



Kahnawà:ke Ratitsénhaiens

Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke

P.O. Box 720 Kahnawà:ke Mohawk Territory JOL 1B0

Phone: (450) 632-7500 Fax: (450) 638-5958

Web Site: www.Kahnawake.com E-mail: communications@mck.ca

Enhsakotò:kénhte Nitiotié:ren Tsi Ietsenhaiéntákhwa

Tsi Nahóten Karihwanákere No'nenk News Release

MCK condemns Canada's *First Nations Education Act*; sends open letter to Prime Minister

For immediate release

(Kahnawake – 25, Kentenhkó:wa/November 2013) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) unanimously passed a [Mohawk Council Executive Directive](#) today condemning Canada's imposition of the proposed *First Nations Education Act* ('FNEA'), which is expected to be brought before Parliament early in 2014. The MCK is also sending an [open letter](#) to Prime Minister Stephen Harper declaring Kahnawà:ke's opposition to the impending legislation.

The Resolution includes the following statements/positions:

- Kahnawà:ke is strongly opposed to legislation that is both paternalistic and unconstitutional
- Kahnawà:ke demands that Canada immediately cease the process, remove the FNEA from the legislative calendar/agenda, and commit to discussing education directly with First Nations
- The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke will work cooperatively and call on all entities, organizations and bodies that it deems necessary in the interest of its opposition
- The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke **condemns** the imposition of the FNEA on this and all other First Nations that stand in opposition

The complete Mohawk Council Resolution and the open letter to the Prime Minister are available for viewing at www.kahnawake.com.

"We are working internally with the Combined Schools Committee and others to make sure that Kahnawà:ke is ready to take on a leading role in this battle against the Harper Government," said Education Portfolio Chief Rhonda Kirby. "We will not allow the government to force feed us laws that have no reflection of our goals, philosophies and realities. The old saying, 'United we stand, divided we fall' has never been more true."

The MCK will be participating in upcoming meetings of the First Nations Education Council, the Assembly of First Nations, and the Iroquois Caucus, where the topic of the FNEA will be the priority agenda item.

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For further information, please contact:
Joe Delaronde, Political Press Attaché
Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke
450-632-7500, joe.delaronde@mck.ca

STRENGTH

PEACE

UNITY

Mohawk Council of Kahnawake

P.O. Box 720
Kahnawake Mohawk Territory J0L 1B0

Tsi Ietsenhaientáhkwawa
" OFFICE OF THE COUNCIL OF CHIEFS "



Tel.: (450) 632-7500
Fax: (450) 632-7276
Website: www.kahnawake.com

25 Kentenhkó:wa / November 2013

The Honourable Prime Minister Stephen Harper
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Wa'tkonnonhwerá:ton (Greetings),

I am writing today to convey my deep and profound concern over your government's insistence on proceeding with the *First Nations Education Act*, and to call on Canada to cease proceeding on this Act.

While I am certain that you have received numerous letters of concern from First Nations people, leaders and organizations across the country, please be certain the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke also take great umbrage to your government's paternalistic, cavalier and – most important – unconstitutional actions in this most important matter.

Education is the cornerstone to our collective future. It is not only the right of all Canadians to have access to proper education; it is also Canada's obligation to ensure that First Nations are given the proper resources to ensure that our educational needs are met. By imposing the *First Nations Education Act*, the Federal government – the current Conservative government in particular – insults and disrespects the integrity of the most fundamental of relationships between our peoples: that between First Nations and the Crown.

By off-loading federal responsibilities and increasing Provincial governmental authorities, you are engaging in the most insidious tactic of 'provincial federalism' against our people. The Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke refuse to accept the assignment of the principles of our most basic relationship to third party entities / governments. Canada cannot unilaterally divest itself of its fiduciary responsibilities. It is not a matter of choice. If we have disagreements, our collective obligation is to deal with these issues on a par, face-to-face basis. Anything less is an insult to our ancestors – both ours and yours.

Your government continues to disregard our Peoples right to self-determination by unilaterally creating legislation that overrides our jurisdictions and affects our people in the most profound manner. By your failure to properly consult, you are telling the people of Canada that you, the Federal government, know what's best for First Nations.

Canada has obligations to consult with First Nations on legislative and policy matters that affect Aboriginal Rights, and we do not take your blatant disregard for these obligations lightly.

In Kahnawà:ke, we foresee significant and detrimental impacts that this legislation could have on our education system. Firstly, the loss of jurisdictional control due to the requirements of adherence to the very limiting governance options is one we cannot accept. There is no guarantee that your imposed external curriculum standards will be culturally compatible, which we also cannot accept. The application of other system standards could have a very negative impact on teacher/professional certification, administration, etc. – which is obviously unacceptable to us.

Additionally, regulation of eligibility based on residency will not only place additional burdens on our administrative systems to accommodate, but also limits the enactment of our rights to the postage stamp perimeters of the reserve. The Mohawk Nation has never ceded our traditional territories and the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke maintain that our rights should remain intact regardless of residency.

Finally, the mandatory and increased federal monitoring and inspection reeks of Indian Agent monitoring, an era that we thought passed several decades ago. This is the most shameful example of paternalism we have witnessed in recent history.

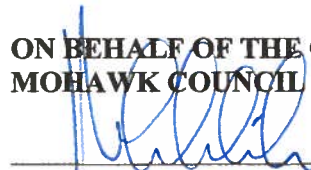
It is appalling to consider that this legislation has come in the wake of an era where you, the Prime Minister, had offered an apology to the survivors of residential schools and made commitments to reconciliation. Unilaterally imposing legislation that does not account for the diverse, unique and rich cultural, linguistic, and historical qualities of First Nations can certainly not be viewed as reconciliatory.

The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke hereby condemns the imposition of the *First Nations Education Act*, and demands that you cease all activities related to the passage of the legislation. We insist that it immediately be removed from the legislative agenda/calendar, and that your government meet with us in good faith to discuss our educational needs once and for all. While this will undoubtedly be a monumental task, please be reminded that this is a monumental issue for First Nations.

Last January, your government committed to advancing a relationship with First Nations that was based on meaningful engagement. We call on you to honour that commitment. We call on you to do the right thing and listen to our voices on this relationship altering issue. Doing so would be extremely positive in re-establishing the trust we showed hundreds of years ago; failure to do so could lead us to a period of our history that neither party will want to remember.

Nia:wen,

**ON BEHALF OF THE OFFICE OF THE COUNCIL OF CHIEFS
MOHAWK COUNCIL OF KAHNAWÀ:KE**



Grand Chief Michael Ahríhron Delisle Jr.

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MOHAWK COUNCIL EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE

DATE: 11 / 25 / 2013 MCED NO: # 48 /2013 -2014 No. of Pages: 2
Month Day Year

PROPOSED BY: Ratsénhaienhs Lloyd Oronhiakhète Phillips

SECONDED BY: Ietsénhaienhs Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer

WHEREAS the Mohawk People (Kanien'kehá:ka Kahnawa'kehró:non), as part of the Mohawk Nation (Kanien'kehá:ka) and the Iroquois Confederacy (Rotinohsonnión:we) are, and have always been a sovereign people;

WHEREAS the Kanien'kehá:ka Kahnawa'kehró:non have consistently and historically declared their right to govern their own affairs;

WHEREAS the Kanien'kehá:ka Kahnawa'kehró:non have stated their intention to reinstate the structures, philosophies, concepts and principles of Mohawk Traditional Government as embodied by the Great Law of Peace (Kaianere'kó:wa);

WHEREAS the Kanien'kehá:ka Kahnawa'kehró:non abide by the principles of Power, Peace, and Righteousness prescribed in and in accordance with the Kaianere'kó:wa;

WHEREAS these principles have governed, and continue to govern, the direction of the Mohawk Nation since time immemorial;

WHEREAS the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke have an historic, inherent and inalienable right to education;

WHEREAS the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke have reasserted the Aboriginal Right of jurisdiction over their education systems since 1972;

WHEREAS the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke have governed and controlled the Kahnawà:ke education system without interference from Federal or Provincial governments, including the administration, development of curriculum, and policy development;

WHEREAS only the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke will determine the future of our education system;

WHEREAS the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke have the right to administer their education systems through the authority of the Parents and People of the community rather than the Federal or Provincial governments;

WHEREAS the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke are aware that the Federal government plans to pass and implement legislation known as the *First Nations Education Act*;

MDJ	CKZD	WTD	RKK	KSD	MTL	RWPJ	KKMc	GKD	COH	LOP	CTP
								Absent	CH		

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WHEREAS the *First Nations Education Act* was created unilaterally by Canada, without properly consulting First Nations;

WHEREAS the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke joined the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador opposition to the federal government’s poor attempts at consultation and instead called for more meaningful discussions on education, and for recognition of our Aboriginal Right to jurisdictional control of our own educations systems;

WHEREAS the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke reiterate our position that the Federal government cannot divest itself of its fiduciary responsibilities towards First Nations education;

WHEREAS the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke are strongly opposed to imposition of legislation that is extremely paternalistic and unconstitutional;

WHEREAS the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke are committed to working cooperatively with any entities, organizations and bodies that it deems necessary in the interest of its opposition to said legislation;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT DIRECTED that the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke declare and affirm jurisdictional control of our own education system through the authority of the people of the community;

THEREFORE BE IT FUTHER DIRECTED that the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke demand that the Federal government immediately stops the process; removes the proposed *First Nations Education Act* from the legislative calendar/agenda and; begins working directly with Kahnawà:ke and other First Nations to address education issues;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER DIRECTED that the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke hereby CONDEMNNS the imposition of the *First Nations Education Act* on this community and other First Nations that stand in opposition;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER DIRECTED that the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke calls upon other First Nations to formally reject the *First Nations Education Act* and condemn its imposition.

Ratsénhaienhs Michael Ahrihrhon Delisle Jr.

Ratsénhaienhs Martin Thawen:rate Leborgne
Ratsénhaienhs Kenneth Karonhiatie McComber
Ietsénhaienhs Rhonda Kawenánoron Kirby
Ietsénhaienhs Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer
Ratsénhaienhs Carl Onakarakete Horn

Absent
Ietsénhaienhs Gina Kanietahawi Deer

Ratsénhaienhs Clinton Tionawate Phillips
Ratsénhaienhs Robert Watio Patton Jr.
Ratsénhaienhs William Tioronhiáthe Diabo
Ratsénhaienhs Lloyd Oronhiakhète Phillips
Ietsénhaienhs Christine Katsitsenhawitha Zachary Deom