



Meeting Highlights

February 7, 2025

The mandate of the CASS First Nations, Métis & Inuit Education Action Committee is to collaboratively identify effective education practices for school authorities through engaging with representatives of First Nations, Métis, Public, Separate, Francophone, Charter, Independent authorities, and associations.

Committee Membership for 2024-2025

CASS Representatives:

David Keohane – CASS CEO

Jonathan Kaiswatum – Board Representative

Dr. Dianne Roulson - CASS Leadership Consultant (related to the annual Indigenous Education Gathering and grant deliverables)

Zone Representatives:

Roger Lauck – Director of Teaching & Learning, Grande Prairie Catholic (Zone 1)

Annalee Nutter – Superintendent, Fort McMurray Public (Zone 2/3)

Tim De Ruyck (Committee Chair) –

Superintendent, Wolf Creek Public (Zone 4)

Dr. Ryan Sawula – Associate Superintendent - Curriculum and Inclusion, Red Deer Catholic (Zone 4)

Cindy Stefanato – Director of Indigenous Learning, Rocky View Schools (Zone 5)

Aaron Skretting – Director of Religious Education, Holy Spirit Catholic (Zone 6)

Treaty Representatives:

Tracy Swampy-Sylvester – Superintendent, Maskwacis Education Schools Commission (Treaty 6)

Staatsistayaaki - Genevieve Fox – Director of Education, Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council (Treaty 7)

Chester Auger – Director of Education, Bigstone Cree Nation Education (Treaty 8)

Métis Representatives:

Dianne Desjarlais – Director, Alberta Métis Settlements General Council

Lisa Cruickshank – Director, Métis Education and Lifelong Learning, Rupertsland Institute

Charter:

Chris Gilmour – Superintendent, Connect Charter

Francophone:

Dolorèse Nolette – Directrice Générale/Superintendent of Schools, Conseil scolaire Centre-Est

AISCA:

Erin Murphy – Senior ECS Manager

Alberta Education:

Carmen Parent – Executive Director of Rural and Métis, First Nations and Inuit Education

Ron Taylor – Director, Indigenous and North Services Branch

For more information, please contact:
Your representative and/or David Keohane
david.keohane@cass.ab.ca

Land Acknowledgement / Introductions

The CASS Land Acknowledgment video was played at the start of the meeting. Tim De Ruyck welcomed participants from various locations and each participant introduced themselves.

Opening Prayer

A beautiful opening prayer was offered by Staatsistayaaki, Dr. Genevieve Fox.

2025 Indigenous Education Gathering Program Review

CASS Leadership Consultant Dr. Dianne Roulson and APLC Knowledge Carrier Jason Bigcharles shared updates to the Gathering program.

The theme **Wahkotamowin for Student Success** builds on last year's theme and emphasizes holistic relationships with everything in the natural world. The focus on strengthening relationships in education and aligning with the [principles of Truth and Reconciliation](#) is central to this year's Gathering in addition to renewing commitment to the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action](#).

Pre-Conference Sessions

- **Pipe Teachings:** Featuring Métis pipe holders to showcase Métis cultural traditions.
- **Visit to Métis Crossing:** Hosted by Rupertsland, offering educational workshops on Métis history and traditional arts.
- **Manitou Asinîy (Sacred Stone) Session:** Elder Leonard Bastien/Weasel Traveller to lead a sacred ceremony at the Royal Alberta Museum.

Keynote Speakers

- **Opening Performance:** Métis Jigging and Fiddling
- **Youth Panel:** Featuring young voices from various Nations to share perspectives on Indigenous education.
- **Dr. Marie Wilson (TBC):** Former TRC Commissioner, reflecting on the Calls to Action as a gift.
- **Dr. Niigaan Sinclair:** Honouring the legacy of his father, Murray Sinclair-iban.

Session Structure

Adjustments based on participant feedback:

- More time for networking and reflection.
- Sessions providing time for deeper engagement.
- Elder teachings circles redesigned.

Special Features

Conference Books: Participants to receive "The True Canadians: Forgotten Evermore" donated by Rupertsland Institute, and the TRC Calls to Action booklets.

Legacy of Hope Exhibits: New displays highlighting the significance of National Truth and Reconciliation Day and How to be an Ally.

Sponsorship by Explore Edmonton: The Gathering is participating in the Carbon Neutral Events Program, which ties closely to the theme where we aim to be good stewards of the land and emphasizes a shared commitment to sustainability, respect, and interconnectedness with nature.

Registration for the Indigenous Education Gathering to open the following week. Participants expressed appreciation for the thoughtful planning and commitment to meaningful learning experiences.

Updates from Committee Members

- **Wolf Creek Public Schools:** Success coaches program providing cultural and academic support.
- **Blackfoot Confederacy:** Leadership changes and ongoing initiatives in language revitalization and early learning.
- **Bigstone Education Authority:** Launch of a new high school and a Sakaw Cree Language Institute.
- **Rupertsland Institute:** Presenting to the Public Board of Trustees Association and interest in conducting a survey to identify the number of Métis educators.

Closing Prayer

Staatsistayaaki, Dr. Genevieve Fox expressed gratitude and wished everyone a safe journey home.