

## Memorandum of Understanding

Matawa First Nations Education Authority Board of Directors as represented by the "MFNEA"  
and

Lakehead District School Board, as represented by the Director of Education ("LDSB")

jointly "the Parties"

**WHEREAS** the Parties recognize the value of access by MFNEA First Nations students to culturally supportive elementary and secondary education programs and services which will enable them to pursue further education or training and to become healthy productive members of their communities and Canadian society;

**WHEREAS** education is a life-long learning process that requires recognizing both the value of practical educational initiatives as well as the unique circumstances of the First Nations of MFNEA, which include but are not limited to language and culture;

**WHEREAS** the LDSB has a commitment to reconciliation identified in the Strategic Plan and the Indigenous Education Framework with an interest for improving opportunity and access for all Indigenous Students;

**WHEREAS** the LDSB has extensive and current knowledge and interest in improving the relevance and effectiveness of programs and services offered to First Nations throughout Matawa First Nations;

**WHEREAS** the Parties have agreed to work collaboratively, collegially, and as quickly and efficiently as possible to support MFNEA students attending provincial schools and First Nations operated schools in reaching their full learning potential and in attaining achievement levels comparable to the general student population in Ontario.



Lakehead Public Schools





**THEREFORE, THE PARTIES AGREE THAT:**

**General Objective**

1. This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is intended to establish a collaborative forum for the Parties to work collaboratively to help design and promote strategies to equip First Nation students with Social, Emotional, and Academic Educational opportunities required to be successful in reaching their personal and educational goals.

**Framework**

2. The parties will work together to address the following agreed upon priority areas to improve educational outcomes to MFNEA students in both Matawa First Nations operated schools and provincial schools.
  - a) **Student Support Services:** Development and implementation of a broad range of strategies to support:
    - student safety;
    - social and emotional mental health;
    - student transition and orientation programs;
    - early exposure to career planning;
    - parental empowerment initiatives;
    - support mechanisms for students living away from home;
    - student retention strategies;
    - access and ongoing participation in extracurricular activities;
    - the development of a First Nation student anti-addiction education program; and
    - other student support services as may be agreed among the Parties.

\*Should the need and interest arise to consider a LDSB dedicated staff be assigned to work in, and in support of Matawa First Nations operated schools; the parties commit to the establishment of a separate "Secondment Agreement of LDSB Staff.





- b) **Special Education Support:** Support in the form of strategies and professional mentorship will be provided to identify students with special education needs and to develop IEPs for such students. First Nations education will be supported with access to required student supports and programs, including access to professional development on all aspects of IEP evaluation and implementation.
- c) **Curriculum:** Development of curriculum modules and implementation strategies to enhance the inclusion and integration of First Nation history, culture, perspectives, and language for all students in both First Nation and provincially operated schools.
- d) **Professional Development and/or Mentoring:** Strategies to reciprocate support of staff learning in meeting the holistic learning needs of First Nation students. Development of strategies to facilitate cross-cultural training and professional development for educators and administrators in the provincial education system and/or Matawa education system.
- e) **Communication:** Identification of mechanisms to improve communication between provincially funded schools within the Ontario public education context, and First Nation schools.
- f) **Human Resources:** Activities to support the effectiveness of education and support staff in both the First Nation and provincially operated systems to help ensure that staff have the skills and training to meet the needs of First Nations students in both education systems.
  - Explore options to facilitate increasing the number of First Nation staff, including the participation of elders, in LDSB schools.
  - Develop and implement retention programs for administrators, teachers, and support staff to improve staff relations and continuance of programming.
  - Engage in professional mentoring programs between First Nations and the LDSB for best practices.
  - Access to specialists, including but not limited to speech and language development, support staff, and literacy/numeracy specialists. Should at any time, the MFNEA





determine that the secondment of a dedicated staff from the LDSB to support identified teaching and learning areas of need, the parties agree to explore the possibility of an LDSB secondment.

- g) **Parental Participation:** Strategies to facilitate improved First Nation parental communication, empowerment, and involvement throughout their children's academic years in all educational systems on and off their traditional territory.

The above list of priorities is not intended to be exhaustive and additional areas may be added or adjusted in the future with the mutual agreement of the Parties.

- h) **Travel:** If either organization is travelling into the communities and there is space available, an invitation will be extended to other parties.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

3. The Parties will develop, and update annually, an implementation plan based on the agreed upon priority areas as set out in this MOU, to guide the activities of the Parties. It is recognized that the implementation plan may include the participation of other appropriate participants in the First Nation and First Nation education systems.

#### **MNFEA-LDSB COLLABORATION STEERING COMMITTEE**

4. The Parties agree to establish a MNFEA-LDSB Collaboration Steering Committee that will oversee the implementation of the commitments set out in this MOU and which will operate in accordance with the attached MNFEA-LDSB Collaboration Steering Committee Terms of Reference. The Parties agree that a face-to-face meeting will occur at minimum three (3) times a year to review the agreed to articles and dialogue around partnership success, challenges, potential for growth and enhancement, and next steps. Representation for the Parties will include members of each organization's respective senior executive teams.





## MONITORING

5. The Parties agree that all reports and studies undertaken to address any of the above priority areas within the context of this agreement will be shared amongst the Parties.
6. This MOU is a statement of Intent by the Parties and is not legally binding. It is not intended to define, create, recognize, deny, or amend any of the rights of the Parties nor to require MNFEA or LDSB to act in a manner inconsistent with any applicable laws and regulations. This MOU is not intended to alter or amend any existing jurisdictional responsibilities with respect to First Nation education nor to impact in any way existing agreements that may be in place with respect to First Nation education.

SIGNED at Eabametoong, Province of Ontario, as of the 17 day of March, 2025.

Signed on behalf of the Matawa First Nation Education Authority

Stephanie Hogan  
Educator Coordinator, MFNEA

Signed on behalf of Lakehead District School Board, as represented by the Director of Education

Sherri-Lynne Pharend  
Director of Education



**Lakehead Public Schools**

