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Office of First Nations and Inuit Education



Partnering to Advance Indigenous Education

As part of [McGill University's Faculty of Education](#), the Office of First Nations and Inuit Education (OFNIE) delivers community-based teacher education and professional development programs to Indigenous students across Quebec. Originally founded in 1975 by McGill Education professor, Jack Cram, the goals of the Office are threefold: to provide a pathway for Indigenous teachers to become certified while studying in their own communities, to raise the bar for how universities collaborate partner with Indigenous community partners and to develop curricula that is grounded in and celebrates First Nations and Inuit culture and knowledges.

Today, OFNIE's Indigenous education programs are all co-created and collaboratively delivered with local and regional Indigenous education authorities. With its province-wide reach, multitude of student cohorts, and array of certificate and degree choices, OFNIE's offerings are of the largest of their kind in Canada. Charting new pathways for in-community Indigenous education and land-based learning, OFNIE's responsive model has resulted in hundreds of students and alumni who are shaping the future of First Nations and Inuit education in Quebec and beyond!



OFNIE students from across the province gather in Montreal to celebrate their convocation.

Co-Creation, Cooperation & Growth

OFNIE's exceptional organization, curricula, and resulting student success are due to its deep-rooted alliances with educational authorities in Cree, Inuit, Kanien'kehá:ka, Naskapi, and Mi'gmaq communities across the province. McGill Education academics and staff actively co-create with six Indigenous education organizations: [Kativik Ilisarniliriniq \(KI\)](#); [Cree School Board \(CSB\)](#); [Kahnawà:ke Education Centre \(KEC\)](#); [Mohawk Language Custodian Association \(of Kanehsatà:ke\)](#); [Naskapi Education Committee \(of Kawawachikamach\)](#); and [Listuguj Education Training and Employment \(LETED\)](#). Together, these "partners in the circle of learning" engage in continuous collaboration to support and deliver programs in Indigenous territories across Quebec. From recruitment, through application, course delivery, ongoing student support and even graduation ceremonies, McGill's OFNIE programs are community-focused and community-centred.

OFNIE's strategic plan includes these five areas of growth:

- Cultivate new relationships with other First Nations as needs and opportunities arise.
- Increase enrollment for teacher certification programs to reduce Indigenous teacher shortages.
- Augment the involvement from and direction setting of OFNIE partners to improve program responsiveness and success.
- Develop and implement land-based curricula and pedagogy and in-school experiential learning opportunities.
- Engage in inter-partner and partner-university knowledge mobilization and knowledge-sharing towards creating a network of in-community teacher education programs in Canada.



Province-Wide OFNIE Leadership at their Annual Visioning Day - 2019



250+ Students
currently enrolled



45+ years of
long-term
partnerships



100+ course
offerings each year



24 campus
locations



12 Communities
of Students
learning in Inuktitut



9 Communities
of Students
learning in Cree

*50% of First Nations
in Quebec do not
have access to
teacher education
programs in their
communities.*

Emphasis on Land & Culture

Increasingly, OFNIE students are going beyond textbooks and classrooms for land-based education opportunities; an place-focused approach to learning that strengthens connections to Indigenous territories, languages, and cultures. Land- or placed- based education allows students to to apply knowledge traditions in the modern education system.

A perfect example is OFNIE and Kativik Ilisarniliriniq joining forces with the globally recognized [Students on Ice Foundation](#). This initiative offers OFNIE's teacher candidates the opportunity to participate as leadership staff in a ship-based, polar education excursion designed for high school students from the Arctic and around the world. Dubbed "[Teachers on Ice](#)", OFNIE's student-teachers facilitate hands-on workshops aimed at providing youth participants a greater understanding of Inuit life, supporting their cultural growth and inspiring global sustainability initiatives. A truly unique initiative, "Teachers on Ice" encourages OFNIE student-teachers to centre Indigenous knowledge and prepare them to bring Indigenous pedagogies to their future classrooms.

"We never had the opportunity to learn our own culture in our own classrooms, so I hope the next generations will have that opportunity."

- Tukirqi Pilurttut, Inuktitut Curriculum Developer with OFNIE Partner, Kativik Ilisarniliriniq (Kuujuarapik, QC)



Nunavik students gather for an informal group discussion

Meeting the Challenges

OFNIE in-community education serves to address these vital needs:

- Addresses teacher shortages by raising the number of certified Indigenous educators
- Increases accessibility to high-caliber McGill degrees and certificates for Indigenous students in local communities
- Creates pathways for employment in the education field across Canada

Career-Oriented Programs

OFNIE students have the opportunity to enroll in these innovative teacher certification and professional development programs:

- Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.)
Kindergarten/Elementary First Nations & Inuit Studies*
 - Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.)
for Certified Teachers
 - Master of Arts (M.A.) Education and Society **New!**
 - Graduate Certificate (Gr. Cert.) Teaching Indigenous Education for Non Indigenous Teachers
 - Certificates in:
 - Education for First Nations & Inuit Education*
 - First Nations & Inuit Education Leadership
 - Indigenous Language & Literacy Education
 - Middle School Education in Indigenous Communities
 - First Nations & Inuit Education Student Personnel Services
 - First Nations & Inuit Inclusive Education
- *Leads to teacher certification

Alumni Success

OFNIE alumni can be found teaching in nearly every elementary school in Nunavik, Eeyou Istchee, Listuguj and Kahnawà:ke. Apart from being classroom educators, many have forged careers as principals, school board administrators, curriculum developers, translators, government officials, and McGill instructors.



Sarah Isaac - Listuguj Graduate 2020

OFNIE's Quebec-Wide Presence

Did you know that there are McGill Education students studying in communities and as far north as the 55th parallel? Take a look at where OFNIE satellite campuses are located throughout Quebec!



Contact Us

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