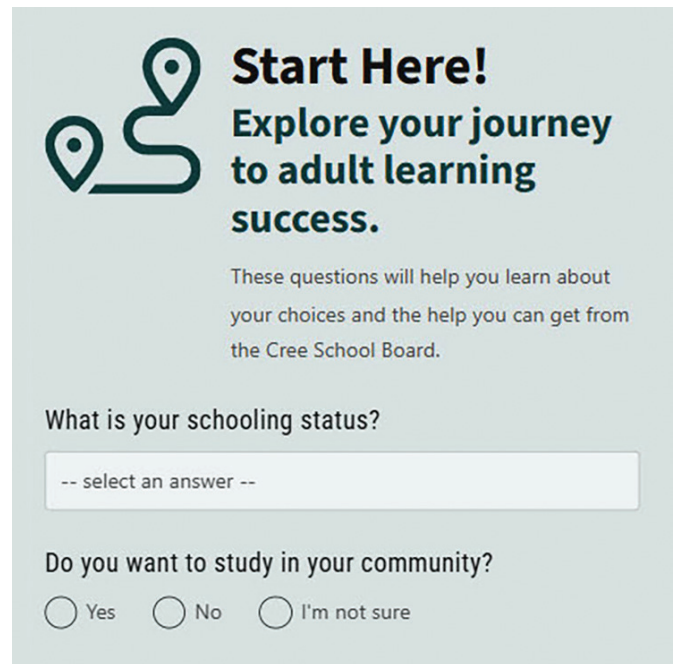
- Complete high school courses or earn a diploma
- Improve language skills
- Train for jobs such as carpentry, trucking, or accounting

Through **Higher Learning**, learners can:

- Take college preparatory programs like iiyiyiu iinuu Springboard to Health Careers or DCS
- Enroll in university programs, including Education, Social Work, or a Master's in Education, offered in-community, online, or in Montreal

**Off-territory** learners can access **Post-Secondary Student Services (PSSS)** for advising, counselling, and financial support.

Visit [eeyoueducation.ca/adult](http://eeyoueducation.ca/adult) to explore pathways or connect with an advisor.



**Start Here!**  
Explore your journey to adult learning success.

These questions will help you learn about your choices and the help you can get from the Cree School Board.

What is your schooling status?

-- select an answer --

Do you want to study in your community?

Yes  No  I'm not sure



# Support and Deadline Reminders

Thinking about studying outside iiyiyu aschii?  
Post-Secondary Student Services is available for support!

We can answer questions you have about:

- Eligibility
- Financial supports
- Part-time or full-time studies
- Correspondence courses/programs
- Academic advising
- Social supports and referrals

Application deadlines for financial aid:

- **October 1**, to begin sponsorship in the Winter semester
- **March 1**, to begin sponsorship in the Fall semester
- **Three months** prior to other official starting dates

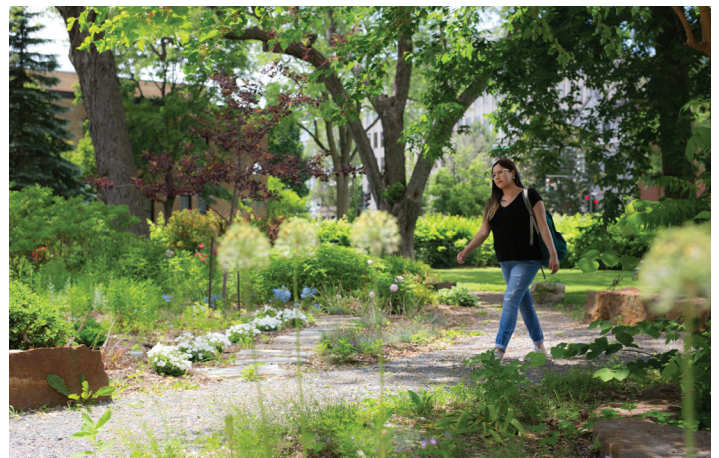
Scan to apply online:



[psssportal.cscee.qc.ca](https://psssportal.cscee.qc.ca)

Or pick up an application form at CSB schools and Sabtuan Adult Education Services centres, by appointment only. Faxed or emailed applications will not be accepted.

1440 Ste-Catherine St, West Suite 400,  
Montreal Qc, H3G 1R8  
Tel: 514-846-1155 | Toll Free: 1 800-463-7402



# CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY

## Winter Walking Challenge

Last March, Sabtuan teachers in Chisasibi teamed up with students to get fit outdoors.

The Winter Walking Challenge was a regional initiative, organized by Alexandria Coon, Recreation Activities Technician.

The group of 6-8 students got together every day for a daily walk, tracking their steps. For the teachers, it was a great team building opportunity while students used this towards their Physical Education credits as well as a regional draw for most steps tracked, all in a healthy spirit of competition.





## Students & Elders: Sharing Knowledge

Last March, when students of all ages gathered in Mistissini for the iinuu metawewinh Games, the hope was that this celebration would kindle new connections while reviving iiyiyiu/iinuu ayimuwin (language) and iiyiyiu/iinuu iiyhtuuwin (traditions).

For students like Diana Wadden, a General Education student in Chisasibi completing her high school education, the Games were an awakening.

Learning from Elders and Knowledge Keepers, like Jamie Moses and Robert and Janie Kanetewat, she was inspired to dive deeper into the tradition of the First Snowshoe Walk.

Having never had one herself, she decided to play her part in reviving the tradition by organizing a ceremony for her own family.

The ceremony is a big undertaking, but with the guidance of her grandfather and support of the CSB, she was able to offer the ceremony to her 12-year-old son and several local

children, who were led on the journey by Chisasibi Elder, Samuel House.

Later in the year, Diana continued her personal exploration, attending gatherings in Chisasibi and interviewing Elders, including Jane Mathew and Angie Shem, who shared teachings on the preparation of plant medicines.

Her experience has been captured in a presentation called “Our Culture, Traditions and Medicine,” a personal research project that she created in fulfillment of the “My Learning Plan” requirement to graduate from the General Studies program.

**“[Diana] brought knowledge from the Games home, restoring the tradition to her family. From the school perspective, anything we can do to support that in a learning environment is a fulfillment of our purpose.”**

**Eric Grimstead**  
Center Director, SAES, Chisasibi



