



Tsi Nahò:ten Karihwanákere Nó:nen'k

PRESS RELEASE

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MCK supports Education Center and Combined Schools Committee regarding concerns over Bill 96

For immediate release

(Kahnawake – 14, Onerahtókha/April 2022) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) wishes to express its concern regarding pending Quebec legislative changes that will have a major impact on English-language CEGEP and, especially, many Kahnawà:ke students who would be attending these schools.

Bill 96 would require a minimum of three additional courses offered in French language only, as well as a freeze in the number of students attending subsidized English-speaking colleges and the number of students in non-subsidized, private colleges offering education in English. Additionally, one-year college certificates (AECs) in the Anglophone and Francophone networks must have “conditional knowledge of the French language” to receive their certificate, and College and CEGEP diplomas (DECs) will have a “written” French language requirement.

“What Bill 96 makes clear is the fact that the Legault government is committed to a course of action that clearly demonstrates that systemic racism is alive and well in Quebec,” said Ratsénhaienhs (elected Chief) Ross Montour. “In spite of their claims of honoring and respecting our Peoples’ cultures and languages, Premier François Legault and Simon Jolin-Barrette’s refusal to reconsider this dreadful direction is clearly evident of colonial mindsets that will no doubt have devastating effects upon our students and their goals and dreams of attaining higher education.”

The Kahnawà:ke Education Center and Kahnawà:ke Combined Schools Committee have issued a powerful statement ([click here](#)) outlining, in great detail, the potential and probable effects the legislation will have on our students. The MCK wishes to confirm its solidarity with these community organizations, and confirm its commitment to do whatever is necessary to ensure our students have a fair opportunity to continue their higher education. As their statement says: “Contrary to any efforts of reconciliation, this law perpetuates colonialism and linguistic assimilation, violating the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

The MCK commits to working collaboratively with all Kahnawà:ke organizations to protect the educational opportunities for our future leaders.

“We have been through enough without having another roadblock thrown in front of us,” said Ratsénhaienhs Harry Rice. “Due to colonization, many of our people lost our language and English became the prominent language used in the community. We refuse to be subject to further colonial actions by the Legault government playing political games with education. It is too important for us to sit idly by while they close the door on our students.”