

WELCOME TO

Gakijiwanong Anishinaabe Nation



**TEACH
FOR
CANADA**

A scenic autumn landscape featuring a calm lake in the foreground, a shoreline with fallen logs and rocks, and a dense forest of trees with vibrant yellow, orange, and red foliage. The sky is a clear, bright blue. Overlaid on the image are several large, semi-transparent, wavy blue shapes that create a sense of movement and depth. The word "aaniin" is written in a clean, white, sans-serif font, centered horizontally and partially overlapping the blue shapes and the forest.

aaniin



Gakijiwanong Anishinaabe Nation

Booshoo teachers!

On behalf of Gakijiwanong Anishinaabe Nation, I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome you to our community as a teacher at Zhingwaako Za'Iganing Private School.

In the French language, our former name 'Lac La Croix' translates to mean "The Lake of the Cross". However, to the Ojibwe people, it is traditionally known as Zhingwaako Za'Iganing meaning "Lake of Large Red Pines", made in reference to the pines that surround the lake and are believed to provide protection to the community. To the Anishinaabe people, the red and white pines play a significant role in the overall cultural practices, especially during times of harvesting fish and game for spring and fall feasts. This traditional process also includes honouring the spirits and the spiritual connection of Zhingwaako Za'Iganing with expressions of gratitude and respect for the protection they provide.

In 2023, we proudly changed our community's name to Gakijiwanong Anishinaabe Nation. 'Gakijiwanong' is Ojibwe for "Where the river flows".

While in Gakijiwanong Anishinaabe Nation, you will have many opportunities to take part in community events and ceremonies. From these experiences, you will learn the language, traditions and values that are so important to our school, students and community members. Gakijiwanong Anishinaabe Nation First Nation is located in the centre of North America and in the legend of "Painted Rock" the elders say this is where the earth began.

As we continue to pursue personal and academic excellence, we are pleased you are joining us on this journey towards the creation and cultivation of a safe, inclusive community-based learning environment. We are very proud of where we are today, and excited about where we're headed.

Once again, welcome to Gakijiwanong Anishinaabe Nation First Nation. I am excited to get to know you better, and look forward to a happy and productive school year ahead.

Miigwech,

Rob Mitchell
Principal & Education Director

Community



A Brief History

1900

Students were registered in the St. Mary's Residential school in Fort Frances, Ontario.

1900-1950

Residential school era. When they were registered for school, students used their Anishinaabe names for Residential School registration. In later years, English names were given. Some children never returned to their home and many lost their Anishinaabe language and culture. Those who went to school during this era preserved their language and used their brief education knowledge to develop their own writing in the Anishinaabe language – they wrote letters to one another in Ojibwe. This way of communicating, by writing letters to one another continued until 1965. While in the residential school, the authorities at the time did not allow verbal communication in their first language so they developed this practice and were able to maintain their language. The first graduates from Grade 12 were Andrew Jourdain Sr & Ida Oshawee.

1950-1970

The log cabin school was constructed under the Lac La Croix First Nation leadership with Chief Gilbert Oshawee. Chief John Boshey had used his political influence to build an elementary and a high school. The children were running away from school and their lives were being threatened. Linda Ottetail graduated while in boarding school. Gakijiwanong Anishinaabe Nation community was granted funding to build a federal high school as a one room school with Grades 9-12. The first graduates of this new school were Robert Atatise Jr. and Larry Jourdain.

1974

The elementary school was built with federal funding under the leadership of Steve Jourdain Sr. It accommodated all the resident students from Grades 1-8.

1975-1980

Lac La Croix First Nation was granted federal funding to build a gymnasium and a high school for Grades 9-12. The Rainy River Board of Education entered into a tuition agreement with the Lac La Croix First Nation leadership to provide classes on reserve. When the Board of Education took over, there were more graduating students – usually 3-4 students per year. Very few pursued postsecondary education. The school was funded with both federal and provincial money. Funding offered better wages for teachers through the union. Services to children were improved by offering a better selection in the curriculum.



- 1980-1984** The first gymnasium was converted into a high school and completed under the Lac La Croix First Nation leadership with Chief Justin Boshey. Students were recruited from Nishnawbe Aski Nation territory from the First Nation communities of North Spirit Lake, Deer Lake, and Kasabonika. They too had students who graduated from Grade 12.
- 1994** A road is established so Lac La Croix is no longer an isolated community accessible only by air.
- 2000** The Ojibway Language program was introduced. Under Leon Jourdain's leadership, Lac La Croix First Nation suspended their agreement with the Rainy River District School Board and returned to the federal School system. Due to its remoteness, it is considered a private school system. This system cannot employ teachers affiliated with a union. Funding was decreased by half and the curriculum under the federal system was limited. The number of graduates also declined.
- 2000-2015** A new elementary and high school was built under the the leadership of Chief Larry Jourdain.
- 2015** The number of postsecondary graduates is approximately 23. Lac La Croix's Zhingwaako Za'Iganing School is developing Anishinaabe curriculum and a language immersion for students from Kindergarten to grade 12. Due to our isolation, our Elders have maintained Anishinaabe culture and traditions with our children. To continue to protect our language and our identity, implementing the Anishinaabe way of life in the curriculum is critical.
- 2018** Students of Lac La Croix First Nation went viral with their music video 'Firemakers', which became the title track for N'we Jinan's 2018 album.
- 2023** Lac La Croix First Nation changes its name to Gakjiwanong Anishinaabe Nation. 'Gakjiwanong' is Ojibwe for "Where the water flows".

Gakjiwanong Anishinaabe Nation Community Map





Zhingwaako Za'Iganing School



Welcome!

School Population
65

Grades
Junior Kindergarten
to Grade 12

Principal
Rob Mitchell

Education Director
Jim Windego

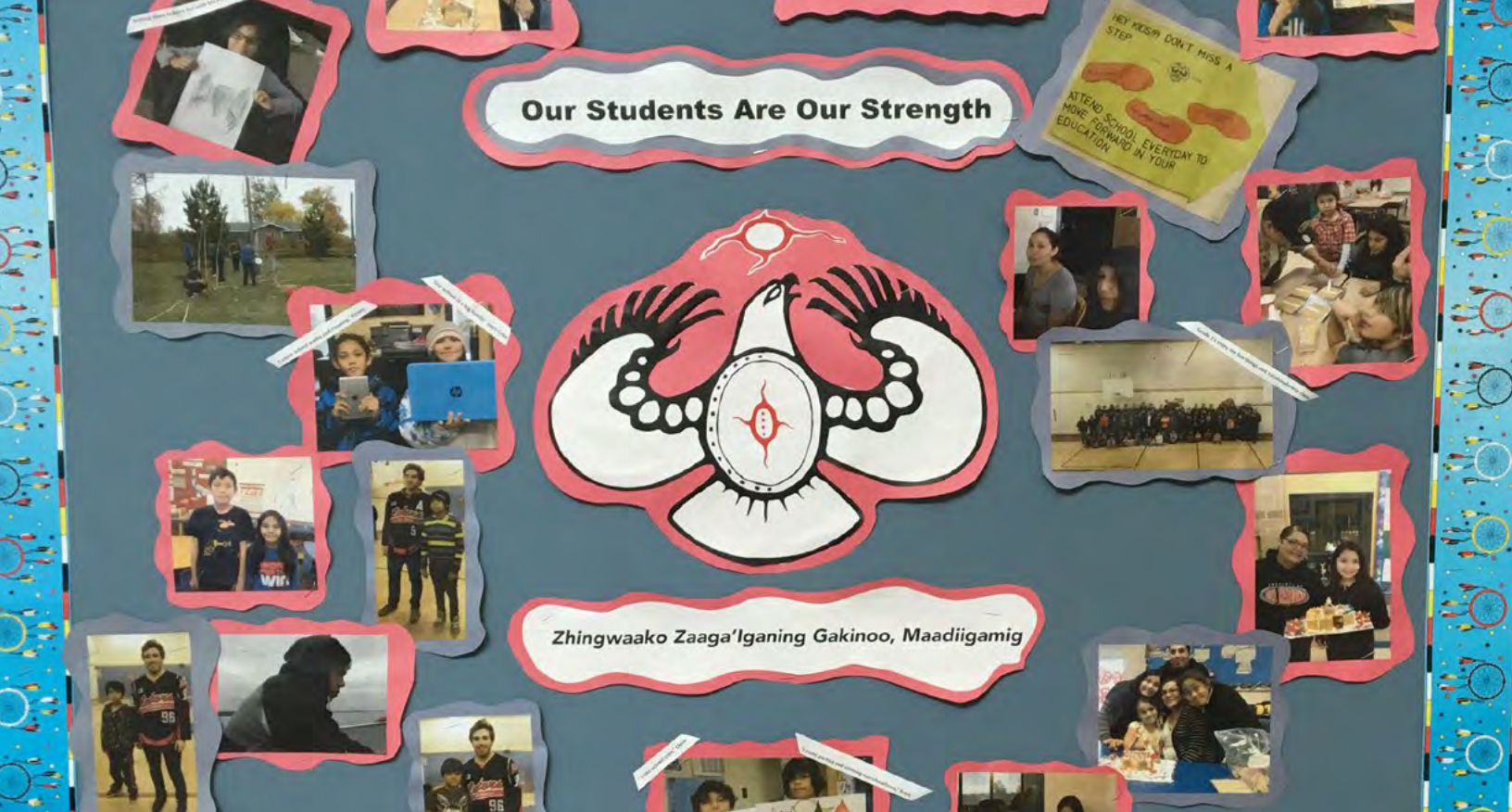
Band Manager
Randy Councillor

The design of the school pays homage to the community's culture: from above the school looks like an eagle and there are ten windows to represent the ten original clans.

The culture and language play a central role in the programming and curriculum of our school. Traditions and culture are practiced daily and it is reflected in the physical building itself.

Zhingwaako refers to the tall pine trees that are common in the community. Za'Iganing refers to the lake and waters in the community. So, the school's name most directly translates to "The Lake of the Tall Pine Trees".





A Day in the Life of a Teacher

As a teacher, our priorities become the children and the school the moment we walk through the door.

At every period throughout the day, we ask how can we help children get from where they are to where they want to be. This starts with making efforts to learn where the students are in their learning and focusing on what you can do for that student over the course of a single day. We provide students with the building blocks of learning with our breakfast and lunch programs and dedication to keeping kids active, by planning games and activities for the students. We walk out of the school, exhausted and satisfied with the fact that we gave the students our best energy.

8:30 AM - 4:00 PM School day (Elementary ends 3:45 PM)
11:55AM - 12:55PM - Lunch (everyone goes home for lunch)

- Every other Friday is a day off to grab essentials, groceries
- There is a bus service for all students
- All teachers have one prep period/day while the students take Native Language class

What is the school most proud of...

Ceremonies and language are important to our school and students. Every Monday there is a smudging and lesson on the Seven Grandfather teachings. Volleyball is a major source of pride as well as wild rice harvesting, seasonal hunting and gathering. Our Gakijiwanong ponies are integral to the community, they are indigenous to Gakijiwanong Anishinaabe Nation. There are opportunities to look after the horses, and the school teaches lessons around them.

We are proud of our growing school and plan to add more classrooms, as well as a woodworking room. Excitingly, we will eventually require a Technical Education teacher.

Additional Responsibilities

Teachers are asked to host or facilitate one extra-curricular activity each week.





Facilities

- Daily breakfast and regular hot lunch programs
- Computer room, smartboard and iPad or Chromebook enabled classrooms
- Gym

School Events and Extracurricular Activities

- Outside Looking In runs an after-school dance training program 2x/week.
- There is a winter carnival every year in the school, and many community members attend.
- The students go on a boat excursion on the lake most years.
- Baseball, hockey, and volleyball are the most popular sports
- There is an annual Christmas concert.
- Hockey fundraisers are organised.
- New music program with guitars, keyboards, and clarinets
- N'we Jinan in 2018-2019
- Community and School Wellness/Fitness Programs
- Land-based Teaching with Knowledge Keepers

Unique Classes Offered

- Custom woodworking
- Entrepreneurial Course (Venture)



Teacherages

Teacherages are either one bedroom apartments with a kitchen, living room, bedroom, bathroom, electric heat, major appliances, shared laundry or two bedroom house with kitchen, living room, storage room, bunk bed, and queen-sized bed, washer/dryer. Both are located two minute walk to the school.

Pets are allowed but teacherages with pets are inspected for damage before the teacher leaves. There is no damage deposit required.

Teachers may purchase satellite internet.





Life in the Community

Traditions and customs

The community is very traditional, with an annual powwow, a teepee outside the school, land-based education taught by Elders and the Native language teacher, and other traditional practices. There is no church in the community.

Community events

- Traditional powwow every August
- Fall feast every October
- Ice fishing derby every March
- Spring feast every May
- Bass fishing derby every May and September

Amenities

There is one small store that sells chips and pop. Most people drive to Atiokan (1-2 hours) or Fort Frances (2-3 hours) for grocery shopping.

There is a health centre in the community with a nurse four days per week

There is a resort nearby called Campbell's Cabins. It has lodges for guests and a full-service dining room. It is only accessible by boat.

There is a band run gas station in the community.

What is going on in Gakijiwanong Anishinaabe Nation

The band office has a bulletin board with lots of information about what's going on in the community.



Get to Know Gakjiwanong Anishinaabe Nation Community Members

MEET LANCE GEYSHICK,
Educational Assistant at Gakjiwanong Anishinaabe Nation School

How would you describe Gakjiwanong?

It's a nice and quiet and peaceful place. Everyone is super friendly. And everybody will want to get to know you once they get here. Everybody really cares about you here, and they'll treat you like family.

What do you look for in a person coming to teach in your community?

Someone that is open up to being there for the kids. Because you know the kids here, it's a small community, and there's been a lot of trauma just recently. And what I want here is a teacher who is open up to talking to the kids and making them feel safe here up here at the school and letting them know that they are there for them.

It's a great place to work at. Everybody will love you here. And everybody will appreciate what you do and make you feel like you are a part of the family.

What do you do in your spare time?

With my spare time I usually go over to one of the Teach For Canada teacher's house to play FIFA. Or I open the gym for floor hockey for the youth. Or I'm at home playing the Xbox or watching sports.



MEET GLADYS GEYSHICK,
Retired Grade 1-3 teacher at Gakjiwanong Anishinaabe Nation School

What do you like most about your community?

I like when I'm here in the summer and fall. I absolutely love the lake. It's inviting. It has lots of fish. Children are friendly. If I'm walking around they usually come and give me a hug. Even though we are far away, I like the location. We're really remote. I like the remoteness. It's quiet.

How would you describe Gakjiwanong Anishinaabe Nation to someone who has never been?

We are an inviting community. We invite guests to come fish. They blend right in. One thing I do is take teachers to the sacred sites on the lake. I love it when teachers ask, offer tobacco like we do, they respect our practices. Gakjiwanong Anishinaabe Nation is a traditional community. Every Monday we start with a prayer and a smudge. Families are close here.

What do you do when you have a day off?

I love to go fishing in the summertime and blueberry picking. Ice fishing in the wintertime. I still love to cut wood. I like to cook a big supper for my family. We have a lot of cookouts, we go out to meet on a little lake or Powwow ground. Even in winter we have bonfires.





The Student Corner

MEET TEHYA LESHAN,
Former Grade 8 Student

People support and help each other here. There's a beautiful lake where you can go fishing. There's the bush very close.

Soccer is my favourite sport. Once I started playing it makes me feel like I can do it and push harder. I also participate in Outside Looking In. I have a lot of cousins that went [to compete] last year so they are supporting me to push myself and work harder. It's actually good. I didn't realize how much goes into dancing.

I also like gym. I like moving around and that it's fun. I like when teachers show us how to dribble or different techniques in sports.

In my free time I like to hang out with my friends. We usually go for a walk. Sometimes we go to the school to listen to music and play basketball at the court.



Quick Facts



Community Name

Gakijwanong Anishinaabe Nation

Tribal Council

Pwi-di-goo-zing Ne-yaa-zhing Advisory Services (Pwi)

Provincial Territorial Organization (PTO)

Grand Council Treaty #3

Population On-Reserve



350

Language Spoken



Ojibwe and English

Treaty



Treaty 3

Average Yearly Temperature



-20°C

January

26°C

July

Average yearly snowfall of 161cm.

Access



Year Round

Around the Community



①

Health centre

②

Student work

③

Band Office



Directory

Education Director

807-485-2402

Principal / School Office

807-485-2402

Zhingwaako Za'Iganing School
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