



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 announces plan to address education issues

For immediate release

(Kahnawake – 30, Tsothohrkó:wa/January 2013) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke announced today that it has developed a plan to address governance-related education issues in Kahnawà:ke.

The plan has been developed in response to the ongoing frustrations/communications breakdowns regarding the joint process that was agreed to between the MCK and the Kahnawake Combined Schools Committee (KCSC) on September 27, 2012 (in accordance with Mohawk Council Executive Directive #32-2012/2013). The plan is based on the general workplan that was agreed to in principle and released by the MCK and KCSC on October 19, 2012, with minor modifications made for neutral oversight.

“Instead of focusing on the disagreements between the KCSC and the MCK being the focal point, the proposed plan deals with the work that needs to be completed,” said education portfolio chief Rhonda Kirby. “At this point we realize the need to give the entire community the opportunity to give their input.”

Therefore, Chief & Council have unanimously agreed to present an action plan entitled ‘[Community-Based Education Resolution Process](#).’ It has been designed to ensure that the Constitutional review is conducted in a timely manner, through the hiring of an Educational Resolution Coordinator. An Education Oversight Committee, to consist of parents and community representatives, will be responsible for oversight of the governance/constitution work, administration/operations and ensuring consistent communications with the community. Details on the plan are included ([see attached](#)).

Chief & Council strongly encourage community members to provide feedback on the action plan through emails and telephone calls. A special email address, actionplan@mck.ca, has been set up for convenience in order to give feedback or to set up appointments. In addition, community members can visit kiosks to be held at the Services Complex in order to set up appointments.

-30-

For information about this release, please contact:

Joe Delaronde, Political Press Attaché

Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke

450-632-7500, joe.delaronde@mck.ca

DRAFT

Community-Based Education Resolution Action Plan

Background

During 2012, as a result of several serious complaints and related activities brought to the attention of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) concerning education, the Council of Chiefs took action to rescind Mohawk Council Resolution #5/1983-84 delegating responsibilities from the Mohawk Council to the Kahnawake Combined Schools Committee (KCSC), and replaced it with MCED #30/2012-2013 revoking responsibilities delegated to KCSC and delegating such responsibilities to an 'Interim Board of Trustees'. As further community dissention continued regarding the revoking of delegated authority, and continued desire to have MCK involved in addressing concerns, MCED #30/2012-2013 was rescinded and replaced with MCED #32/2012-2013 delegating a new relationship between the MCK and KCSC to oversee education. Guided by the MCED, the MCK and KCSC would work collaboratively to develop a joint workplan to conduct constitutional discussions to improve education governance, affirm and/or elect representation on the KCSC, and oversee the general operations and administration of the Kahnawake Education Center (KEC).

Throughout October to January, the MCK diligently worked on taking a collaborative approach to working with the KCSC to advance the measures identified in MCED#32/2012-2013. During this time, a general workplan was established and released on October 19th that identified key areas of collaborative constitutional/governance work and oversight of operations/administration to be undertaken. In addition, the general workplan also identified the work of an independent investigation that was to be undertaken in tandem with the collaborative work. On November 7th, the MCK and KCSC co-hosted the Annual General Assembly (AGA) of the KEC; which included a confirmation process and subsequent election process for general representation on the KCSC. However, the production of collaborative work has been motionless as a result of issues related to, and resulting from, conflicting interpretation of the scope and reach of MCED #32/2012-2013. Further, more recent failed attempts to address valid concerns regarding the conduct of the November 7th KCSC elections have worsened, and resulted in a standstill of working relations.

Following the AGA, several complaints and concerns were brought to the attention of the MCK challenging the validity of the affirmation/elections process and results. In an effort to address such, the MCK took initiative to raise concerns with the KCSC for resolution via email and at KCSC meetings, and to obtain a legal opinion on the validity of the confirmations/elections process and results. The MCK was met with opposition from the KCSC to take action to remedy the errors concerning the affirmations/elections process and results. On November 15th, the Council of Chiefs declared the confirmations/elections results null and void and called for a new election for general representatives. The MCK proceeded to request further meetings with the KCSC to resolve the issues with little result.

According to previous MCED's concerning education funding, the MCK delegates responsibilities to oversee the administration of education funds. In the delegation of these responsibilities, MCK still retains some liabilities and is obliged to ensure sound governance and operations of the education system in Kahnawà:ke. To achieve and support such, the MCK has supported and endorsed a collaborative working relationship that would facilitate such until concerns to alleviate risks and concerns are addressed. This approach has been ineffective in producing results and the MCK is growing increasingly concerned about the liabilities potentially resulting from questionable decisions on the part of the KCSC. Thus, at this point in time it is imperative that MCK take action to safeguard this vital community resource and move forward on strengthening the Kahnawà:ke education system.

Moving Forward

As a result of the failed attempts under MCED #32/2012-2013 to take a joint approach to resolution, the MCK has recently spent considerable time to deliberate on alternative approaches to resolving issues plaguing the Kahnawà:ke education system. These deliberations have been guided by several factors including: the authority of the community to collectively direct the governance structure of its education system, the responsibility that MCK holds to oversee sound administration of education funds and operations, community dynamics, and the sole intent to safeguard a valuable community resource. The MCK has decided to take an approach of developing an action plan for moving forward, and presenting the plan for community feedback prior to implementation. The plan prioritizes resolution of issues by focusing attention on mending education governance through a neutral process, which includes the removal of both the MCK and KCSC from the resolution process to best allow progress.

Action Plan for Resolution of Education Issues:

The MCK is planning to reach resolution on governance-related education issues by continuing to advance as closely as possible with the general workplan jointly developed by the MCK and KCSC, and as presented to the Education Assembly on November 7th, 2012. Minor modifications to replace the joint MCK-KCSC oversight with an Education Oversight Committee to guide the conduct of the governance/constitution and operations/administrative work have been made to the workplan. A new MCED will be put in effect to reassign the delegated responsibilities to this effect once established. The MCK will entrust the Education Oversight Committee with the tasks as identified in the attached document entitled *Community-based Education Resolution Process*, including oversight of governance/constitution work and oversight of ongoing administration/operations. Upon completion of the work mandated to the Education Oversight Committee, the MCK will review this delegated authority and reassign as appropriate and as directed through community consultations.

To ensure that the constitutional review is conducted in a timely manner, the MCK will facilitate a tendering process to secure an Education Resolution Coordinator that will be responsible for working with an Education Oversight Committee on functional implementation of the *Education Resolution Process*. The tendering process will begin at the end of January and will be held in a timely manner to ensure work commences as soon as possible. Through acquiring an Education Resolution Coordinator, it is anticipated that the constitutional review can be conducted within 6 months. Having a tight timeframe will allow for issues to be resolved and a new KCSC mandated prior to the beginning of the 2013-2014 academic year.

The Education Oversight Committee identified in the *Community-based Education Resolution Process* will be comprised of parent and community representatives. It will be responsible for oversight of the governance/ constitution work, administration/operations and ensuring consistent communications and reports are provided to Kahnawà'kehró:non on a regular basis. The Education Oversight Committee will be mandated to work with the Education Resolution Coordinator to conduct comprehensive community consultations and use the direction to strengthen the governance of the Kahnawà:ke education system and ensure the system meets the needs of the community. Upon completion of its work on the governance/constitution and independent investigation, the Education Oversight Committee will then turn its remaining responsibilities over to the newly enacted Kahnawà:ke Combined Schools Committee, or equivalent body as identified through community consultations. The MCK will be issuing a call for interested parents and community members to submit their interest to the Education Resolution Coordinator for consideration.

To ensure that each of the Kahnawà:ke schools maintain strong parental links and direction, it is highly encouraged that each In-School Committee continue to operate in a usual manner. The In-School Committees are a highly valuable resource for each respective school's administration and operations and the MCK encourages that these continue to serve in this highly valuable function.

In an effort to build awareness and foster community engagement on resolving issues in the Kahnawà:ke education system, the MCK is making efforts to provide an opportunity for community to express feedback or concerns. The MCK welcomes feedback on the plan of action prior to its implementation through email, or in-person at upcoming kiosks hosted by Council Chiefs at the Community Services Complex.

The decision to develop a new action plan for resolution of education issues is one that the Council of Chiefs has not taken lightly. It is the result of exhaustive measures taken to accommodate the diverse range of community positions on education issues with little or no avail, and the continued endangerment of Kahnawà:ke authority over education resources. The MCK reminds all Kahnawa'kehró:non that the sole intent for MCK involvement in the Kahnawà:ke education system at this point in time is limited to ensuring sound governance and operations through open and impartial means.

Kahnawà:ke Community-based Education Resolution Process

