

First Nations student deaths inquest hears from education authority

The Northern Nishnawbe Education Council operates the high school that 6 of the 7 students attended

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On Wednesday, jurors at the inquest looking into the deaths of seven First Nations students in Thunder Bay heard from the head of the education authority which runs the high school that 6 of the 7 students were attending when they died.

The Northern Nishnawbe Education Council (NNEC) operates Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School in Thunder Bay.

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- [First Nations student deaths inquest: 7 youths died in 10 years](#)

Norma Kejick, the council's director, explained there are no high schools which go beyond grade 10 in the 23 remote First Nations communities served by the NNEC. Kejick added that the NNEC becomes the legal guardian of students who leave home to attend schools in the city.

A juror asked Kejick how the education authority is funded. She responded that Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada allocate the funding. She said no extra funding is provided for any of the support services that NNEC provides students in Thunder Bay.

Jurors were scheduled to tour Dennis Franklin Cromarty school on Wednesday afternoon.

Here is a look at the some of the proceedings on Wednesday from the CBC reporter in the courtroom.

Day 3 of inquest starts with courtroom being cleared for 'private' lawyers meeting which then appears on webcast [#cbctb](#)

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Norma Kejick, head of Northern Nishnawbe Education Council begins testimony. NNEC is the education authority for 23 First Nations [#cbctb](#)

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Kejick answering many questions explaining the basics of First Nations. E.g. Coroner's council asks 'what is a tribal council?' [#cbctb](#)

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NNEC runs 3 high schools. 1 distance ed. only. Students live on site at Pelican Falls near Sioux Lookout, at boarding homes at DFC in [#tbay](#)

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NNEC receives no \$ for support services for students who must leave home for school, Kejick

says. \$ taken from education budget [#cbctb](#)

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Only 5 of 23 First Nations on SLKT district have high schools and they only go to grade 10, Kejick says [#cbctb](#)

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NNEC becomes guardian of students who leave home for school. 'All of us at NNEC become part of their family' Kejick says [#cbctb](#)

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Jury members ask many questions of Kejick. Eg. Why high schools in First Nations only go up to grad 10. [#cbctb](#)

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Lack of funding and small community size limit availability of high school in First Nations, Kejick says [#cbctb](#)

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Before break, coroner Dr. Eden apologizes, says he is 'embarrassed' by breach in confidentiality re: webcast of lawyer's meeting [#cbctb](#)

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Jonathan Kakegamic, principal of Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School in [#tbay](#) begins testimony [#cbctb](#)

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Kakegamic: goal of DFC is to 'provide opportunities for our youth to become productive citizens for their communities and families' [#cbctb](#)

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About 140 students attend grades 9 to 12 at DFC, more than 20 graduate each year. 5 grads of [@mylakehead](#) this year were from DFC [#cbctb](#)

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'Back at the time we were losing students it was difficult,' Kakegamic says, starting to cry on the stand [#cbctb](#)

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Two graduates of DFC now work at the school. 'That's why we're there, to empower our youth,' Kakegamic says [#cbctb](#)

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Kakegamic says some years up to 30 students are sent home for their own 'health and safety'. So far this year, only 6 [#cbctb](#)

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'A lot of times we send students home because they're going through stuff we don't have supports here for them' Kakegamic says [#cbctb](#) 1/2

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'But they might not have supports at home either' so decision not taken lightly, Kakegamic says [#cbctb](#) 2/2

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'I'm very proud to say every student in our school has someone to go to in their time of need,' Kakegamic says [#cbctb](#)

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Inquest jurors will get a tour this aft of the school that 6 of 7 students attended before they died [#cbctb](#) pic.twitter.com/dV17O8tJ0i

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Tour of First Nations school includes tea and bannock in Elders room for all visitors 1/2 [#cbctb](#)

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'I will say for the record the bannock is great' says presiding coroner Dr Eden 2/2 [#cbctb](#)

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'It's clear to me this is a place of learning. I've learned a lot here today' Coroner tells principal [#cbctb](#) pic.twitter.com/2tdnUynN3C

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