



For Immediate Release:  
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## **ONECA ANTICIPATING A PRODUCTIVE YEAR AHEAD**

**Sault Ste. Marie, ON** – The Ontario Native Education Counselling Association (ONECA) concluded their annual conference yesterday. Powerful messaging and a variety of workshops were presented to an engaged and spirited audience.

Fourteen-year-old Wes Prankard spoke about his dream and work so far of getting a playground in every Northern Community while twelve-year-old Ta'Kaiya Blaney talked about improving living conditions in First Nations territories. Ta'Kaiya also demonstrated her remarkable singing and songwriting prowess. Jeremy Dias spoke of his own experience and vision to eliminate bullying and other forms of discrimination in schools and communities. The ONECA was pleased to offer these dynamic speakers to East View Public School, who graciously accepted.

Phase 2 of the Transitions project was also kicked off with major elements including Parental Engagement, Remote to Urban, Role Model Poster Series, and translations of the Phase 1 materials. Feedback was also collected to guide some of the direction for Phase 3 of the project.

Roger Chum was elected as the new ONECA Board President and replaced previous President Cindy Fisher. He stated the following:

*“Since 1977 ONECA has and continues to advocate and provide professional development to its membership. I would like to commend the former President, Cindy Fisher for an outstanding job. The board faces a challenging educational climate in the years to come. As President in the upcoming year, my focus will be on increasing membership, challenging legislation for Education, encouraging our membership’s participation in ONECA’s initiatives and lobbying for equitable funding and support in education.”*

The ONECA is a not-for-profit organization that represents the needs and interests of Native Education Counsellors in Ontario. There are approximately 180 paid members that belong to ONECA and they come from 11 distinct districts. These areas do include Brantford, Fort Frances, Georgian Bay, James Bay, Kenora, Lakehead, London, Nakina, Peterborough, Sioux Lookout and Sudbury. Visit them online at [www.oneca.com](http://www.oneca.com) or on facebook and twitter.

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