ANNUAL REPORT

SEVEN GENERATIONS EDUCATION INSTITUTE
NIIZHWAACHING AANIKOOBIJIGENG GIKINOO'AMAADIIWIGAMIG



2025/26

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Message from our CEO

I reflect on this past year with gratitude; gratitude for our learners, the direction from the communities and the responsibility entrusted to us to provide education and connection to Anishinaabe culture for as many years as we have.

Thanks to the direction from our board, leadership from senior staff, and the hard work of many, many folks, we've hit many of our goals this year as outlined in our strategic plan. **Our growth brings new responsibility.** Our 2025–2030 Strategic Plan challenges us to strengthen leadership, language and culture, learner supports, financial stability, and technology. We must make sure the systems and relationships behind our programs grow stronger alongside these priorities, so that SGEI can continue to respond to community needs for generations to come.

Our 40th anniversary in 2025 gave us a moment to return to where we began – an air hangar in Couchiching First Nation, Delbert Horton's vision, the early work of our governing communities, and the belief in Indigenous control of Indigenous education. Our anniversary video series honoured the people and relationships that have carried that vision through four decades. Just as importantly, it reminded us that the work is unfinished. **We have a responsibility to ensure the next generation inherits an institute that is even more accessible, capable, and firmly rooted in community direction.**

We also had the honour of gathering for our 2026 graduation and pinning ceremonies. This year's theme, "Pathway to Success," reflected the many different journeys our learners have taken to reach this milestone. No matter the program or stage of life our learners are at, each graduate reminds us why this work matters. Their determination, gifts, and accomplishments are a source of pride for their families, their communities, and all of us at SGEI.

Our responsibility is to continue building learning environments that meet learners where they are and reduce barriers wherever we can. In October 2025, construction began on a 20-unit dormitory at our Manidoo Baawaatig Campus in Kenora. This residency is an important step toward providing safe housing and helping more learners pursue education without having to travel far from their home community or support systems.

We are grateful for the Mastercard Foundation's continued partnership and its investment in learning opportunities designed around SGEI's values. **This financial support enables SGEI to provide more learning opportunities grounded in language and culture, and allows us to work toward our strategic goal of self-sustainability**. We understand that this gift comes with responsibility, and we are committed to using it in a good way, for learners today and for those who will come after them.

The beginning of 2026 saw several partnerships take form. We partnered with EmployNext, powered by Serco, to become an employment services provider, bringing job seekers in our region the services needed to find work. We also signed a new relationship accord with Confederation College. This relationship, honoured in an Anishinaabe ceremony, allows SGEI to deliver Confederation College programming west of Thunder Bay. **Both partnerships help SGEI grow as an organization, expanding our reach and allowing more individuals in the communities we serve to access our services and Anishinaabe language and culture.**

None of this work is done by one person or organization alone. I want to offer a chi-miigwech to the governing First Nations communities, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, leadership, staff, learners, and their families and supporters. Your guidance and commitment help keep SGEI grounded in its purpose.

As we move forward, we do so with humility and hope. Our path remains clear: to support learners, to serve the communities, to honour Anishinaabe culture and language, and to help create opportunities that allow learners across the lifespan to learn, grow, and succeed close to home. Miigwech for walking with us in this work.



Brent Tookenay, **Ogimaabines**, CEO
Seven Generations Education Institute

Our Governing Communities

Mitaanjigamiing First Nation

Naomi Field
Chairperson, Executive Member

Couchiching First Nation

Peggy Loyie
Vice Chair, Executive Member

Seine River First Nation

Roger Spencer
Secretary/Treasurer, Executive Member

Big Grassy First Nation

Mackenzie Archie
Board Member

Anishinaabeg of Naongashiing

Robert Handorgan
Board Member

Gakijiwanong Anishinaabe Nation

Shauna Henderson
Board Member

Ojibways of Onigaming

Trevor Copenace
Board Member

Naicatchewenin First Nation

Rhonda Smith
Board Member

Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation

Clayton Windigo
Board Member

Rainy River First Nations

Lyn Blackburde
Board Member

These ten governing First Nations provide the community direction at the heart of SGEI's work. Through the Board, they help ensure decisions about growth, partnerships and resources remain accountable to the Nations and learners SGEI serves.





Language and Culture

Seven Generations Education Institute will strive to be the acknowledged centre for language preservation and resources.

Mazina'iganan – Books

Anishinaabemodaa - Rainy Lake Campus

In early 2026, Anishinaabemodaa completed the publication of 11 new children's books in Anishinaabemowin. Five of these titles were written by youth from our communities through the Become an Author contest, which encouraged participants to work alongside community speakers to create and share their own stories.

These new resources help expand the availability of Anishinaabemowin reading materials for learners, educators, families, and communities. In addition to printed copies, all of our books are available online and are accompanied by "Read With Me" videos narrated by first speakers. These recordings support learners in hearing proper pronunciation, rhythm, and language sounds while building confidence in reading and speaking Anishinaabemowin.

As part of our commitment to supporting language revitalization, free copies continue to be distributed to partner organizations, educational institutions, and language-learning families throughout the region.

Niigaanendadaa

Anishinaabemodaa - Rainy Lake Campus

During summer 2025, Niigaanendadaa Let's Think Ahead (*formerly the Mentor Learner Program*) learners spent time with fluent speakers engaging Anishinaabemowin centered land-based and cultural learning, including canoeing, birch bark basket making, and manoomin harvesting. With guidance from the Niigaanendadaa Working Group comprised of Gigidiziiminaanig, instructors, and team members, the program was restructured to student interest and needs. It now offers seasonal learning opportunities with family-inclusive Wednesday evening sessions, reflection and further instruction on Thursday evenings, and continued grammar learning through the Anishinaabemodaa.app platform. For the 2026 Biboon (winter) session, 10 new learners were welcomed to join the restructured program. Beginning in Ziigwan (spring), the program welcomed three new learners in addition to two returning learners.

Anishinaabemowini-Ogichitaag

Anishinaabemodaa - Rainy Lake Campus

Fifteen learners returned in September 2025 for the second of the three-year Anishinaabemowini-ogichitaag program. As of May 2026, 11 learners have completed five of six semesters and continue to demonstrate strong growth in their Anishinaabemowin proficiency, with many now confidently participating in intermediate-level conversations.

Throughout the year, learners supported community events, including SGEI's annual Dagwaagani-mawindoosijigewin (Fall Harvest) celebration, where they helped plan activities and facilitate the language station. Learners also participated in educational visits to post-secondary institutions, including The University of Winnipeg, University of Manitoba, Yellowquill College, and Red River College Polytechnic, building connections and exploring future opportunities in language revitalization and Indigenous education.

The year concluded with land-based learning at Manitou Rapids, where learners participated in teachings focused on water, sturgeon, healing, and traditional protocols. Several learners will also be gaining practical experience in local schools as language helpers and observers, further supporting the growth of Anishinaabemowin in our communities.



Daga Anishinaabemodaa

Anishinaabemodaa - Virtual

Beginning in September 2025, seven learners began the Daga Anishinaabemodaa program with Pebaamibines (Dennis Jones). This four-week online program focuses on learners staying immersed in Anishinaabemowin for an hour per day while practicing valuable conversational skills. An additional cohort of 11 learners began the program in May 2026, with three team members co-teaching and learning from Pebaamibines about immersion methodologies and instruction.

Seven Generations Education Institute will provide a land-based learning program to benefit students and staff

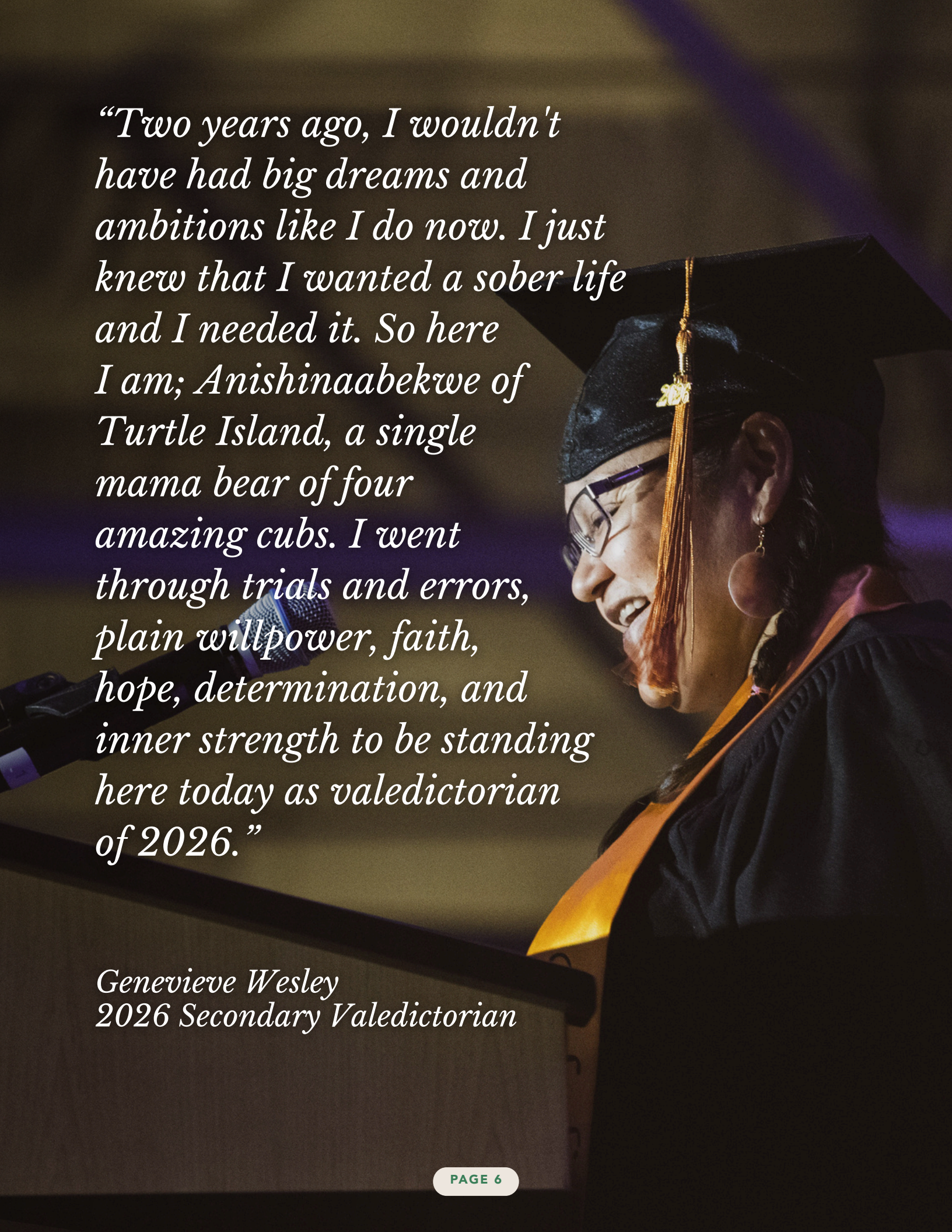
Gidakiiminaan Gagiikweninan

Anishinaabemodaa - Rainy Lake Campus

Gidakiiminaan Gagiikwewinan is Anishinaabemodaa's land-based learning program, developed and guided by a dedicated working group of Gigidiziiminaanig and skilled Anishinaabe professionals. Through their leadership, teachings, and ongoing involvement, the program creates opportunities for learners to strengthen their connection to Anishinaabe language, culture, and the land.

In partnership with the Rainy River District School Board, the program worked with students from grades 5-8 to integrate Anishinaabemowin and Anishinaabe cultural teachings into secondary programming. Throughout the year, learners participated in land-based experiences that included teachings on medicines, offerings, navigation, plant identification, fire safety, and Anishinaabemowin vocabulary. These experiences support students in building relationships with the land while fostering a deeper understanding of Anishinaabe knowledge and ways of being.

A highlight of the year was the Winter Outdoor Activity Day, which brought together approximately 70 learners and five Knowledge Keepers for a day of hands-on learning. Students participated in teachings on traditional medicines, trapping, fire making, and the gifts provided by the beaver, while also taking part in outdoor activities such as skiing and dogsledding. Strong student engagement has led to the expansion of programming into additional grades, with plans to continue growing opportunities for learners across the district.



“Two years ago, I wouldn't have had big dreams and ambitions like I do now. I just knew that I wanted a sober life and I needed it. So here I am; Anishinaabekwe of Turtle Island, a single mama bear of four amazing cubs. I went through trials and errors, plain willpower, faith, hope, determination, and inner strength to be standing here today as valedictorian of 2026.”

Genevieve Wesley
2026 Secondary Valedictorian



Leadership and Growth

Seven Generations Education Institute will expand its presence regionally, provincially, and nationally.

Emergency Management Curriculum Pilot Programs

SGEI - Thunder Bay and Geraldton

SGEI has partnered with Matawa Education and Care Centre in Thunder Bay and Geraldton Composite High School in Geraldton to run pilot programs of the Emergency Management course developed in collaboration with Indigenous Services Canada. Through these pilot programs, SGEI had the opportunity to learn from our high school learners, collecting feedback and testimonials about the program, and deliver some exciting hands-on emergency management training including ice rescue, fire extinguisher training, canoe certification, Wilderness First Aid and more in collaboration with local service providers. Once the pilot programs are complete, SGEI intends to refine the courses and make the curriculum available to school boards province-wide.

Minwenjigedaa

Anishinaabemodaa - In-Community

The Anishinaabemodaa team partnered with Giishkaandago'Ikwe Health Services and SGEI's First Nation Student Success Program (FNSSP) to deliver the Minwenjigedaa (Let's All Eat Well) initiative across ten First Nations communities. During the program, the team worked alongside community partners in a variety of ways, including hosting family cooking nights, attending informal community gatherings and meet-and-greets, supporting home deliveries with education departments, and partnering with local playgroups and family programs.

Rather than distributing pre-packaged food boxes, families were encouraged to select the fruits and vegetables they knew they would use, helping to reduce waste while supporting healthy food choices. Children and families were also invited to choose games, crafts, activities, language books, and Anishinaabemowin resources to take home.

The program focused on more than providing healthy food. It created opportunities for families to gather, learn, and connect through shared meals and language. Resources and information were provided on the benefits of eating together as a family, creating positive mealtime routines and incorporating more fruits and vegetables into everyday meals. By bringing together healthy food, Anishinaabemowin, and family-centred activities, the Minwenjigedaa initiative supported wellness, relationship-building, and language revitalization within participating communities.

Victimology Continuing Education Certificate

Post-Secondary, Continuing Education - Online

Through our valued partnership with OntarioLearn, SGEI continues to offer online continuing education courses to learners of all ages. For the 2025-2026 academic school year, we've offered 22 different courses to our learners including, but not limited to Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Songs and Stories, Introduction to Intercultural Communication, and a set of courses that make up the Early Childhood Education Management Certificate. Starting May 2026, SGEI introduced a new set of courses that, compiled, result in the Victimology Certificate provided in partnership with Algonquin College.

EmployNext powered by Serco Partnership

Training for Employment - All Campuses & Locations

As of April 1, 2026, SGEI became a service provider for EmployNext's Employment Ontario network. EmployNext is a centralized, government-funded employment services program in Ontario that helps job seekers find work and assists employers with recruitment. As a service provider, SGEI will support jobseekers through the Employment Empowerment Initiative, developed in partnership with the Solicitor General of Ontario (SolGen), to deliver employment services to individuals who are justice-involved. We intend to provide community-embedded employment supports and coordinated referral pathways to both jobseekers and employers across northwestern Ontario.

Emergency Management Curriculum Development

SGEI - Thunder Bay

In partnership with Indigenous Services Canada and under the guidance of First Nation emergency management service providers, educators, and community members, SGEI has developed Grade 11 and 12 Emergency Management curriculum to help Indigenous youth become community leaders in the face of an emergency. The Emergency Management course is geared to First Nations communities, has an Indigenous focus, and prepares youth to address emergencies common in First Nations communities including wildfires, floods, opiate use, infrastructure failures, ice rescues, and more.

National Action Plan to End Gender Based Violence

Azhemiinigoziwin - Thunder Bay

Thanks to funding from Canada's National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence, SGEI was provided the opportunity to expand the Azhemiinigoziwin (Women's Empowerment) program to Thunder Bay, Ontario, beginning in November 2025. This cohort, like the others, supported Anishinaabekweg in their journeys to Mino-Bimaadiziwin through education, language, and culture.

Partnership with Confederation College

Post-Secondary - All Campuses

In June 2026, SGEI signed a relationship accord with Confederation College in a traditional ceremony to commemorate a new partnership. Through this partnership, learners throughout the region west of Thunder Bay will have increased access to SGEI's community-based, culturally grounded learning environment, including strong connections to Anishinaabe language, knowledge, ways of being, and land-based learning. At the same time, learners will graduate with accredited Confederation College credentials. This new relationship was honoured in an Anishinaabe ceremony and involved teachings from Elder Pebaamibines on relationships, a meaningful story about faith and trust from Elder Kelvin Morrison, an exchange of gifts, and a meal. SGEI will begin offering Confederation College-accredited programs in the fall, with plans to expand program offerings in semesters to follow.

Driving School Programs

Training for Employment - Rainy Lake and Kenora Campuses

As an MTO-approved Beginner Driver Education (BDE) course provider, SGEI provided 20 SafeStart New Driver Training Programs at our Rainy Lake and Kenora Campuses from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, resulting in 1,259 in-car lessons and 245 new drivers in our communities. Due to growing demand, SGEI has welcomed additional drivers to our campuses and plans to expand our Driving School to service the Dryden area.



Learner Support and Access

Seven Generations Education Institute will work toward increasing supports for students in the areas of housing, accessibility, transportation, and childcare.

Manidoo Baawaatig Residency

SGEI - Kenora Campus

Thanks to funding from the National Indigenous Collaborative Housing Inc. and direction from our governing First Nations communities, in October 2025, SGEI began construction on a 20-unit dormitory at its Manidoo Baawaatig Campus. The residency construction is an important step in providing safe housing for our learners and reducing the need for students to travel out of their home community to attend school.

As of June 2026, project framing, and exterior roofing is complete, and interior work on electrical, plumbing, and HVAC systems are being completed. Construction is expected to be completed by January 2027.

First Nations Student Success Program

Secondary - In-Community

The First Nation Student Success Program (FNSSP) supports kindergarten to Grade 12 educators in participating First Nations communities by providing literacy and numeracy supports, school improvement plans, and other resources. This school year, SGEI was grateful for the opportunity to support our participating schools with several professional development sessions for educators and budgetary support, but most importantly, activities and resources for learners. These included musical instruments for classes in Ojibways of Onigaming First Nation, outdoor classroom upgrades for Pegamigaabo in Big Grassy First Nation, and school trips.

High School Classrooms

Secondary & Adult Education - Treaty 3

SGEI is grateful for the responsibility entrusted to us to provide access to secondary school education to communities across Treaty 3. Continuing longstanding relationships, SGEI has secondary classrooms in more than 20 First Nations communities, and through our partnership with the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board, adult-education classrooms in Red Lake, Pickle Lake, Kenora, Dryden and Sioux Lookout. In March 2025, SGEI was fortunate to open a new secondary classroom in Thunder Bay, allowing additional learners in the Thunder Bay area to access culturally enriched, self-paced secondary education that suits their needs.

"Going into the nursing program was like coming home to a place where I knew I belonged and where I'm seen for who I am. It is also the place where I passed people in the halls who have now become like aunties and uncles. The extra resources and care that go into the students is what sets SGEI apart from the rest. It is what brought me home."

Ogimaabinesiik, Anna Mainville
2026 Post-Secondary Valedictorian



Learner Mental Health and Wellness Support

Accessibility - All Campuses & Locations

We are grateful for the opportunity to support our learners with mental health and wellness services. Throughout the 2025-2026 school year, SGEI delivered 3,374 interventions supporting learners across campuses and communities through counselling, food security initiatives, wellness programming, crisis response, and resource navigation. The demand for services remained strong throughout the year, reflecting the growing complexity of our learners' needs and the importance of accessible support systems. Some key highlights include:

- 350 food security interventions through classroom food bins, self-serve resources, and supper pantry programs.
- 145 mental wellness activities and awareness initiatives
- 66 wellness-focused events
- 31 direct referrals received by our Mental Health Counsellor
- 77 counselling sessions provided

Accessibility Education

Accessibility - All Campuses & Locations

Throughout the school year, the Accessibility and Mental Health team supported SGEI staff and learners with accessibility education and training, including Evacu Trac emergency response training, educational sessions offered in partnership with Sullivan + Associates Clinical Psychology, and learner-centred workshops focused on topics like learning disabilities, sleep hygiene, self-care, and autism spectrum disorder.

Accessible Seating and Lighting

Accessibility - Rainy Lake and Kenora Campuses

Continuing our commitment to accessible learning spaces, SGEI has incorporated more accessible seating options including ball chairs and rocking chairs as well as sensory friendly light filters in all classrooms to reduce harsh blue light.

Accessibility Services

Accessibility - All Campuses & Locations

SGEI is committed to providing our learners with disabilities, learning challenges, and other barriers with individualized supports and accommodations to ensure they experience equitable access to education. Throughout the 2025-2026 school year, our Accessibility and Mental Health team supported 75 students across Secondary, Adult Education, Training, Language, and Post-Secondary programs with accommodations, assistive technology, consultation, advocacy, and educational programming.

Soundfield Systems for Learners with Hearing Impairments

Accessibility - Rainy Lake and Kenora Campuses

With the guidance of our Accessibility team, SGEI installed soundfield systems at our Rainy Lake and Kenora campuses. SoundField classroom voice amplification systems amplify relevant speech in a room to improve clarity and reduce background noise and distractions to aid students with hearing impairments.

Training for Employment Community Partnerships

Training for Employment - In-Community

Together with community partners, SGEI delivered ten training programs to community members in our surrounding First Nations. With direction from each community, we facilitated programs in trades, safety, and administration to meet the unique needs of each cohort. Partnered communities and organizations included Ojibways of Onigaming, Naicatchewenin First Nation, Iskatewizaagegan #39 Independent First Nation, Wabaseemoong Independent Nations, Jarnel Contracting, and Weechi-it-te-win Family Services. We are grateful to continue building relationships with Treaty 3 First Nations and helping community members learn new skills to become employed.





Financial Stability

Seven Generations Education Institute will maintain existing partnerships to support the growth and development of programs

$10 Million Strategic Gift from Mastercard Foundation

In recognition of our leadership and innovation, SGEI is pleased to be the recipient of a $10 million strategic gift from the Mastercard Foundation. In the first five-year agreement, our partnership with the foundation supported SGEI-developed programs, including our language revitalization and land-based education programs. Those programs strive to give our learners pride, confidence, and leadership skills they'll carry for a lifetime. With this additional investment, we can continue to dream big and implement the work in a good way — our way. Our focus is on the future and making sure that access to learning opportunities lasts for generations. We recognize that this gift comes with responsibility, one we hold with care, knowing lifelong learning is a path of renewal, hope, and possibility.

Investment and Finance Committee

With guidance from SGEI's governing First Nations, the Investment and Finance Committee is helping strengthen the policies, oversight and long-term planning needed to manage growth responsibly. Its work supports sound financial decisions, careful stewardship of partner investments and the pursuit of more sustainable funding arrangements. Financial stability is not an end in itself. It is what allows SGEI to sustain culturally grounded learning, learner supports and community-defined priorities through changing funding cycles.

Seven Generations Education Institute will work to secure predictable and sustainable long-term funding agreements with both federal and provincial governments.

Ministry Funding

On February 12, 2026, SGEI was one of nine Indigenous institutes in Ontario to receive funding from the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security. In its funding announcement, the Ontario government shared that the combined $57 million in funding for Indigenous Institutes is aimed at expanding access to programming and building long-term operational sustainability.



Technology

Seven Generations Education Institute will support employee and student capacity through improved access to technology and the development of new technologies.

AR/VR Content for Educators

IT & Media - Rainy Lake and Kenora Campuses

In collaboration with SGEI language and post-secondary instructors, SGEI's Digital Content Creator designed augmented and virtual reality (AR/VR) lessons to better engage students in learning and introduce technology to the classrooms. Some of the lessons created for the 2025-2026 school year include an Anishinaabemowin translation quiz for the Anishinaabemowini-ogichitaag class, a complete VR heart model for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Practical Nursing cohorts, models of neurotransmitters and psychoactive drugs for the Mental Health and Addictions Worker program, and CareerLabs VR software for the Training for Employment participants to virtually explore career options.

Classroom Meeting Equipment Upgrades

IT & Media - Rainy Lake Campus

To address transportation issues experienced by some of our learners, SGEI installed Polycom Studio equipment in seven classrooms at our Rainy Lake Campus. This technology enables classrooms to be compatible with Microsoft Teams for online classes or for learners to join class remotely if they're unable to travel to campus.

Makerspace

IT & Media - Rainy Lake and Kenora Campuses

During the 2025-2026 reporting period, the Rainy Lake Makerspace welcomed 260 new and 738 total participants to participate in workshops, private events, and recurring clubs. The Makerspace at Manidoo Baawaatig saw 312 new and 948 total participants. Some of this year's most popular events included the Pink Shirt Day workshop at the Rainy Lake Campus which welcomed 39 learners and staff members to create their own pink shirts, and eight ribbon skirt and shirt workshops at the Manidoo Baawaatig Campus Makerspace in November 2025.

Mobile Makerspace

IT & Media - In-Community

With guidance from our governing First Nations, SGEI has developed a Mobile Makerspace to travel to surrounding First Nations to engage community members in cultural art projects and workshops.



Class of 2026

Gigii-chiikeniminim gizhiikimeg! Congratulations to all our Secondary, Post-Secondary, Azhemiinigoziwin, and Adult Education graduates of the Class of 2026.

Adult Education Graduation Ceremony

Secondary, Adult Education - Kenora Campus

On June 12, 2026, our longtime Adult Education partners Keewatin-Patricia District School Board, hosted the 2026 graduation ceremony at our Manidoo Baawaatig Campus in Kenora. We were fortunate enough to celebrate 49 graduates as they crossed the stage in front of their families, friends, and peers. Congratulations to this year's graduating cohort!

Secondary, Post-Secondary, and Azhemiinigoziwin Graduation Ceremony

SGEI - Rainy Lake, Kenora, and Sioux Lookout Campuses

SGEI is honoured to have hosted another graduation and pinning ceremony celebrating the accomplishments of our secondary, post-secondary and Azhemiinigoziwin learners across our campuses. This year's theme for both ceremonies was "Pathway to Success," a way to celebrate the unique pathways that each of our learners forged to get where they are today. We would like to acknowledge the day's speakers including Elder Kelvin Morrison, who opened both ceremonies in a good way, our graduation keynote speaker Waawaategiizhigook (Shannon Chapman) for her inspiring words, Cheyenne Vandermeer, Deputy Grand Chief of Grand Council Treaty #3 for providing the Gaakinawataagizod address at our pinning ceremony, the drummers from our surrounding communities, and our drum and staff Saagajiwe and Gookomisinaan for coming together to support our learners. Miigwech to everyone that made this ceremony so special for the class of 2026.

Class of 2026

SGEI - All Campuses & Locations

Secondary – 22 graduates
Adult Education – 49 graduates
Post-Secondary and Continuing Education – 61 graduates
Azhemiinigoziwin – 28 graduates



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