

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
Amanda Sainnawap, Assistant Director
Corry Turtle, 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.
- Pikangikum is a part of Treaty 5 which was first signed off in 1905.
- 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.
- The community gradually shifted from a local, subsistence-based economy, to a wider and more cash-based economy.
- 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.
- Leaders in Pikangikum and other First Nations began advocating strongly for increased local authority, including local health planning and service provision.
- Pikangikum First Nation begins to deliver its own education programs.
- The Whitefeather Forest Initiative steering group was formed.
- The community school was burned. Classes are offered in portables.
- 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.
- Launch of annual Remembering Winterhawks Hockey Tournament
- The "For Our Future Generations Agreement" is signed with Ontario Parks
- 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.
- 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.



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

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 Community Map



Eenchokay Birchstick School



Key People

Cindy Spence

Principal

Parastou Ziadlou

Vice Principal (9-12)

Brian Green

Vice Principal (5-8)

Mary Hill

Vice Principal (JK-4)

Kamandi Quill

*Vice Principal of Language
and Culture*

Marsha King

*Special Education
Coordinator*

Philip Warner

Mental Health Coordinator

Andrew Mattiachone

School Success Coordinator

Kurt MacRae

HR Coordinator

Ross Keeper

HR Manager

Mason Strang

Assistant HR Manager

Elaina Suggashie

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 Population

Approximately 1,200

Grades

Junior Kindergarten - Grade 12



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.

School Facts

1. Eenchokay Birchstick first opened for students in October 2016.
2. There are 39 homeroom classes from Junior Kindergarten to grade 8. Each of these classes has an English language teacher and an Ojibway language teacher.
3. The high school has 12 subject teachers.
4. 1,249 students are enrolled in Junior Kindergarten to grade 8; 249 students are enrolled in grades 9 to 12.
5. Most students attending Eenchokay Birchstick School are Ojibway. Most students speak Ojibway as a first language and learn English as a second language once they start going to school.
6. Most students are taken to school at the beginning of the school day and returned home at the end of the school day by bus. Students are provided breakfast and lunch every school day.
7. Our school has a number of different departments to help take care of our students. We have mental health, special education, information technology, and culture departments, an attendance team, and an Ojibway language curriculum development team.





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.
- Project Journey Program
- Hockey
- Land-based programming

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.



Additional programming

We offer adult programming to people age 18 and older who are looking to graduate and meet their secondary school diploma requirements.



Extracurricular Activities

- Broomball teams - *grades 7 to 12*
- Volleyball teams - *grades 7 to 12*
- Running team - *grades 9 to 12*
- 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 2 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

The Pikangikum Education Authority provides every non-local teacher with subsidized housing. Single teachers and/or teachers without partners or children are required to share a one, two, or three-bedroom trailer. All teacher housing comes equipped with a washer, a dryer, a microwave oven, a dishwasher, and some utensils, dishes, and pots and pans. All units have indoor plumbing. Water is delivered to the homes and sewage is removed at no cost, on a regular basis.

Rent for teacher housing is deducted from your paycheque. A one-bedroom unit costs \$350.00 per month, a two-bedroom unit costs \$450.00 per month, and a three-bedroom unit costs \$650.00 per month. If a unit is shared, the rent is divided by two.

The Pikangikum Education Authority provides every non-local teacher with \$500.00 per year, increasing by \$100.00 per year, to help with additional living expenses.

All Ontario College of Teachers certified employees at our school are automatically enrolled in the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan.

Please contact Walter Latt (walterlatt@ebs-school.org) or Marvin McKay-Keenan (marvinmckaykeen@ebs-school.org) for a copy of our current salary grid, an information package about living and working in Pikangikum, and the prices of common food items at The Northern Store.

Pet Policy

Pets are discouraged. Explicit permission is required.

Communications Services

Cable and satellite TV are available in the community. Installation must be arranged and paid for by the teacher. High-speed internet is available and must be paid for by the teacher. A modem and router may be purchased from the internet provider. Tbaytel and KNET provide cellular 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



3800

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,
Pikangikum Education Authority Finance Admin

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!

Practical Advice

We polled several current and former Pikangikum teachers to share their expert advice and practical suggestions for relocating to 'Pik'. The common, most valuable advice is listed below.

- Plan ahead: the little extras when it comes to classroom decorations, like bulletin board borders, need to be brought in with you to use to set up your classroom
- Humidifiers, fans, or a white noise machine can be invaluable for so many reasons!
- Insulated! Rubber! Boots! Or even just good quality boots. Investing in quality is worth it! Forget about fashion. Think practical.
- Cleats or grips for your boots can be reassuring for walking to work on the snowy, icy roads in winter.
- Don't wait for Culture Break to bring a winter coat and long johns with you. Winter has shown up early every year.
- Don't let the cold weather fool you into only bringing warm winter clothing. It can be warm inside the school year-round, and it definitely warms up in the summer.
- Bring lots of toiletries and pain meds (cough and cold medicine, upset stomach and fever remedies, etc.) as they can be expensive if you buy them here, and your favourite brand may not be available.
- If you have any hobbies (like baking, playing an instrument, or sports) you'll want to bring the materials you'll need for them, or plan a way to order them. Lots of companies ship to Pikangikum!
- The internet in Pikangikum is reliable most of the time for Facetime, Netflix, and downloading from iTunes, but it never hurts to have a backup. Bringing a hard drive of movies or TV shows, or arranging to bring a satellite, can be worthy investments, depending on how you like to spend your time.
- Have cash on hand! Local convenience stores that sell munchies are cash only, and people often sell meal plates and desserts via Facebook. Local artists sometimes sell paintings, beadwork, and moccasins for cash. There is an ATM available at the Northern, but there's a service fee for each use.
- If you want to try something new, Pikangikum is a great place to do it. New sport? New hobby? New teaching idea? Whatever it is, some of the nicest people live in Pikangikum, and many of them are willing teachers if you're interested in taking in more of the culture.
- Show up with an open mind, a sense of humour, a big heart, and a willingness to learn, and you'll have the experience of a lifetime!





Photo courtesy of Denzel Quill | @Nishnabe_



Photo courtesy of Denzel Quill | @Nishnabe_



John Woods, Canadian Press

Around the Community



①

Nothern Store Dock

②

EBS OutdoorEd Camping Trip

③

Airport Pikangikum

④

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

⑤

Filleting Fish at a Fishing Derby

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

Flying

Wasaya Airways and Perimeter Aviation provide scheduled service to the community 7 days a week. They fly out of Thunder Bay and Winnipeg, as well as some smaller communities, like Red Lake and Sioux Lookout. Smaller airlines, Northstar and Superior, also provide service to the community. It costs approximately \$600 to fly to and from Winnipeg.

The Pikangikum Education Authority provides every non-local teacher with a \$2,400.00 stipend toward travel expenses, per school year, to help cover the cost of traveling.

Driving

In the wintertime, Pikangikum is accessible by a gravel road from Red Lake, Ontario. From December to March, you can drive to Pikangikum over an ice road on Lake Pikangikum. It takes about 2 hours to drive from Pikangikum to Red Lake and about 7 hours to drive from Red Lake to Winnipeg.

During summer, people travel by boat across Lake Pikangikum and, from there, drive on an all-weather dirt and gravel road to points in southern Canada.

Package Delivery and Mail

The Northern Star is Pikangikum's main store, selling common food products, clothing, hardware items, hunting, and fishing gear. Many staff charter food supplies from grocery stores in Red Lake and Sioux Lookout if they can't find items at the Northern Store. Some people choose to order items like clothing, household appliances, etc. from stores like Canadian Tire.

🕒 Ice Road with Northern Lights





Pikangikum Directory

School
807-773-5561

Elementary School Principal
807-728-0317

High School Principal
807-728-1022

Kyle Peters, Education Director
807-773-5420

**Chief and Council, Jeffrey Strang,
Education Portfolio**
807-773-5578

Contact person if problem with
teacherage:
Jonathan Strang

Contact person for internet:
Leon Keeper

Band Office
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

Kwan's Restaurant
807-773-5118

Pikangikum Northern Store
807-773-5913



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