

WELCOME TO

Pikangikum First Nation



**TEACH
FOR
CANADA**



boozhoo



Pikangikum First Nation

Dear Teachers,

The Pikangikum Education Authority and Eenchokay Birchstick School welcomes you to our beautiful community located in the heart of Turtle Island. Pikangikum is always looking forward to working with enthusiastic and community engaged people to come work for our children and youth as their teachers. Our community is not “isolated” or “remote” as we are accessible almost all year round by plane, vehicle, and boat! Local people and all staff are always willing to help you with the transition and moving process.

The Board of Trustees for the Pikangikum Education Authority values and supports its mission. The Pikangikum Education Authority is committed to providing a quality education in the community. Education Authority Trustees discharge their mandate by providing an educational program for the students of Pikangikum that encourages pride in their language and cultural heritage and supports their educational aspirations. We also welcome you to our new school building that currently staffs 220 employees and educates 920 students.

Pikangikum takes pride in being one (or the foremost) of the communities that has retained the traditional language. We encourage our students and staff to practice it on a daily basis. Other than language retention we also try to encourage retention of all aspects of our cultural and traditional beliefs. We believe that if the community as a whole implements what is being taught at the school and it is being practiced at home, we can help the students better understand who they are.

We encourage you to take a very active role in our community, by participating and organizing community events for our youth that promote Language, Culture, and traditional values. Our students have to know their Identity, “Who am I?”, “Where do I come from?”, “What is my purpose?” and “Where am I going?”. The students well-being is also very important in all areas of their mental, physical, spiritual, and social/intellectual needs to be in “balance” and “holistic” for their overall development and success. We want them to have the ancestral teachings of the Seven Grandfathers: wisdom, love, courage, truth, respect, humility, and honesty.

Overall it’s about “Living the Good Life” and education is “Life Learning” (“MINO BIMAADZIWIN”)

In closing, we would like you to take part in this process as we look further into holding on to “our culture and traditional” way of life. The Pikangikum Education Authority and Eenchokay Birchstick School look forward to meeting you in person and welcome you to be a part of our community.

Yours in education,

Kyle Peters, Education Director
Daniel Keeper, Assistant Education Director
Samson Keeper, Chairperson

Community



A Brief History

Pikangikum people have lived off this land and practiced traditions of hunting, fishing, and gathering wild foods since time immemorial. We have been keepers of the land. We have developed a rich knowledge tradition, tools and practices to sustain and even enhance the abundance and diversity of the forest. Initial contact with Europeans was minimal and we relied on our own health traditions well into the mid-1900s.

1905

Pikangikum is a part of Treaty 5 which was first signed off in 1905.

1925

The Hudson Bay trading post was established in Pikangikum, along with the first mission teachers and Church influence. As our on-reserve community grew, more Western-style health infrastructure was set-up.

1940s

The community gradually shifted from a local, subsistence-based economy, to a wider and more cash-based economy.

1950s-60s

The federal government became more directly involved with individual and community life, through such things as residential schools, delivery of Western-style health services, child welfare programs, and social assistance payments.

1970s

Leaders in Pikangikum and other First Nations began advocating strongly for increased local authority, including local health planning and service provision.

1988

Pikangikum First Nation begins to deliver its own education programs.

2000

The Whitefeather Forest Initiative steering group was formed.

2007

The community school was burned. Classes are offered in portables.

2008

Pikangikum Health Authority is empowered to deliver and manage health care services as an independent body linked to the overall governance authority exercised by Chief and Council.

2011

Launch of annual Remembering Winterhawks Hockey Tournament

2012

The "For Our Future Generations Agreement" is signed with Ontario Parks

2016

The brand new Eenchokay Birchstick School opens. Pikangikum joins Wataynikaneyap Power, which is jointly owned by 21 other First Nations and Goldcorps, to reinforce transmission lines to Pickle Lake and Musselwhite Mine and to construct new transmission lines north of Pickle Lake to service remote First Nation.

2018

Wataynikaneyap Power connects Pikangikum to the Ontario power grid



The Land

Pikangikum and its Elders have done some extensive work regarding the Whitefeather Forest.

The Whitefeather Forest is located in Northwestern Ontario within the ancestral lands of the people of Pikangikum. It is centered on the headwaters of the Berens River Watershed. It is bounded by Woodland Caribou Provincial Park in the southwest, the Red Lake and Trout Lake Sustainable Forest License units in the south and southeast, the Albany River Watershed to the east and the Severn River Watershed to the north.

The Pikangikum Whitefeather Forest is a northern boreal landscape of expansive coniferous forest interspersed with numerous lakes and rivers. Under the care of our people, the Whitefeather Forest has been protected and enhanced as a rich, boreal ecosystem inhabited by black bear (Mahkwa), caribou (Atik), moose (Moos), timber wolves (Maaingan), wolverine (Kwiingwaagway), fox (Waagoosh), ducks (Shiishiib), bald eagles (Migisi), sandhill cranes (Ochiichaag) and many others.

Pikangikum was first known as “Beejikamaang” which is the word “bay” in Ojibway. The name “Pikangikum” came to be as the settlers mispronounced “Beejikamaang.”

Pikangikum Community Map



Eenchokay Birchstick School



School Population

Approximately 980

Grades

Kindergarten to Grade 12

Key People

Marvin McKay-Keenan

*Elementary and Junior High
School Principal*

Walter Latt

High School Principal

Lenir Sommerville

*Special Education
Coordinator*

Philip Warner

Mental Health Coordinator

Andrew Mattiachone

*First Nations Student Support
Program Coordinator*

Chris Ameil

Project Journey Coordinator

Alannah Peters

School Secretary

Welcome!

Our school opened to the public on October 5, 2016.

What is the school most proud of...

Our school is proud of our student attendance. Our school is proud of our student participation in the many cultural and extracurricular activities offered by staff and other organizations. Our school is proud of the large number of local, bilingual staff that work with our students.

School Mission

We want to provide a safe place for students to learn and grow.





School Philosophy

Students entering Eenchokay Birchstick School shall be provided with the opportunity to gain an education, which will guide them to be positive, contributing members of a society that recognizes the rights and dignity of each individual. The student should develop a sense of pride in his or her goals. Trustees, Pikangikum Education Authority leaders, school administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, tutor escorts, and substitute teachers shall strive to provide a learning environment in which:

- People value one another unconditionally.
- People are fair and honest.
- People see the school as a safe, beneficial educational environment.
- People feel that they belong and their presence and contributions are valued.
- People expect growth in themselves and others.
- People view themselves as part of a cooperative team.
- People seek opportunities to improve.
- People support one another.
- People plan and act upon plans.





A Day in the Life of a Teacher



The teaching day starts at different times for different grade levels due to our busing schedule. Before school starts depending on the day of the week, teachers are responsible for supervision before the school gym program. Teachers greet their students at the start of the teaching day. Kitchen staff prepare breakfast and bring it to teachers' classrooms for their students. Every day teachers are involved in our school literacy and mathematics programs. This sometimes involves students moving from one class to another. On Tuesdays while students are in art, music, drama or gym classes teachers meet with the school principal for up to 45 minutes to discuss school matters. On Wednesdays, while students are going to art, music, drama or gym, teachers meet with educators from OISE at the University of Toronto via video conferencing to discuss the school mathematics and literacy programs.

For more details about daily life at Eenchokay Birchstick School, visit the school [website](#).



Unique classes

- Culture class - Students from Junior Kindergarten to grade 8 get to go fishing, gill netting, trapping, learn how to skin animals, etc.
- Music class - Students learn to read and write music and play instruments such as the recorder, the piano, and the ukulele.
- Morning gym - Students who arrive at school before classes start get to do supervised activities in the gym.

Special School Events

Our school is closed for one to two weeks in September for cultural week. Students and parents can go on the land during that time. Teachers are free to do what they want during that time.





Extracurricular Activities

- Broomball teams - *grades 7 to 12*
- Volleyball teams - *grades 7 to 12*
- Gymnastics - *grades 4 and 5*
- Outside Looking In (dance group) - *grades 7 to 12*
- Hockey team - *grades 7 to 12*
- Floor hockey - *grades 4 to 6*
- Pickleball - adults
- Art club - *grade 4 to 6*
- Saturday art, cooking, gym, and other activities at the school under the supervision of Project Journey

What educational activities would you be interested in teachers planning for students?

- Reading/library club
- Badminton - *grades 4 to 8*
- Cooking classes - *grades 4 to 8*
- Chess, checkers and other board game activities - *grades 4 to 8*

With the new school up in full swing, there is almost an unlimited amount of activities that can be started beyond what is already organised. Eenchokay Birchstick School is equipped with 2 gymnasiums, an outdoor hockey rink, a full size running track, a soccer field and a baseball field.



Teacherages

All non-local teachers live in either trailers or townhouses provided by the Pikangikum Education Authority. All teacher accommodation is within a 5 to 15 minute comfortable walk from the school. The teacherages are fully furnished with a washer, dryer, dishwasher, dishes, furniture, utensils, pots and pans and other household items. All units have indoor plumbing. Water is delivered to the homes and sewage is taken away from the homes for free on a regular basis. The rent for the 2017-2018 school year is \$330 per month per person plus \$100 per month for electricity.

Pet Policy

Permission is required.

Communications Services

Cable tv and satellite tv are available in the community but must be paid for by the teacher. High speed internet is available in the community but must be paid for by the teacher. A router can be rented from the internet provider. TbayTel provides cell phone service in Pikangikum.



Quick Facts

Community Name
Pikangikum First Nation

Tribal Council
Independent First Nations Alliance

Provincial Territorial Organization (PTO)
Nishnawbe-Aski Nation

Population On-Reserve



2954

Language Spoken



**Ojibway and
Ojibwemowin**

Treaty



Treaty 5

Average Yearly Temperature



-19.8°C **18.3°C**
January July

Access



Year-round



Jan - Mar
Connects to Red Lake



Life in the Community



Community Events

Pikangikum usually has a 2 week cultural break in the fall (late September) so that families can prepare for the winter, stock up on firewood, and get some moose meat.

Arena

The “Pikangikum First Nation Arena; Home of the Winterhawks” opens

when the cold weather comes in November and closes when the warm weather comes in April. Hours of operation are usually from Monday to Saturday from 4:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m.

The “Remembering Winterhawks Hockey Tournament” has gotten bigger and bigger every year since it started in 2011, its an ice hockey tournament that allows community-based First Nations

teams from elsewhere in Ontario and Manitoba (open to any First Nation) to come compete and have fun playing. The community looks forward to this tournament every year and fans pack the arena every night during the 4 day tournament. Participating communities include: Poplar Hill, Sandy Lake, Kasabonika, Kingfisher Lake, Eagle Lake, Whitefish Bay, Sandy Bay (MB), Norway House, (MB).

The Student Corner

BRANDON TURTLE,
Grade 12 Student

What do you do on your days off? Why?

Sit and write. Anything. One thing I am good at. I like to write rhymes. I am into music. I don't sing, I just write.

What is your favourite class or activity at school? Why?

My favourite class is literacy and English. My English and literacy class helps with writing. I sometimes get the chance to practice my writing in class.

What do you like most about your community? Why?

I like hockey. Everyone in my family plays hockey. I play forward. I taught myself how to play hockey. I play hockey when there are practices in the evening. EBS Hawks is the school hockey team. I play tournaments in Dryden. This was my first time. It was fun, even though we lost. I will practice harder this year. We will be doing more tournaments this year.

Get to Know Pikangikum Community Members



MEET DEAN PETERS,
Coordinator for the First Nations Student Success Program (FNSSP)

What do you like most about your community?

I like my community because this is where I grew up. I like that fact that our language is alive, and strong. All of the kids have the language. I had excellent teachers who taught Native Language at our school growing up and I kept it up over the years. I am able to read and write in syllabics, passing it down to students in the school. I've taken language workshops on how to maintain language. We communicate in our native language here in Pik.

What do you like to do in the community when you have a day off?

Relax at home. I enjoy my weekends. I read my bible in syllabics. I have a Cree hymnbook in syllabics. I read and sing from it.

How would you describe your community to someone who had never been?

I have been working in the school for 31 years, under many titles. What I told the teacher is to interact in the community and not be isolated. Get to know people, students, other teachers, get to know their culture. Interaction is key. Pik is the best community to come and teach. We have an excellent school, it's awesome. There is a large number of local employees. Experience it with us!

**MEET DANIEL KEEPER,
Assistant Director of Education**

What do you like most about your community?

I love that the students are able to speak their first language at home, outdoors, and at school. It's really nice to hear. All students in the community are fluent in their language. I also like that students are excited to learn about their identity and their traditional ways. They're curious, which makes them want to learn. Over the last five years, the involvement of teachers in sharing traditional knowledge has made the students more curious and more interested in being in school because of traditional teachings (how to cook, how to harvest, life skills, etc). Students want to learn about pow wows and traditional culture.

What do you like to do in the community when you have a day off?

I like going out on the land to reflect, be myself, relieve stress. Skidoo rides on the winter road system help me to relax. I like fishing, and enjoy when local teachers join us out on the land to fish, or hunt. I like to fish all year round, and participates in the fishing derbies. Walleye is the best to fish. I also like walking and playing hockey. In the community, hockey is the most important sport, but broomball is a game the girls also enjoy.

How would you describe your community to someone who had never been?

I find the community to be very unique. 97% of the people can communicate in their first language. The community is growing at a rapid pace. I think more schools will be needed. There are about 75 kindergarten students each year. The water is really fresh, with great fishing spots. The community isn't very isolated, you can boat in, take the ice road, or fly. You can even skidoo from December - March on the winter road. The only time the community is isolated is for two weeks in the fall and spring. The community is getting back to its cultural roots, there is a break in the fall when families work on cultural activities.

We are starting a bed and breakfast. The most friendly people you will ever meet live in Pikangikum. The teachers are very included within the community because the community is very friendly.

You see a lot of hope in the community, a lot of it comes from the school. It's amazing to hear laughter down the hall in the school. A lot of Elders visit the school on a regular basis, and there is a program for them.

We have some really great after-school programming: cultural programs, Elders programs, a bike club, dance, soccer. A lot of activities for students and a health management/nutrition program.

There will be a full-time nurse in the school this year.



Around the Community



①

Band Office

②

Deer in the forest

③

Airport Pikangikum

④

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau holds a Northern Pike after pulling in fishing nets with students and teachers

⑤

Grade 4 class ice fishing trip

⑥

School Crossing sign in Ojibway

⑦

A double rainbow over some houses

⑧

Front of the Northern Store

⑨

Fast Food Restaurants





5



6



7



8



9

16



Getting to and from Pikangikum

Wasaya Airways and Perimeter Air provide scheduled service to the community 7 days a week. Other smaller airlines also such as Northstar and Superior also provide service to the community. Wasaya and Perimeter fly out of Thunder Bay and Winnipeg and also smaller communities like Red Lake and Sioux Lookout. It costs approximately \$600 to fly to and from Winnipeg. For the months of January to March our community is connected to the outside world by a winter road leading to Red Lake and a paved highway from there. It takes about 2 hours to drive to Red Lake and about 7 hours to drive from Red Lake to Winnipeg. During summer months people travel by boat to the other side of the lake and drive their vehicles from there on an all weather dirt/gravel road to points in southern Canada.

Package Delivery and Mail

Many staff order food, clothing and household appliances, etcetera from Walmart or Amazon. Also people travel over the winter road to Red Lake to buy groceries. Canada Post is located in the Northern Store. It takes approximately 2 weeks for parcels from southern Canada to reach Pikangikum.

What's going on in Pikangikum?

There are private Facebook groups and message boards at the Northern Store and in the band office.



Pikangikum Directory

School

807-773-5561

Elementary School Principal

807-728-0317

High School Principal

807-728-1022

Kyle Peters, Education Director

807-773-1093

Contact person if problem with
teacherage:

Hector Turtle

Contact person for internet:

Leon Keeper**Band Office**

807-773-5578

**Chief and Council, Jeffrey Strang and
Charlie Turtle, Education Portfolio**

807-773-5578

Nursing Station

807-773-5301

807-773-5550

**Health Centre, Billy Joe Strang,
Executive Director**

807-773-5550

On-Reserve Police

807-773-5007

Pikangikum Hotel

807-773-1039

Weseeneawegamic Restaurant

807-773-5595

Kwan's Restaurant

807-773-5118

Pikangikum Northern Store

807-773-5913



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