

# The Office of First Nation Education Newsletter

June 2023

## Cultural Teachings: Honour Songs

In this issue we will be sharing the stories of important honour songs: **The Mi'kmaq honour song, and the Wolastoq song.**

Three student performances of several Mi'kmaw songs and the Wolastoq song are also linked in this issue beginning on page 2.

Using these songs is one way to help implement the [Wabanaki Framework](#) and introduce more Wabanaki cultures and languages into New Brunswick Schools.

### Origin of Mi'kmaq Honour Song

Written by Mi'kmaw Elder, George Paul, the Honour Song is now sung across Canada, but especially in Mi'kma'ki. The song came to Elder Paul after a series of encounters, and the words of an Elder spoke deeply to him. The



George Paul Reading from Honour Song book

Elder told him that he had “a song to sing”. Later, Elder Paul was participating in a Sweatlodge ceremony when he was once again told that he has “a song to sing”. Soon, the words for the Mi'kmaq Honour Song came to him.



A'fis ujit l'nueyey  
kina'matmkewey

Litposuwakon 'Ciw  
Skicinuwî-Kehkiketuwakon

Office of First  
Nation Education

Bureau d'éducation  
des Premières nations

## Wolastoq Song

*Excerpt from Wolastoq Song Protocols* By Sarah Francis, Amanda Myran, Wolastoqewi Kci Sakom Spasaqsit Possesom (Ron Tremblay), Elder Dr. Opolahsomuwehs (Imelda Perley) and Samaqani Cocahq (Natalie Sappier)

### Origin of Wolastoq Song

This song is a gift from our late Elder, Gwen Bear. The song is considered an honor song by Wolastoqiyik since it pays tribute to our great grandmother Wolastoq, our beautiful and bountiful river that has been renamed St. John by the settlers. Elder Gwen went to Wolastoq to pray for strength after the loss of her beautiful mother Yvonne. As she sat under a tree close to the bank of the river, she told us that she heard our river sing to her, not to forget that she too was still our mother. The song is sung like a lullaby that a mother would sing to her child. When she first sang it to us in ceremony, we were all touched by the melody and the words.



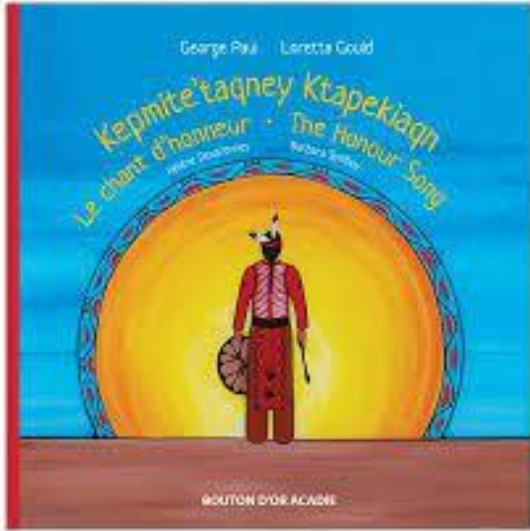
The making of the Wolastoq Song Recording

**For the complete song,**

**visit:** <https://youtu.be/tcAJs3Ped80>

Important protocols around the use of Wolastoq song must be observed and are available upon request. Please contact [Sarah.Francis@nbed.nb.ca](mailto:Sarah.Francis@nbed.nb.ca) to request this document.

## The Mi'kmaw Honour Song book:



### Ordering information

To order George Paul's book, please visit:

<https://atlanticbooks.ca/books/kepmitetaqney-ktapekiaqn-le-chant-dhonneur-the-honour-song/>

George Paul introducing and reading from the Honour Song book:

### Student Performances of Honour Songs

#### Mi'kmaq Honour Song



Elder George Paul introduced the Mi'kmaq Honour Song for a student performance from **Dorchester Consolidated School** as

part of a project in support of Climate Education in New Brunswick.

<https://climateeducation.nben.ca/projects/mikmaq-honour-song/>

#### Veterans and Flag Song with Drums



North and South Esk Regional High school students from Metepenagiag perform veterans and flag song with drums, in Mi'kmaq.

<https://climateeducation.nben.ca/projects/veterans-and-flag-song-with-drums/>

#### Wolastoq Honour Song

Students at Hubbard Elementary perform the Wolastoq Honour Song.



<https://climateeducation.nben.ca/projects/wolastoq-honour-song/>

## Accelerated Learning Grant Supporting Mi'kmaq Artistic Expressions Education

Through an Accelerated Learning Grant from EECD, ASD-N has been providing students with

a full day cultural workshop focused on traditional Mi'kmaq artistic expressions of beading, quillwork, and ash basket making.

These are a few of the comments from the students. They loved it because they could make stuff out of nature.

I really liked that we are not being rushed to complete it. It was fun that we got to bond with everyone. I liked it because we got to create the flowers. I liked the flower part and that we used special materials. I liked they we learned how the materials were made from bark of the tree and they pounded it to make it thinner, then they cut it into thin strips. I learned that we need to wet the black ash, so it didn't split, and you really need to be careful with material and take your time. You needed patience to do this art. My favorite part was putting the string around the flower, doing the weaving. My favorite part was cutting the pedals and putting the wood in the water.



## Growth in Wabanaki Languages in New Brunswick

Statistics Canada is reporting some promising evidence that Indigenous lead, language revitalization efforts are having a positive impact.

According to this data, The number of Mi'kmaq language speakers has increased by 16% from 2016 while the number of Wolastoqey speakers has increased by 5%. Statistics Canada has the total number of Mi'kmaw speakers in New Brunswick at 2505 and the number of Wolastoqey speakers at 755.

**More data can be found here:**

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/98-200-X/2021012/98-200-X2021012-eng.cfm>

## What the Holistic Curriculum Framework Means for Wabanaki Languages in Provincial Schools

The new, [modernized curriculum framework](#) is being introduced over the next five years beginning with early adopter schools in September 2023.

Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqey languages are now included as subject areas from K-8 and also have a substantial place in Early Learning and Childcare as well.

What this means varies greatly depending upon the context and location. The goals that Elders have set for us is not to make every New Brunswick educator instantly fluent in Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqey by September, instead it is to encourage the use and presence of Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqey in every school.

Some schools include regular visits (including virtual visits through [World of Wisdom](#)). Many other schools include the Wolastoq Song, or Mi'kmaq Honour Song in the morning announcements. Signage and books written in Mi'kmaw or Wolastoqey are also actions that educators can take.

In many other schools, face-to-face Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqey language classes will continue to be held, and expanded. The number of students enrolled in these courses continues to grow year on year. For 2022-2023, 509 students enrolled in at least one Mi'kmaw or Wolastoqey language course, which is a new record in New Brunswick. The course with the highest

enrollment was a middle school Wolastoqey beginner course.

While the approaches will necessarily be very different depending on the school, all New Brunswick educators have a role to play. For some ideas, consult the Wabanaki Framework available on our public website:

<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/education/k12/content/office-of-first-nation-education.html>

### World of Wisdom

Did you know that educators from across New Brunswick can access virtual sessions with [Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqey knowledge keepers for their classes](#)? Other services on WoW include tutoring support, Wellness sessions with Linda Morehouse, and Counselling for students with Mike Hennessey. Some schools have accessed World of Wisdom for whole school assemblies. For more information and for technical assistance, please contact [Lynn.Wolverton@gnb.ca](mailto:Lynn.Wolverton@gnb.ca)

### Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqey Resource Bundles

Do you have Mi'kmaw or Wolastoqey learning material for New Brunswick classrooms? We are seeking educators (in any school or community) to join us in producing Resource Bundles.

For more information, visit the Resource Bundle site:

<https://nbed.sharepoint.com/sites/ResourcePackagePL>

## Summer Learning Sessions for Educators

Educators and Educational Assistants in provincial and First Nation community schools are invited to attend sessions for Summer Learning Week this year from **August 8-11**. The location this year will be at Nashwaaksis Middle School in Fredericton.

Elders Imelda Perley and Noel Milliea will be joined by Craig Williamson for a full day session on August 8 entitled:  
**Piluwitahasuwawakon-  
Piluiankita'suaqn wjit Teliagewey aq  
Kisaknutmaq- Changing attitudes and  
walking towards the truth.**

This session will focus on ways that educators can use the Wabanaki Wholistic Learning Framework in their classroom practice.

Additional sessions are also being planned by the Learning and Achievement branch to assist non-Indigenous teachers who are teaching Indigenous Studies 120.

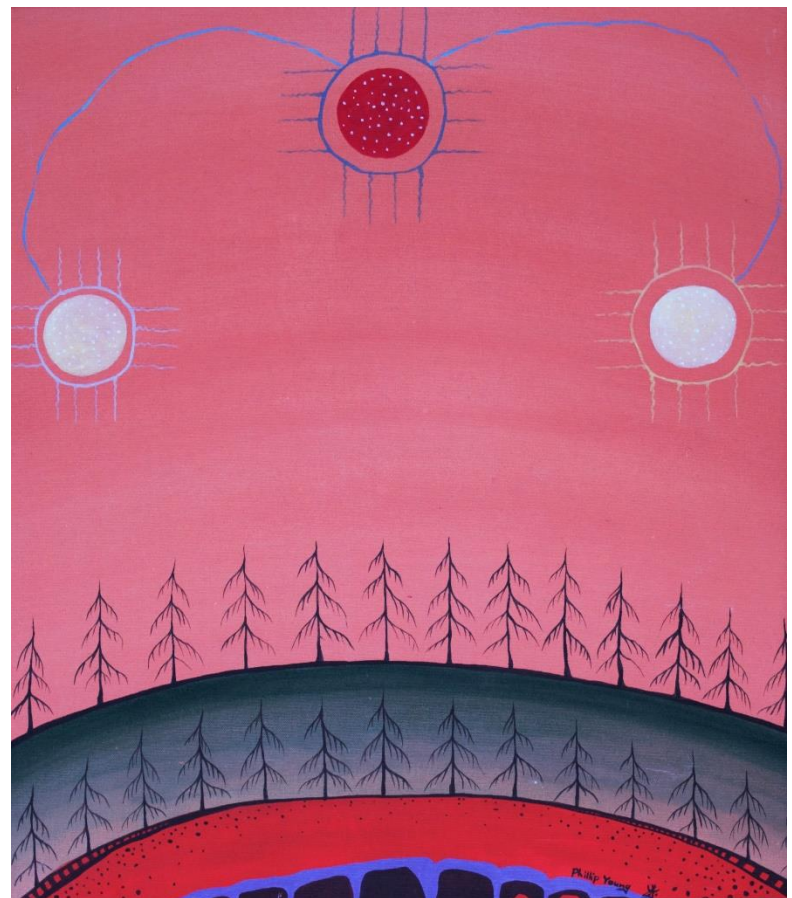
Registration will open in June. For more information, contact  
[Craig.Williamson@gnb.ca](mailto:Craig.Williamson@gnb.ca)

## Cultural Immersion Camps

Cultural Immersion camps are being hosted this year from **July 17-21**.

This is an opportunity for educators to learn more about Wabanaki Peoples by learning through ceremony and teachings offered by Elders.

For more information contact  
[Bill.Patrick@gnb.ca](mailto:Bill.Patrick@gnb.ca)



*The Strength of Na'gu'set by Pauline Young*



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