



KAHNAWÀ:KE EDUCATION CENTER
PO BOX 1000
KAHNAWÀ:KE QC J0L 1B0
TEL: 450 632-8770
FAX: 450 632-8042
WWW.KECEDU.CA

COMMUNIQUE

Kahnawà:ke Education Center and Kahnawà:ke Combined Schools Committee Oppose Bill-96 Amendments

Kahnawà:ke Education Center (KEC)

Kahnawà:ke, Quebec – 13 Onerahtókha/April 2022

The Kahnawà:ke Education Center and the Kahnawà:ke Combined School Committee would like to update the community on its ongoing efforts in addressing Quebec's Bill 96. These proposed amendments will have critical impacts on Indigenous students and their educational success.

Should the proposed Bill 96 amendments pass they will impact students at several levels:

- At the CEGEP level, students will be required to take a minimum of three additional program related courses offered in French language only;
- Freezing the number of students allowed to attend subsidized English-speaking colleges and the number of students in non-subsidized, private colleges offering education in English;
- Students in one-year college certificates (AECs) in the Anglophone and Francophone educational institutions must have "conditional knowledge of the French language" to receive their certificate; and
- College and CEGEP diplomas (DECs) will have a "written" French language exam requirement.

In early 2021, concerns were tabled at the First Nations Education Council (FNEC). Director of Education Robin Delaronde represents Kahnawà:ke at the FNEC. Communities approved the FNEC aligning efforts with the FNEC Chief's Committee to address our concerns and voice our opposition. If passed, Bill 96 will have numerous negative impacts on student success, access to services and increase dropout rates in our communities.

The FNEC has been working on behalf of the twenty-two (22) communities with support from the FNEC Chiefs Education Committee, of which MCK Chief Harry Rice is a member, John Martin, the Chief Responsible for Education and Regional Chief Ghislain Picard of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL). Their technical team analyzed documents, collaborated, drafted communiques and proposed counter amendments to bring awareness to Quebec ministers on the negative impacts Bill 96 amendments will have on our Indigenous communities, specific to educational success.



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Equally concerning is the imposition this bill has on our inherent rights and jurisdiction as Indigenous people. Contrary to any efforts of reconciliation, this law perpetuates colonialism and linguistic assimilation, violating the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

To date, every effort to address this issue with various ministers has been met with a paternal and colonial response. On March 2, 2022, FNEC Chiefs Education Committee sent a letter to Education Minister Jean Francois Roberge requesting a meeting to discuss exemptions for First Nations students. Further updates will be forthcoming.

The Kahnawà:ke Education Center and Kahnawà:ke Combined Schools Committee support these efforts and are issuing letters to Quebec ministers and collaborating with local organizations within the Kahnawà:ke community who will be impacted by Bill 96 amendments.

The KEC and KCSC will keep community informed as we rally together with the FNEC and other Indigenous communities to ensure protection of our inherent and political rights.

Robin Delaronde
Director of Education
Kahnawà:ke Education Center

Tahothoratie Cross
Chairperson/Post-Secondary Representative
Kahnawà:ke Combined Schools Committee

For more information, please contact:
KEC Communications
communications@kecedu.ca
450-632-8770