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Leading the Future for Indigenous Languages

**May 29 & 30,
2026**



**Sexqeltqín,
Chase, BC, Canada**

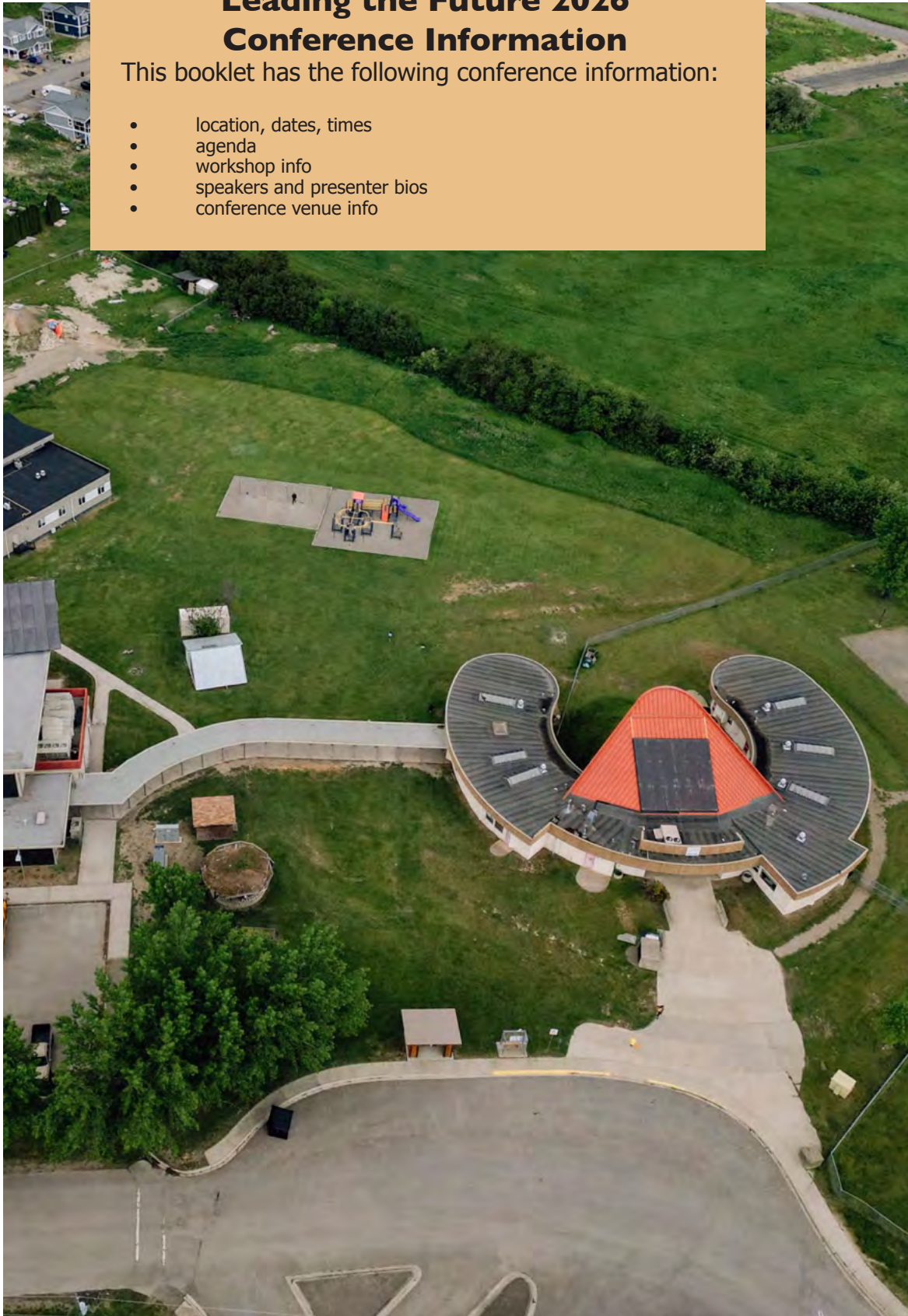
Welcome to Chief Atahm School's Annual Conference

Our school is a unique learning community featuring Secwépemc language immersion and Secwépemc-centred teachings. We invite you to join us at our school site to celebrate our shared love for First Nations languages and to learn new teaching ideas.

Leading the Future 2026 Conference Information

This booklet has the following conference information:

- location, dates, times
- agenda
- workshop info
- speakers and presenter bios
- conference venue info



Weytkp



Tsxwentiye xwexwéytep!

We are excited to be hosting another language conference that focuses on sharing meaningful and inspirational practices to help uplift and educate language dreamers, teachers and program developers.

This year's theme is "Leading the Future" and will be at our school site near Chase, BC. We hope to build on the energy and networking that was sparked at our 2025 conference.

Workshops and presentations will be showcasing the amazing work being done by young language leaders and educators, ones who are taking up the challenge of creating new generations of Indigenous language speakers.

Like always, our conference attracts Indigenous language practitioners from far and wide who seek to expand their teaching, to gain inspiration and to get to know other teachers.

I am excited that our school is hosting another language gathering and look forward to sharing ideas with you all.

Robert Matthew
Chief Atahm School Principal



Robert Matthew **Chief Atahm School Principal**

I am proud to have been Chief Atahm School's principal for over 30 years and to have worked for over 40 years in teaching and administration. The school is a unique learning community featuring Secwépemc language immersion and Secwépemc-centred teachings.

I am grateful to have worked alongside many Elders doing field research and curriculum development on Secwepemc stories and place names. The research has served two purposes: to produce Secwepemctsin curriculum for Chief Atahm School and to add to my personal knowledge of what it takes to be a Cstelenec, "a person of the lake".

Location

Chief Atahm School is located on the Adams Lake Reserve #4, across the South Thompson River bridge from Chase, B.C. approximately 55 km east of Kamloops and 52 km west of Salmon Arm.



Adams Lake Band Gym



Chief Atahm High School



Driving From the East (from Salmon Arm to Chase)

Travel 50 km west on the Trans-Canada Hwy #1 from Salmon Arm. Turn right onto Shuswap Ave to enter Chase. Continue on Shuswap Ave for 1.2 km, then turn right onto Pine St. Follow Pine Street for 1.3 km, cross the bridge, and take the road to the left. After 400 metres, turn right, then take a quick left into the parking lot. The conference opening will be held in the large gymnasium building.

Driving From the West (from Kamloops to Chase)

Travel approx. 52 km east on the Trans-Canada Hwy #1 from Kamloops. Turn left off the highway into Chase (near the A&W exit) via Shuswap Ave. Continue on Shuswap Ave for 2.5 km, then turn left onto Pine St. Continue on Pine St for 1.3 km, cross the bridge, and take the road to the left. After 400 metres, turn right, then take a quick left into the parking lot. The conference opening will be held in the large gymnasium building.

Our Partners



R Stselxméms r Secwépmc Institute



First Peoples Cultural Council



Adams Lake Band

About The Conference

1

Chief Atahm Conference

We have hosted over 20 language conferences over the years and are always excited to meet other language educators and warriors. This year we are focusing on planning for the future of our languages.

2

Language Teaching Methods

As part of our commitment to Indigenous language revitalization, we purposefully focus on the details behind language programming, including best practices in teaching, planning and assessment.

3

Building Community

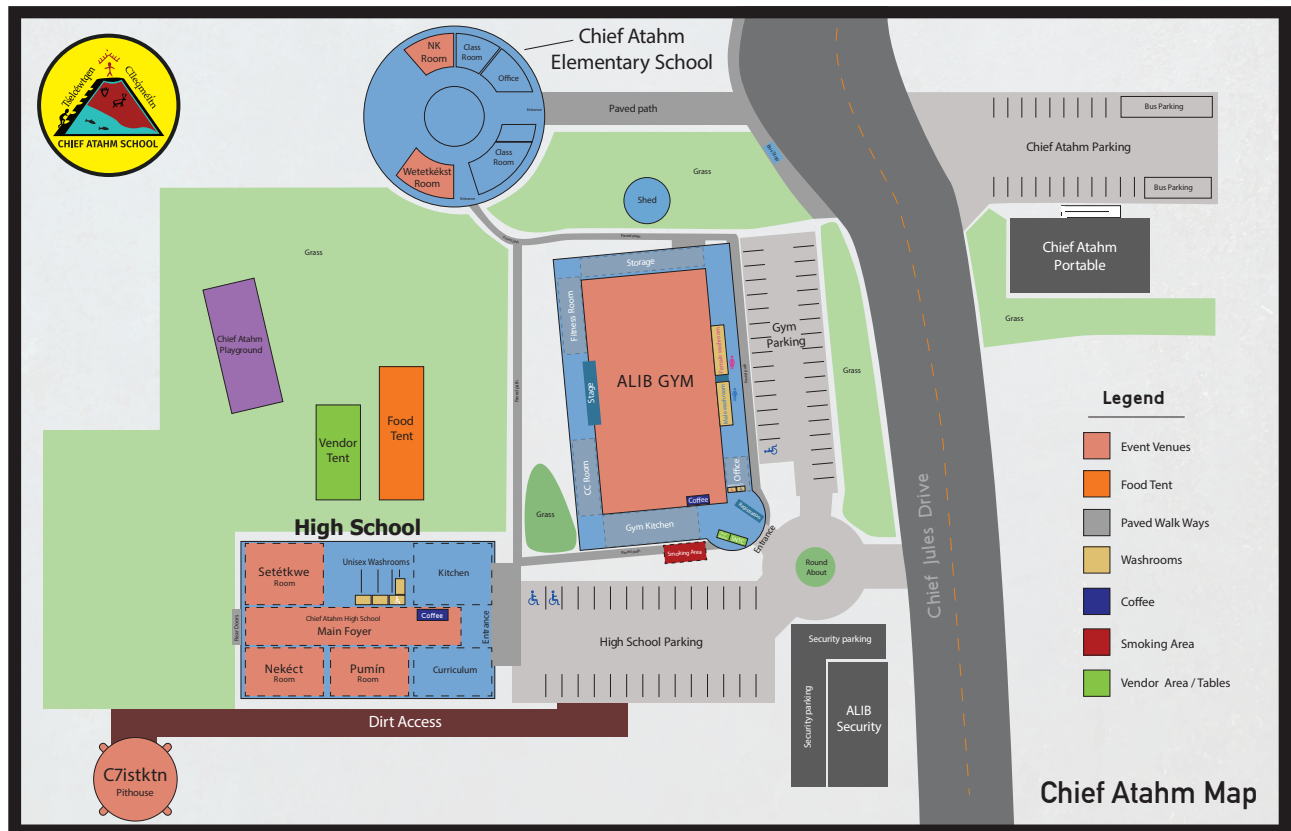
Language revitalization can sometimes be a lonely process and can be very challenging at times. Through our conference, like-minded people support each other and share their thoughts, ideas and dreams for their languages.

4

Theory into Practice

At our conferences we cater to those that are not only dreamers but are "doers". It takes action to move mountains and as a community of language activists, we focus on future oriented-goals for language survival.

Conference Site Map



Our Speakers

Dr. Kathryn Michel **Language Instructor**

Dr. Kathryn Michel has worked extensively in the area of community language revitalization and Indigenous language immersion education. She is one of the founding parents of Chief Atahm School, a Secwépemc language immersion program in 1991 on the Adams Lake Reserve near Chase, BC. Dr. Michel holds a Doctorate in Education from UBC and a Master of Arts in Education degree from SFU. She has written, edited and published numerous language curriculum resources for use in Secwepemc immersion classrooms. In 2013, she developed the "First Nations Language Essentials" curriculum guides for use in language programs in First Nations Schools across BC. Currently she is lead instructor for R Stselxmém r Secwépemc Institute language programs through NVIT and UBCO.



Graduates of R Stselxmém r Secwépemc Adult Fluency Programs



Special Guest



Kananinohea Maka'imoku

Coordinator
Kahuawaiola Indigenous
Teacher Education Program

Associate Professor
Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikolani
College of Hawaiian Language,
University of Hawai'i at Hilo

Kananinohea "Kanani" Maka'imoku is a graduate of the first class of Pūnana Leo language nest preschool and of the Hawaiian language immersion program, completing her K–12 education through Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u. She was educated primarily through Hawaiian across a preschool-to-doctorate pathway and is currently a doctoral candidate in Indigenous language and culture revitalization.

She brings over 25 years of experience in Hawaiian-medium education, beginning as an elementary teacher at Nāwahī and now serving as coordinator of the Kahuawaiola Indigenous Teacher Education Program and associate professor at Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo.

Grounded in the Hawaiian language revitalization movement, her work is also the language of her home and her family. She is committed to preparing the next generation of teachers and supporting the continued revitalization of Indigenous languages.



Day I Morning: Fri. May 29th

08.00-08.30

Check-In at Gymnasium Get your conference package in the front foyer of the gym. Refreshments and muffins in the gym.

08.20-08.45

Conference Welcoming [gymnasium]

Welcome Song; welcome by Adams Lake Band Kúkpi7 Lynn Duck Chief

08.45-09.15

Keynote Speech [gymnasium] Kananinohea Maka'imoku from the Hawaiian Teacher Education Program in Hilo, Hawaii

09.15-09.30

Beverage and Nutrition Break [gymnasium]

09.30-10.45

Session One Workshops

Room	Workshop Title	Presenter(s)
Gymnasium	1a. TPRS through Stories and Movement	Janice E. Billy
Pumín Room in Highschool	1b. Verb Rounds to Learn Complex Verb Systems	Kathryn Michel
Setétkwe Room in Highschool	1c. Adult Language Fluency Programs - Discussion Session	Moderator Candice Day
Highschool Foyer	1d. Centering Land, Language, and Secwépemc Ways of Knowing	Ada Jules and Charmayne Jules
Nekéct Room in Highschool	1e. Gathering Language for Young Children: a Thematic Language Collection Workshop	James Thompson, Sasha Blakeley
Wetetékest Rm in CAS Main School	1f. Future Language Leaders Discussion Session	Moderator Melpetkwe Matthew

10.55-12.15

Session Two Workshops

Room	Workshop Title	Presenter(s)
Gymnasium	2a. TPRS through Stories and Movement	Janice E. Billy
Pumín Room in Highschool	2b. Verb Rounds to Learn Complex Verb Systems	Kathryn Michel
Setétkwe Room in Highschool	2c. Adult Language Fluency Programs - Discussion Session	Moderator Candice Day
Highschool Foyer	2d. Centering Land, Language, and Secwépemc Ways of Knowing	Ada Jules and Charmayne Jules
Nekéct Room in Highschool	2e. Gathering Language for Young Children: a Thematic Language Collection Workshop	James Thompson, Sasha Blakeley
Wetetékest Rm in CAS Main School	2f. Future Language Leaders Discussion Session	Moderator Melpetkwe Matthew

12.15-01.00

Lunch [outside tent]

Participants pick up their lunches in the outside tent.

Day I Afternoon: Fri. May 29th

01.00-02.15

Session Three Workshops

Room	Workshop Title	Presenter(s)
Setétkwe Room in Highschool	3a. Youth Leadership through Mentorship	J.R. Billy, M. Jones, Spetenetkwe, et al
Wetetkékst Rm in CAS Main School	3b. Re-Styling the Alphabet with Chants and Songs	Kathryn Michel, Sarah Michel
Nekéct Room in Highschool	3c. Bite-sized Teachings by Adults in Intensive Fluency Programs	R Stselxmém r Secwépemc Grads
Gymnasium	3d. I Ulu Nō Ka Lālā i Ke Kumu: Growing the Next Generation of Speakers	Kanani Maka'imoku
Highschool Foyer	3e. Sharing Stories, Learning Together	Aliana Parker, Suzanne Washington
Pumín Room in Highschool	3f. First-ory's Language Pen: The tech, and what it can do now and in the future	K'odi Taylor

02.15-02.30

Beverage and Nutrition Break

Beverages and snacks are available at gym, high school and the tent.

02.30-03.45

Session Four Workshops

Room	Workshop Title	Presenter(s)
Setétkwe Room in Highschool	4a. Youth Leadership through Mentorship	J.R. Billy, M. Jones, Spetenetkwe, et al
Wetetkékst Rm in CAS Main School	4b. Re-Styling the Alphabet with Chants and Songs	Kathryn Michel, Sarah Michel
Nekéct Room in Highschool	4c. Bite-sized Teachings by Adults in Intensive Fluency Programs	R Stselxmém r Secwépemc Grads
Gymnasium	4d. I Ulu Nō Ka Lālā i Ke Kumu: Growing the Next Generation of Speakers	Kanani Maka'imoku
Highschool Foyer	4e. Sharing Stories, Learning Together	Aliana Parker, Suzanne Washington
Pumín Room in Highschool	4f. First-ory's Language Pen: The tech, and what it can do now and in the future	K'odi Taylor

03.55 p.m.

Hotel Shuttle Leaves for Kamloops

Bus pickup at front of gymnasium

Day 2 Morning: Sat. May 30th

08.20-08.40

Day Two Opening [gymnasium]

Chief Atahm School principal Robert Matthew

08.45-09.10

Keynote Speech [gymnasium]

Dr. Kathryn Michel and Graduates of Stselxmémis r Secwépemc Institute Adult Fluency Programs

09.15-10.30

Session Five Workshops

Room	Workshop Title	Presenter(s)
Highschool Foyer	5a. Language Success in the Language Nest	Laura Michel, Sarah Michel, Kathryn Michel
Wetetékest Rm in CAS Main School	5b. Music and Play the Language Way	Janice E. Billy
NK Room in CAS Main School	5c. Original Music in Our Original Languages	Spyu7éllp r Sqelécw & Tekawus Armitage
Setétkwe Room in Highschool	5d. Language Futurity: Dreaming Our Language into Reality	Melpetkwe Matthew
Gymnasium	5e. Technology as Teacher	Seth Armitage, K'odi Taylor

09.30-10.45

Beverage and Nutrition Break

10.45-12.00

Session Six Workshops

Room	Workshop Title	Presenter(s)
Highschool Foyer	6a. Language Success in the Language Nest	Laura Michel, Sarah Michel, Kathryn Michel
Wetetékest Rm in CAS Main School	6b. Music and Play the Language Way	Janice E. Billy
NK Room in CAS Main School	6c. Original Music in Our Original Languages	Spyu7éllp r Sqelécw & Tekawus Armitage
Setétkwe Room in Highschool	6d. Language Futurity: Dreaming Our Language into Reality	Melpetkwe Matthew
Gymnasium	6e. Technology as Teacher	Seth Armitage, K'odi Taylor

12.00-01.00

Lunch [Outside Tents] Lunch pickup at the outside tent.

Day 2 Afternoon: Sat. May 30th

01.00-02.30

Cultural & Hands-on Experiences

7A. From Tmicw to Paint: Language, Land, and Pigments

Robyn Tardif, Tisha Tardif [Gymnasium]

This hands-on workshop invites participants to explore traditional painting practices using qwéqwyeńc (ochre) and plant-based materials gathered from Tmicw (land). Participants will mix their own natural paints and experiment with painting on various materials, and get to take home their creation. As we work, we will reflect on the connections between land, language, creative expression, and how traditional materials carry knowledge and story. This workshop offers a relaxed and creative space to learn, share, and experience the process of making and using paints from the land.

7B. Me7 Tcúsmete r Skweńllq ell r Meláme: Plant/Medicine

Walk *Lisa Orton, Denise Sellars [C7istktn - Pithouse Behind Highschool towards mountains]*

Join us for a guided plant identification walk designed to support educators in bringing language out onto the land. This workshop weaves together language and cultural teachings by offering practical ways to engage students with plants and their cultural significance. We will explore Secwepemc plant names, uses, and ethical harvesting practices. By visiting key plant sites and recognizing important cultural keystone species you will strengthen your observation skills and gain inspiration for incorporating language into cultural teachings and land-based education!

7C. Sticks and Bones: Making a Lahal Set

Robert Matthew, Lawrence Michel [Pumín Room - Highschool]

This hands-on workshop focuses on making a stick game (lahal) set. Lahal (also known as "slekméwés" in Secwepemctsin) is a guessing game played by many First Nations, using decorated bones, sticks, and rhythmic songs. There will be a brief introduction and going over the "rules" of the game.

Attendees will create their own Lahal sets, including bones and counting sticks.

7D. Beyond the Drum: Exploring traditional music and sound

Janice E. Billy [Wetetékest Room- CAS Main]

Music communicates the heart of a culture and is the backbone of spiritual, cultural and kinship beliefs. There are a diverse variety of instruments like drums, flutes, rattles, and vocals that are featured in traditional music. In this cultural experience, participants will learn how to make a variety of rattles and shakers that can be used to do rhythm activities with young children.

7E. Bookmaking Basics: Layout, print and assemble saddle-stitch books

Spud Barker, Kathryn Michel [Highschool Foyer]

Join this hands-on workshop to learn how to create simple, professional-looking saddle-stitch books using easy bookbinding techniques. Participants will explore the fundamentals of booklet design, page layout, folding, stitching, and finishing while making their own handmade book to take away.

02.45-03.00

Conference Closing in Gymnasium

Join us at the gymnasium for the conference closing

- door prizes, closing speech, Farewell Song

03.00-03.10

Hotel Shuttle Leaves for Kamloops

Friday Morning Workshops (Sessions 1 & 2)

1A/2A. TPRS through Stories and Movement

[Gymnasium]

Janice E. Billy

Discover the power of TPRS in this interactive workshop presented by master TPRS teacher Janice E. Billy. TPRS is a fun-filled story-based method that helps language learners acquire fluency naturally through comprehensible input. In this session, participants will:

- Learn the core principles of TPRS, including circling, personalization, and storytelling techniques.
- Experience a live demonstration of TPRS in action.
- Explore how to create engaging stories to maximize language acquisition.
- Gain practical strategies for adapting traditional stories to TPRS

1D/2D. Centering Land, Language, and Secwépemc Ways of Knowing

[High School Foyer]

Ada Jules & Charmayne Jules

This workshop explores how place-based learning can be meaningfully implemented by centering the land as teacher and grounding education in local context. Participants will engage with approaches that weave together land-based learning, Secwepemc language, cultural practices, and community knowledge systems. Participants will consider how learning on and with the land supports student identity, well-being, and can inform curriculum design and classroom practice.

Educators will leave with strategies for creating learning experiences that are authentic, place-responsive, and grounded in respect for Indigenous knowledge systems.

1B/2B. Verb Rounds to Internalize Complex Verb Systems

[Pumín Room in High School]

Kathryn Michel

This interactive workshop introduces an innovative, kinesthetic approach to teaching verb conjugation by integrating gestures. Drawing on principles from Total Physical Response and WAYK, participants will explore how physical actions can reinforce grammatical structures, improve retention, and increase student engagement. Participants will learn how to assign meaningful gestures to different verb forms (person markers) as well as:

- gain ideas on designing gesture systems for other languages and age groups
- Explore strategies for adapting this method to both in-person and online teaching environments

1E/2E. Gathering Language for Young Children: A thematic language collection workshop

[Nekéct Room in High School]

James Thompson, Sasha Blakeley, et al

In this workshop, First Peoples' staff demonstrate the Thematic Language Collection method that supports early childhood educators and parents in their efforts to create and sustain immersion environments. In Thematic Language Collection (TLC), speakers work together to capture words, sentences, and stories all revolving around a particular topic or activity. Speakers combine their knowledge and stimulate each other's memories, leading to rich language collection that can be used to support learners in a variety of contexts. This workshop will:

- provide an overview of TLC
- demonstrate how it can be used with a First Nations language to gather words and phrases for an early childhood immersion setting

1C/2C. Voices in Learning: Programs for Adult Language Learners

[Setétkwe Room in High School]

Moderator: Candice Day

This discussion-based session invites adult language learners to share their experiences, challenges, and strategies in acquiring a new language. This session creates a space for authentic dialogue between learners, educators, and community members. Participants will explore key themes such as motivation, identity, confidence, and the realities of balancing language learning with work and personal responsibilities. Through guided discussion and audience interaction, the session highlights what supports adult learners most effectively—inside and outside the classroom.

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1F/2F. Discussion Session: Future Language Leaders

[Wetetékest Room- CAS Main School]

Moderator: Melpetkwe Matthew

This discussion-based session explores how youth can be empowered as leaders in language revitalization efforts within their communities. This session highlights the vital role young people play in sustaining and reimagining language education and advocacy.

This session invites youth, community members, and program leaders to reflect on how to nurture the next generation of language leaders. Participants will:

- Explore what meaningful youth leadership looks like in revitalization
- Share strategies for mentoring and supporting young language advocates
- Discuss barriers to youth participation and ways to address them

Friday Afternoon Workshops (Sessions 3 & 4)

3A/4A. Youth Mentorship & Leadership [Setétkwe Room - HS] **J.R. Billy, M.Jones, S.Romandia, et al**

Wumec r Cqwewqwlutn-kt Community Society implements a Secwepemctsin Apprenticeship Program. We have 6 youth registered in the program. The program consists of: Secwepemc language classes, mentoring with a fluent speaker, work placement in a Secwepemctsin setting, teaching and assisting in language classes, organizing community language and culture events, and assisting in other language events in the community. Youth are paid a stipend depending upon the amount of time spent in the program. The youth are developing their fluency in speaking, reading, and writing Secwepemctsin.

3D/4D. I Ulu Nō Ka Lālā i Ke Kumu: Growing the Next Generation of Speakers [Gymnasium] **Kanani Maka'imoku**

A language does not live simply because it is taught—it lives when the next generation chooses to speak it. Drawing on lived experience from the Hawaiian language revitalization movement, this workshop invites participants to examine the gap between language learning and language use. Kanani will share how reflection, discussion, and an intergenerational framework can help identify the conditions that support—or hinder—active use and lead to ways to better support youth in using language beyond the classroom. She will focus on strategies used for raising speakers who will carry the language forward and grow into leaders within their communities.

3B/4B. Restyling the Alphabet with Chants & Songs [Wetetkékst Room-CAS Main] **Kathryn Michel & Sarah Michel**

This interactive workshop introduces an innovative language alphabet that incorporates chants, songs and activities. Participants will explore how songs and chants can improve pronunciation and support early literacy development in language learners. Through hands-on participation, attendees will experience a range of original alphabet songs and rhythmic chants designed to move beyond rote memorization. Participants will:

- Learn innovative alphabet songs and chants adaptable to different languages
- Tips on creating their own chants tailored to their teaching context

3E/4E. Sharing Stories, Learning Together [High School Foyer] **Aliana Parker, Suzanne Washington**

Join us for a session of active networking and learning from each other! In this workshop, you'll be invited to share your experience through guided questions and hear the stories of others in small-group dialogues. Share your challenges, hear what other people are doing, and collaboratively explore great ideas and solutions for your language learning context.

3C/4C. Bite-sized Teachings Led by Adults in Intensive Fluency Programs [Nekéct Room - HS] **Students of Stselxmems r Secwepemc**

Adult language students will lead a series of brief, language activities focusing on speaking, listening, and vocabulary development. This workshop emphasizes how adult students can be empowered to lead by starting with teaching bite-sized lessons. Participants will:

- Engage in short language activities facilitated by adult learners
- Explore strategies for supporting learner-led instruction
- Reflect on the benefits and challenges of adult learners
- Gain ideas for integrating learner leadership

3F/4F. First-ory's Language Pen: The tech, and what it can do now and in the future [Pumín Room- HS] **K'odi Taylor**

Join K'odi Taylor for an exploration of a tactile, scan-based approach to language learning. The technology utilizes trigger-based scanning to provide instant access to high-quality audio resources without the complexity of AI. He will demonstrate how to seamlessly incorporate these tools into existing curricula—transforming static textbooks and flashcards into interactive hubs that enhance student engagement and pronunciation. Discover how this reliable, low-barrier technology simplifies lesson delivery while keeping students focused on the language itself. Find out how this project started, what it's currently capable of, and how it's redefining the "smart" classroom.

Saturday Morning Workshops (Sessions 5 & 6)

5A/6A. Language Success in the Language Nest

[Highschool Foyer]

Laura Michel, Sarah Michel

This interactive workshop explores effective strategies for fostering full immersion in a Language Nest. This session highlights how consistent, meaningful use of the target language can support natural acquisition, cultural connection, and learner confidence.

- Emphasis will be placed on creating supportive, language-rich environments where children acquire language through interaction, routines, and play.
- Explore techniques for maintaining target language use throughout daily activities
- How to maximize opportunities for staff to increase their language skills
- Share challenges and solutions for sustaining immersion in real-world settings

5D/6D. Language Futurity: Dreaming the Language to Life

[Setétkwe Room - HS]

Melpetkwe Matthew

This workshop examines how language practitioners, learners, and educators activate futurity with a particular focus on historical and contemporary initiatives that support language revitalization efforts. Doctoral candidate Melpetkwe Matthew builds on Harjo (2019) and Jojola (2013) theorizations of futurity and a Seven Generations Model, to examine intergenerational connections and kinship and how people are continually dreaming, imagining and activating the desires of their ancestors, contemporary kin, and tellqelmúcw, the people to come. Learn how futurity can be used as a tool to examine what are we doing in our current reality to support and carry out the work of our ancestors. Building from the strengths of language revitalization movements globally, the session will share strategies and ideas utilized by immersion K-12 schooling, early-childhood language nests, post-secondary education and land-based research to transform the language landscape.

5B/62B. Music and Play the Language Way

[Wetetékest Room-CAS Main]

Janice E. Billy

This workshop will share how games and songs can transform language learning into an engaging, meaningful, and memorable experience. Participants will take part in a variety of hands-on activities, including games and simple, adaptable songs designed for language learners of different ages and proficiency levels. The workshop encourages participation in a low-pressure, enjoyable way. Participants will:

- Experience a range of language learning games and songs
- Learn how to adapt activities for different languages, age groups, and classroom contexts
- Explore ways to reinforce key language skills through play and music

5C/6C. Original Music in Our Original Languages

[NK Room at far end of CAS Main School]

Spyu7éllp & Tekawus

This workshop explores the powerful intersection of Indigenous language and modern music, as two artists share how they create original music that showcases how tradition and modern expression can coexist. The session begins with an introduction to music and its role as a tool for storytelling, resistance, and identity. Participants will be guided through the creative process of writing lyrics in an Indigenous language, exploring beat-making and rhythm through using accessible tools—such as mobile apps and basic production software—to structure a track, layer vocals, and align lyrics with beats. Emphasis is placed on personal storytelling and the intersections between identity, land, community, and lived experience.

5E/6E. Technology as Teacher

[Gymnasium]

Seth Armitage & K'odi Taylor

This workshop explores how technology can enhance language teaching and learning through engaging, accessible, and learner-centered approaches. This session highlights practical ways to integrate digital tools into language instruction to support communication, collaboration, creativity and assessment.

Participants will explore a range of technologies—including mobile apps, multimedia resources, and online platforms—that can be used to develop speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. The workshop emphasizes hands-on practice and adaptable strategies that can be used in both in-person and online learning environments.

Workshop Presenters



Seth Armitage
Language Instructor

Seth, a former Chief Atahm School student, is completing a Masters in Educational Technology at UBC. He teaches at Chief Atahm School and at R Stselxméms r Secwépemc Institute in the Adult Language Programs through NVIT and UBCO. Seth incorporates many digital tools in his dictionary work and with Secwépemc Elders in documenting and transcribing narratives. Seth shares his passion for language in his home, with his four children and wife Willow.



Tekawus Armitage
Musician & Electrician

Tekawus Armitage (Cstélen, Secwépemc) is a former Chief Atahm student and father of two children attending our school. He has a passion for creating music and writing songs with themes of language, land and storytelling. Tekawus is a journeyman electrician and also owns and operates a business called "Nobody's from Nowhere" that specializes in custom clothing with cultural designs.



Spud Barker
Curriculum Technician

Spud is a graphic artist and publication designer specializing in visual design, educational materials, and print layout design. He has experience creating books, media publications, classroom resources, and digital media. Spud's work focuses on supporting our immersion program by creating resources with a strong visual identity. At this conference, he brings expertise in publication layout, design processes, and creative approaches to visual communication in educational settings.



Janice E. Billy
Immersion Teacher

Janice E. Billy is the grade 2/3 immersion teacher at Chief Atahm School and also teaches in the adult proficiency program. For over 20 years she has worked with all ages of language learners, from children to adults. She is a well-known TPRS presenter and has the ability to bring excitement to teaching language through storytelling while still using comprehensible input. Janice also teaches an intensive TPRS course at our TPRS Summer Institute.



Candice Day
Immersion Teacher

Candice is Secwépemc from Stuxtéws. She is the Nursery Immersion Lead at Tselcétwtqen Cileqmélt'n and is also a fourth year UBCO student in the Bachelor of Secwépemc Language Fluency. She is relatively new to the language education space, with a background in entrepreneurship development and a BA and MBA in Social Enterprise Leadership. Candice is endlessly curious about best practices in teaching Indigenous languages, as well as in learning Secwépemc ways of knowing and being. She brings this curiosity and dedication to the language to her position as board member of R Stselxméms r Secwépemc Society.



Sasha Blakeley
First Peoples' Cultural Council
Language Program Navigator

Sasha is a Language Program Navigator with the First Peoples' Cultural Council. She has a background in linguistics, teaching, and curriculum development. She currently supports FPCC grant teams through resource development, training, and grant administration.

Workshop Presenters



Ada Jules
Immersion Teacher

Ada Jules is a proud Secwepemc educator from Adams Lake Band. She holds a Secwepemc Language Immersion Proficiency Diploma and a Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Victoria. Ada is a former student of Chief Atahm School and now teaches Grade 3/4 immersion at Chief Atahm School. She is dedicated to fostering language revitalization and cultural learning.



Charmayne Jules
Teacher

Charmayne Jules is Cstélenec, Secwépemc and resides in Sexqeltqin near Chase. She is Secwepemc from her dad's side and her mother is Nlak'pamux. Charmayne has 3 children, Graydon, Tegan, and Olivia. She works as the On the Land resource teacher at the Henry Grube Education Center for School District 73. She enjoys spending time outdoors and on the land, and finds it fitting that, as a teacher in the public school system, she can share everything she knows about the land to help students engage and understand the importance of outdoor education. Charmayne will be completing her Master's in Education this fall at UBC.



Kananinohea Māka'imoku
Coordinator Indigenous
Teacher Education Program

"Kananī" is a graduate of the first class of Pūnana Leo language nest preschool and of the Hawaiian language immersion program. She is a doctoral candidate in Indigenous language and culture revitalization and brings over 25 years of experience in Hawaiian-medium education, first as an elementary teacher and now serving as coordinator of the Kahuawaiola Indigenous Teacher Education Program and associate professor at Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo.



Melpetkwe Matthew
Post-secondary Coordinator

Melpetkwe is Secwépemc from Adams Lake Band and Simpcw. She is a PhD candidate in the Geography Department at UBC. She works at UBC- Okanagan as the Community Liaison and Instructor Coordinator for the Bachelor of Secwépemc Language Fluency program. She also serves as Chair of the R Stselxméms R Secwépemc Institute. Her research and life's work center on Secwépemc futurity and supporting Secwépemc communities to thrive through language and culture.



Robert Matthew
Chief Atahm School Principal

Robert Matthew is Secwépemc from Simpcw. He has a Teaching Certificate and a Masters of Education and over 40 years experience in teaching and administration, 15 years in the B.C. public schools system and 25 years at Chief Atahm School. His passion is oral history, traditional knowledge and mapping.



Laura Michel
Language Nest Teacher

Laura has a B.A. from TRU with a Major in Theatre and a Secwépemc Language Proficiency Diploma from R Stselxméms r Secwépemc. As Language Nest Coordinator, Laura creates an immersive language environment. She is also a playwright, known for her play "Echoes of the Homesick Heart", created in partnership with Western Canada Theatre, that brings the nuances of language, identity, and community to light.

Workshop Presenters



Lawrence Michel
Secwépemc Elder

Lawrence Michel is a respected Elder, storyteller and language teacher from Cstélen, Secwépemc Nation. "Slé7e Larry" has shared his knowledge to many generations of students at Chief Atahm School. He has a vast knowledge of the land, cultural skills and technology. Lawrence is also a journeyman carpenter and has taught many of our young people the basic woodworking skills.



Sarah Michel
Curriculum Developer and Language Nest instructor

Sarah works at Chief Atahm School in curriculum development and as a language teacher at Kyé7e's House Language Nest. Through her passion for digital art and technology and her skills in language she has produced many e-books and language resources for the school and community. Sarah is currently taking a Bachelor of Secwépemc Language Fluency through UBCO.



Lisa Orton
Immersion Assistant

Lisa Orton (Cstélen - Adams Lake) works in the Secwepemc Immersion Program at Chief Atahm School. She has contributed to the school in various roles, including curriculum development, teaching community language classes, post-secondary education, and an immersion classroom teaching assistant. Lisa enjoys exploring Secwepemc plant names and uses and traditional harvesting activities on the land.



Aliana Parker
Learning Centre Director

Aliana Parker works at the First Peoples' Cultural Council supporting First Nations community-based language, arts and cultural heritage revitalization. Aliana has a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics focused on Indigenous language revitalization and over 10 years of experience working with and learning from First Nations communities and language leaders. She is a non-Indigenous ally in this work and lives in the traditional territory of the WSÁNEĆ nation.



Denise Sellars
Immersion Assistant

Denise (Tsilkst) Sellars (Xatśúll - Soda Creek) is a Language Resource Assistant at the Chief Atahm School, where she works alongside teachers and staff to ensure the children get a well rounded education based in the Secwepemc language . She holds a Secwepemc Language Proficiency Diploma from Simon Fraser University (SFU) and is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Secwepemc Language Fluency at the University of British Columbia Okanagan (UBCO).



Spyu7éllp 7é Sqélecw
Musician & Language Student

Spyu7éllp-7é-Sqélecw. is a proud Secwepemc knowledge keeper, musician, and advocate for Indigenous rights. He is deeply connected to his culture and traditions, he uses music as a way to share stories, inspire people, and strengthen community ties. His passion for music spans multiple instruments and styles, blending traditional sounds with contemporary influences. He believes in empowering the next generation to embrace their voices and creativity.

Workshop Presenters



Robyn Tardif
Instructional Assistant

Robyn Tardif (Kenpésq̓t, Secwépemc Nation) has a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Alberta University of the Arts specializing in Glass and a Secwépemc Language Proficiency Diploma from R Stselxméms r Secwépemc. She is currently pursuing a Master's of Interdisciplinary Studies in the Indigenous Knowledges Theme through UBCO. Her interdisciplinary practice explores the intersection of art and Secwepemctsin using a variety of methods and media.



Tisha Tardif
UBCO Student

Tisha Tardif (Kenpésq̓t, Secwépemc) has a Secwépemc Language Proficiency Diploma from R Stselxméms r Secwépemc and is currently in the Bachelor's of Secwepemctsin through SrS/UBCO. She has a deep commitment to preserving Secwépemc language, culture, and identity and is dedicated to revitalizing Secwepemctsin through teaching. She aims to empower future generations and strengthen community connections through language.



James Thompson
First Peoples' Cultural Council
Program Coordinator

James is a Language Program Coordinator with the First Peoples' Cultural Council. He trained as a linguist and has worked with a number of BC First Nations on documentation, language resource development, and capacity building. He currently lives in Victoria with his wife and two sons.



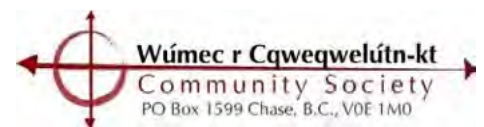
K'odi Taylor
First-ory Company

K'odi Taylor struggled with undiagnosed ADHD for most of his life, and, despite excelling in school, his challenges with social interactions and childhood trauma led to early substance use. After hitting a low point, K'odi went travelling and developed a deep love for languages. He began learning his own Indigenous language and launched a business to create resources for kids. But his struggles worsened after his father's passing. Getting diagnosed with ADHD was a turning point. With a new understanding of how his brain worked, K'odi began dedicating himself to his work and spreading ADHD awareness, hoping to help others unlock their potential.



Suzanne Washington
First Peoples' Cultural Council
Language Nest Coach

ʔazátkwu? Suzanne Washington is N̓eʔkémux from the community of nwéyc (Nooaitch). She provides strengths-based coaching for language nests in BC. Suzanne knows how challenging it can be to provide an immersive environment, being a N̓eʔkémxcín learner herself. She values the hard work it takes to provide an immersive environment and feels fortunate to be able to work alongside language nest programs to connect children to their language and culture.



**Wúmec r
Cqweqwelútn-kt
Presenters:**

- Janice R. Billy
- Natalie Clark
- Matthew Jones
- Susan Romandia

Conference Accommodation

Sandman Signature Hotel

225 Lorne St, Kamloops (250)377-7263

Signature Room: 1 King Bed + Sofa Bed @ \$299. + tax per night

Group Code: **640704** (rate effective up until April 28)

Email: reservations@sandman.ca or 1-800-SANDMAN

or call hotel directly at (250) 377-7263 Ext. 0



Accent Inns

1325 Columbia St. West, Kamloops (250)374-8877

2 queen beds or 1 King bed @ \$215 plus tax per room per night

GROUP Code: Chief Atahm School

Call (250) 374-8877

(rate effective up until April 30)



Chase Country Inn

Chase Country Inn

576 Coburn St. Chase (250)679-3333

2 Queen Beds: \$185 / 2 Queen Beds with kitchenette: \$195 (+ tax)

1 Queen Bed: \$165 / 1 Queen Bed with kitchenette: \$175 (+ tax)

Breakfast included

\$20 will be charged for each extra person

OVERLANDER MOTEL 181 Shuswap Ave, Chase (250)679-8633

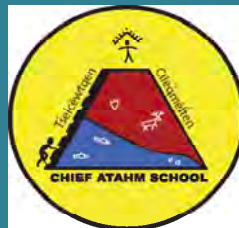
A shuttle bus is available from our conference hotels to and from the conference site.

Please book via Zeffy (check off option) or email Robyn at atahm.media@gmail.com to secure your seat.

? F.A.Q.

The Chief Atahm School Language Conference is hosted by our staff and school community. We make all attempts to have a safe, inviting and informative event. If you have any questions, please direct them to Robyn atahm.media@gmail.com

- **If I registered online, how do I check-in to the event?** Bring your e-ticket with the QR code to get scanned in to collect your conference items, or, show your ID at the registration table.
- **What does registration include?** Friday morning hot drinks, muffins and pastries, 2 nutrition breaks/day, 2 lunches and 2 days of workshops. Free shuttle from Kamloops from select hotels.
- **Can I get a refund if I change my mind about attending?** After April 30,2025 there will be no refunds, however, substitution of participant names will be accepted.
- **I have accessibility needs, can you accommodate me?** Our conference facilities are on one level with paved walkways with no stairs. Wheelchairs may need to be lifted over door thresholds.
- **Can you accommodate my special diet?** We are unable to accommodate every special diet, but we will have vegan, non-dairy and gluten-free choices available. Please bring your own food if you are concerned about cross-contamination or have serious reactions.
- **Can I buy a ticket on-site?** As we are close to capacity now, we recommend you register now.
- **What parking arrangements are available at the venue?** There are three main parking lots available for parking but since we are nearing capacity, parking may be limited.
- **Are there shuttles to transport me to the event?** A shuttle will be available to and from our designated hotels and motels. Please register via Zeffy or contact Robyn at atahm.media@gmail.com.
- **Will there be vendors on-site?** We will have a few vendor tables from local Indigenous artisans and our curriculum team will have a demonstration and sales table.



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