

COTE FIRST NATION

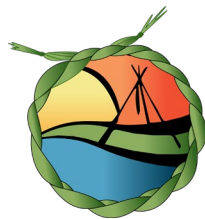


Cote First Nation & Chief Gabriel Cote Education Complex in Partnership with
Treaty Education Alliance Presents:

Student Engagement Report 2026



TREATY
EDUCATION ALLIANCE



TREATY
EDUCATION ALLIANCE

TREATY EDUCATION ALLIANCE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT REPORT 2026

COPYRIGHT 2026 © • ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

DESIGNED AND PRODUCED BY AARON TOOTOOSIS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

It is with great pride and excitement that I am able to write these opening remarks and share the 2026 Treaty Education Alliance Student Engagement Report for Cote First Nation. At its heart, this report is about amplifying student voices and honouring their perspectives, experiences, and aspirations.

While we continue to build and strengthen meaningful connections through events and initiatives, these engagement sessions offered powerful insight into where our collective efforts must be focused. Students clearly shared what they see, what they need, and how they envision an education system rooted in Inherent and Treaty Rights looks like. As we move forward, we will be guided by their voices so that we all can work to better support learners and educators in Cote First Nation.

As we look ahead, our commitment to deepening engagement, strengthening relationships, and exploring new ways of working together leads the way in how we work. Your ongoing participation and collaboration are vital to our shared success.

We are deeply grateful to the students who participated in the Student Engagement Session on May 29th. Their respectfulness, thoughtful contributions, and genuine enthusiasm were really inspiring. We thank them for their openness, honesty, and care in sharing their voices.

Kinanâskomitinawaw,



Faith Watson
Executive Director
Treaty Education Alliance



THE SPIRIT AND INTENT OF TREATY

The Spirit and Intent of Treaty refers to the foundational principles, purposes, and shared understandings that shaped the creation of Treaties beyond their written text. This concept highlights the sacred, relational, and enduring nature of Treaties—particularly those between Indigenous Nations and Peoples and the Crown of Great Britain and Ireland. It is a core value guiding the work of the Treaty Education Alliance (TEA) and must be respected and upheld by all TEA partners and by Canada. Key elements include:

Sacredness and Respect

Treaties are sacred agreements made before the Creator, binding both parties to honor commitments in good faith and mutual respect, often symbolized through the use of the pipe or pipestem. The act of “signing” holds no sacred meaning within Indigenous laws and customs, which predate British law by thousands of years.

Permission

Indigenous Nations and Peoples maintain that they granted the Crown conditional permission to exist within their territories, as declared in the Numbered Treaties. The Crown does not have the authority to grant rights to Indigenous Nations or place them in a position to negotiate those rights. As long as the Crown and Canada wish to maintain this existence, they must fully provide what was promised at the Treaty Table.

Mutual Benefit

The Crown was permitted to use and benefit from the land only to the depth of a plow—reflecting a limited and respectful use of resources.

Oral Traditions and Understandings

While Treaties were recorded in writing, those documents represent only a fraction of the agreement. Oral history and teachings passed down through generations are essential for interpreting Treaties. Canadian courts cannot fully interpret Treaties without these understandings.

Living Documents

Treaties are living agreements, intended to be upheld and adapted over time. Their commitments were meant to last “for as long as the Sun shines, the Grass grows, and the Rivers flow,” signifying an eternal relationship rather than a one-time transaction.

Balance and Harmony

From a First Nations perspective, Treaties were designed to maintain balance and harmony with newcomers. The intent was to share land and resources in ways that respected Natural Laws and ensured ongoing cooperation under Indigenous laws and customs.

Understanding the Spirit and Intent of Treaties means recognizing that the written text alone never conveyed the full meaning of the Treaties. It requires embracing the historical, cultural, and spiritual contexts in which these agreements were made.



Cote First Nation Chief Gabriel Cote Education Complex (CGCEC)

COTE FIRST NATION



Cote First Nation is located 5 km north of Kamsack, Saskatchewan. Gabriel Cote, Head Chief of the Prairie Saulteaux, entered into Treaty 4 on September 15, 1874 on behalf of his band, agreeing to share the land with the Crown of Great Britain and Ireland, within the Spirit and Intent of the Treaty Agreement.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TECHNICAL TEAM



BRIAN STANDINGREADY
Advisor



FAITH WATSON
Executive Director



VERN SEVERIGHT
Advisor



JACLYN YUZICAPPI
Recording Secretary



AARON TOOTOSIS
Communications
Coordinator

The Community Engagement Technical Team, along with our Elders' Advisory Council, works to plan and organize all Student Engagement sessions in our Member Nations. Progressively attended engagement sessions were held in our Member Nations to seek feedback directly from our key stakeholder groups: the Elders, Students and Staff.

The intent of community engagement sessions is to ask key questions in surveys that will be interpreted into visual and print data as you will see in this Student Engagement Report. The survey questions are developed by our Community Engagement Technical Team to capture data that respects:

- **Honouring Inherent and Treaty Rights** – ensuring First Nations' legal and cultural foundations are respected.
- **Promotes cultural relevance** – integrating language, traditions, and worldviews into learning.
- **Supports sustainability** – building long-term structures and resources for future generations.
- **Advances self-determination** – empowering First Nations to lead and govern their own educational systems in accordance to Indian Control of Indian Education.

The Student Engagement Session in Cote First Nation was held on May 29, 2026 at the Chief Gabriel Cote Education Complex science lab.



SURVEY AND DATA COLLECTION

CGCEC Students in Grades 6 - 12 attended the Student Engagement Session. Students were asked the questions as a group and their answers were recorded. Flip chart paper was used and TEA Technical Team members volunteered to record student answers.



The students were asked to give their best answers for the following questions:

1. What does the Treaty Right to Education mean to you?
2. What are the most important things you should be learning at school?
3. What do you like about your school?
4. What are some things you don't like about your school?
5. If you could create the world's best school, what would it look like?



Students answered the questions and provided answers to the greatest of their ability. Rather than have the answers typed into this document, we took the opportunity to listen to the advice of Senator Brian Standingready and acknowledge the power of the student voices as, "the writing on the wall", which can be a greater influence of change than a document that is typed. The intellect, energy, and time that students took that went into answering the questions will be honoured. The next few pages of this report will be photos of the flip charts that were taken after the Student Engagement Session was completed.

① What does the treaty right to education mean to you?
Treaty education
The land



② What are the most important things you should be learning at school?

- Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- ELA
- Respect
- Health
- Language
- Land-based
- Culture
- Shop class



③ What do you like about your school?

Gym
Lunches
Principal
Stiff Cheques
Book Fair
Sport Opportunities
Volleyball
Basketball
Football
Tennis
Softball/Baseball
New Rink Facility
Field Trips
Teachers

Work
Ball diamonds
Play ground.



④ What are some things you don't like about your school?

Mice

Bathrooms - stinks all the time

Strict teachers

Lunch

Hallways - too small

Lockers - too small, smell.

Snakes outside

Too many gophers

Ruined basketball court

⑤ If you could create the world's best school what would it look like?

Elevators

2nd floor

Basketball Court

Football Field

New baseball diamond

Big playground

Big library

Big cafeteria

Big Pool

McDonald's.

Workout gym

New vending machine
(Free one.)

Big Science Lab

Hockey rink Attached to
School

Swimming classes

Band class

