ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS ON
FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION
Round Table Discussions on First Nations Education

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Ontario Native Education Counselling Association

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

ON

FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

Proposed Legislation of the Government of Canada for First Nations Education

“Working Together For First Nations Students - A Proposal for a Bill on First Nations Education”

BACKGROUND

At the ONECA annual conference in May 2013, the membership expressed concern with the announcement by the federal government, through Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), of its intention to initiate work on a national education bill called the First Nations Education Act to apply to all First Nations in Canada, except those with self-government agreements and education laws in place.

ONECA responded by establishing a Steering Committee that would provide support to the consultant that they commissioned to create three reports titled, “First Nations Education Law Template for First Nations Governments”, the “Protocol for First Nations Law Making” and the “Historical Highlights Leading to the Development of First Nations Education Law.” These papers were developed in response to requests from the ONECA membership at the annual conference in May 2013 and are now available on the web site.

The Board also discussed current developments on the FNEA and expressed concern with the severity of the changes suggested by the proposed legislation and the impact of those changes at the community level in jurisdiction, governance, funding levels, culture and language, curriculum, programming and education systems and standards. At an ONECA Board meeting in late October 2013, the Board suggested hosting public education forums called Round Tables for deeper dialogue on the draft First Nations Education Act. The Board also called for an analysis of the draft bill to be completed and posted on the ONECA web site. The paper titled, “Preliminary Analysis of the Proposal for Bill on First Nations Education” was completed in November 2013.

ONECA Board members shared the details of hosting a Round Table in their respective regions by calling on their partners to donate time, space, equipment and food to the events. Three districts of ONECA and their University partners responded immediately with offers to host the Round Tables.
in south, central and northern Ontario. All events were hosted without cost to ONECA and were organized within a 10-day period.

The Round Tables are listed below along with the methodology for hosting such events that can be replicated in your First Nations and surrounding communities.

**Summary of Panel Comments**

**Legislation and Governance**

- Jurisdiction over First Nations education belongs to the rights holders who are community members and their representative First Nation Government
- First Nations must develop their own education laws as nation building tools
- Proposed First Nation Education Act of AANDC will fail us by maintaining control and jurisdiction over education in the hands of the Minister of AANDC who will have no liability but all of the control and decision making in First Nations education
- First Nation Governments will be left all of the administrative responsibilities without control or jurisdiction or decision making over funding levels yet all of the liability for any shortfalls
- Proposed FNEA is a remake of the Indian Act without proper consultation, accommodation or consent
- Reject the FNEA and move to support a collaborative process to discuss the way forward with AANDC with more dialogue, networking, new ways of working together
- Mistrust of AANDC, colonial thinking, power differential within government
- Treaties and inherent rights have never been properly recognized by the Government of Canada, need a new relationship with the government
- First Nations have never given up rights in education to any foreign government
- Downloading jurisdiction to the province for First Nations education is not acceptable to First Nations since it abrogates the honour of the Crown for the protection and fulfillment of treaty and inherent rights
- Centralizing executive functions and decentralizing administrative functions is the character of the current government
- Develop our own Constitution at the First Nation Government level
- Make sure First Nations students in the provincial education system have what they need to succeed in any agreements; their needs are part of any education law

**Funding Formulas, Mechanisms**

- Modern needs based formulas must be developed, equitable with provincial schools, escalators to reach parity, indexing, factors for geographic remoteness, sustainable, long term predictable funding for planning purposes in new funding mechanisms
- Old BOFF formulas used to calculate education costs today are from the 1980’s and are not only outdated but were never meant to fund a modern education system
- Under funding means under achievement
- Government of Canada has a duty to consult, accommodate the rights and interests of First Nations
- Funding cap on First Nations education was placed there in 1996 in AANDC and never removed although other government departments had the cap removed after the budget was balanced
• Accountability is not an issue for First Nations, we are most accountable with thousands of pages of quarterly and annual reports to AANDC.
• Federal position of First Nations supporting the FNEA as “reform first and discussions of funding later” is not acceptable to First Nations; no one will agree to such a position and it is not legally defensible.
• Funding gap is 28 years long for First Nations to get caught up to provincial graduation rates.
• What are the cost factors for culturally and linguistically responsive education?
• Salary gap for federal teachers of the same professional qualifications as compared to their provincial colleagues.
• Data collection is key to providing the context for the reality faced at the First Nation community level with funding issues.
• Funding imbalance is socially engineered racism.

Language, Culturally Responsive Curriculum

• First Nations must develop their own programming to ensure cultural transmission, historical accuracy, linguistic fluency.
• Education standards must be developed to reflect First Nations values, and reach or exceed those of the province.
• Student achievement is tied to culture and language acquisition, equitable funding that enables school administration to properly offer stable staffing, gyms, libraries, Information Technology, computer labs, science labs, sports.
• Provincial curriculum is disconnected from First Nations students in content and pedagogy, assessment.
• Mental health issues, effects of poverty and residential school abuse still present in our systems and manifest in the schools so social programming is essential to student success and parental involvement.

Education Systems

• Decades of running our own systems have yielded professional maturity in operations, systems development and curriculum design, control we are not ready to give up to a new ACT that places control in the hands of the Government of Canada, the Minister of AANDC who is not a Minister of Education.
• First Nations want their own education systems not those inherited from the policies of AANDC that are tied to the acceptance of funding.
• Number of First Nations students attending school off reserve whose needs must be accommodated in any legislation.
• Develop First Nation education standards.

Communication Strategy

• Utilize social media for discussion and feedback.
• Media Strategy needed locally and provincially.
• Television debates.
• Write articles, letters, sign petitions, be vocal and get involved.
Final Recommendations:

- Develop our own education laws, First Nation Government Constitution
- National televised debate of leaders on this issue
- Publicize the research report of data on the discrepancies in teacher salaries
- Charter of Education Rights, Rights of Children
- Engage partnerships with allied organizations for action

Schedule of Round Tables

**Session #1**  
November 19, 2013, University of Sudbury, Sudbury, Ontario

**Session #2**  
November 20, 2013, Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario

**Session #3**  
November 25, 2013, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario

Press Release

Following the confirmation of locations, a press release was prepared to make the announcement throughout Ontario.

A sample of the press release is included below describing the work of the Round Table at the University of Sudbury, Sudbury, Ontario.

Sample Press Release

Round Table Discussion on First Nation Education

Proposed Legislation - "Working Together for First Nation Students"

A Proposal for a Bill on First Nation Education

SUDBURY, ON (November 19, 2013) - The Ontario Native Education Counselling Association is sponsoring a round table discussion to provide an opportunity for those interested in obtaining information and discussing the plans of the Federal Government to introduce legislation for First Nation Education.

The Federal Government has indicated that they intend to introduce a bill, to legislate First Nation Education and they are hoping to have it implemented by 2014. First Nations have been given until January to submit their comments. ONECA is sponsoring this event to provide an opportunity to discuss the impacts that legislation will have on our schools, students, and communities.

We encourage participation from First Nation Chiefs, Councilors, Education Directors, Education Counsellors, Parents, Students and Teachers.
EVENT: Round Table Discussion

DATE: November 19, 2013

TIME: 1:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M

PLACE: Canisius Hall, University of Sudbury

This event is coordinated and funded by the Ontario Native Education Counselling Association and supported by the Office of Indigenous Programs at Laurentian University and Indigenous Studies Program at University of Sudbury.

The Ontario Native Education Counselling Association (ONECA) is a not-for-profit organization that represents the needs and interests of Native Education Counsellors in Ontario. ONECA has approximately 160 paid members that belong to the organization and that come from 11 districts. These areas do include Brantford, Fort Frances, Georgian Bay, James Bay, Kenora, Lakehead, London, Nakina, Peterborough, Sioux Lookout and Sudbury.

For more information or to schedule interviews please contact: Roxane Manitowabi, at oneca@oneca.com or (705) 692-2999

**Panel Members**

A diverse set of Panel members was selected in each region by the ONECA Host to provide a broad spectrum of viewpoints from the education, policy and political perspectives on jurisdiction, systems, funding models, culture and language and improvements required in First Nations education.

Panel members were selected to reflect exceptional political leadership in education, decades of professional expertise in First Nations education, extensive research in First Nations education, cultural and linguistic knowledge of curriculum and wide-ranging experience in the operation of a First Nation school system as teachers, Counsellors, Directors of Education or senior policy advisors.

Each of the Panel members was provided with five questions designed to lead the discussions of the Round Table in order to prepare in advance to make three-minute responses. The Panel was comprised of First Nations political leadership of Chiefs and Grand Chiefs, First Nations educators and policy analysts, and First Nations Directors of Education.

**Moderator**

In each host ONECA district, the Host chose the Moderator to guide the discussions and provide summations of the event. Each Moderator was a senior educator, Vice President of the University or a director of an education program within the University.

In order to ensure the consistency of format at each Round Table, a series of documents were produced to guide the conduct of each session. The following guidelines show the role of the Moderator and the questions for the panelists that were used in each of the locations. Depending
on the background of the panelist, each Round Table was ultimately unique because of the nature of the responses from panelists.

**Information Packages**

Information packages were printed for each participant attending the Round Table and included the following:

- “Preliminary Analysis of the Proposal for a Bill on a First Nations Education Act by AANDC” - completed by ONECA
- Analysis completed by the Chiefs of Ontario
- Draft Letter to send to your MP
- News Release from Nishnawbe Aski Nation
- Paper titled “Why Education Funding is a Critical Issue for First Nations” – by Tim Thompson
- 2 yellow cards. We would like you to use the yellow cards to write down your questions on one side and any suggestions you have on the other. You can drop them in the box at the front as you leave or leave them on the table and people will collect them.
- Participants have the option of using the yellow card to write down your question, pass it to one of our helpers and the moderator will pose the question for you.

**Rules and Procedures for the Panel**

- We have 5 specific questions that we will be asking the Panel
- each panel member will have 3 minutes to respond
- once three minutes are up we will move on to the next person
- once all 5 questions have been answered by all of the Panel members, the floor will be open for participants to pose their questions to panel members or to offer suggestions regarding the proposed First Nation Education Act

This session is being videotaped for the purpose of documentation and recording purposes to assist ONECA with capturing the discussion and feedback from participants and panel members. The video will remain the property of ONECA and will not be distributed to other parties.

The Media have been instructed that they will be able to conduct interviews at the end of the Roundtable discussions and cannot participate in the discussion.

**Moderator Introduces The Issues**

For two decades First Nations have been lobbying the Federal Government to provide equitable funding to First Nations for education. On average First Nations are funded at levels below the comparable provincial levels.

**On June 9, 2010,** National Chief Shawn A-in-Chut Atleo launched a “National Call to Action on First Nation Education.” The Call to Action continues as an invitation to all people in Canada - to the corporate sector, philanthropic organizations, higher learning institutions, provincial and federal governments and groups and individuals – to join in this call for fairness and justice.
“Our call to action has five components:

1. **Reconciliation** - The governments of Canada must reconcile our rights within Education Acts across the country. Canada’s endorsement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, an international standard to guide relationships between nation states and First Nations peoples, creates the appropriate framework to advance this work. In the United States, following their recent endorsement, special Senate hearings have occurred to begin such an effort of reviewing domestic legislation and policy in light of the UNDRIP.

2. **First Nations education guarantee** - A secure fiscal framework is needed for funding for education - something that is enjoyed by every segment of Canadian society except for First Nations.

3. **Sustainability** - It is essential to have equitable funding arrangements based on real costs and comparable to provincial and territorial jurisdictions.

4. **Systems** - First Nation education must be supported through professional and accountable institutional supports delivering second and third level supports including First Nation curriculum, immersion in First Nation languages and First Nations post-secondary institutions.

5. **Support and Partnership** - Creating a positive learning environment in First Nations communities through linkages with organizations in the public and private sector to invest in our schools and our children.”

**December 2010** - The Government of Canada supports priority of addressing First Nation education in a letter from the Prime Minister and announces a National Panel on K-12 First Nation education to develop a path forward.

**Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan opted not to participate in this process. Ontario committed to doing their own research and preparing their own report.**

**December 2011**

Senate Committee on Aboriginal Affairs releases a report on First Nation Education calling for co-creation of a national First Nations Education Act.

**January 11, 2012**

Crown-First Nations Gathering affirms the parties will jointly review recommendations of the National Panel and determine the way forward.

**February 2012**

- National panel released their report “**Nurturing the Spirit of First Nations Students**”
- Three independent reports are also released by First Nation organizations this includes the one from the Chiefs of Ontario, “**Our Children, Our Future, Our Vision - First Nation Jurisdiction over First Nation Education in Ontario**”
March 2012

- Government of Canada announces a **Budget Statement** that specifies their intention to proceed with the development of a First Nation Education Act “with willing partners” to be implemented by Sept. 2014

December 2012

- AANDC releases the **Discussion Guide for Developing a First Nations Education Act** outlining its plans for new governance models, jurisdiction held by the Government of Canada, provincial education standards, little mention of culture or language enhancement, no mention of funding models or formulas.

July 2013

- “Developing a First Nation Education Act – Blue Print for Legislation” was released by AANDC with a few more details of the same plan presented in the Discussion Guide.

October 2013

- “Working Together for First Nations Students- A Proposal for A Bill on First Nation Education” was released by AANDC now in a readable format of a draft bill with more detailed clauses. The third version mirrors the first one showing First Nations that the "consultation" phase of the federal process was information not consultation. The federal government remains true to its objectives of dismantling the education sections of the Indian Act while retaining full jurisdiction over education.

**Questions for the Panelists of the Round Table**

**On Screen:**

1. Minister Valcourt has made statements that many of the Chiefs agree with him on the need for such an education act and that only the PTOs and AFN seem to disagree with him. **Do we need a national act on First Nations Education?**

2. Minister Valcourt has stated that First Nations have a "non-system of education" and "no accountability". **What are the features of the AANDC First Nations Education Act that strengthen the education system in your community?**

3. **How does the AANDC First Nations Education Act support jurisdiction and control over education in your First Nation?**

4. Minister Valcourt has said "reform first, funding later". **What is your reaction?**

5. **What are the answers for improving First Nations education?**
Round Table

University of Sudbury, Sudbury, Ontario

November 19, 2013

Moderator: Dr. Sheila Cote Meek - Associate Vice President, Indigenous Programs, Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario

Panelists:

Dominic Beaudry - Director of Education, Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve, Ontario
Diane Longboat - Education Consultant, Six Nations, Ontario
Tim Thompson - Wahta Mohawk Nation, Ontario
Duke Peltier-Gimaa - (Chief) of Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve
Roger Chum - President, Ontario Native Education Counselling Association
Robert Beaudin - Director of Education, M'Chigeeng First Nation
Steve General - Director of Education, Shawanaga First Nation

Summary of the Issues

Jurisdiction

- Climate of mistrust exists in First Nations relationship with the Government of Canada
- Any new legislation must be developed in partnership with First Nations to affirm First Nations jurisdiction over education, language, culture and traditions based system
- Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution affirms inherent rights and treaty rights; education should bring the section to life through affirming jurisdiction in a new process between First Nation Governments and the Government of Canada that affirms self-determination, self-government and jurisdiction of the First Nations Governments
- Indian Act and proposed FNEA gives the Minister of AANDC full jurisdiction over First Nations education; there is no jurisdiction in the proposed FNEA for First Nations Governments, only administration of federal programs
- Develop First Nations education laws, codes, policies, procedures, First Nation Government Constitution in order to assert jurisdiction over education
- First Nations are seeking a legislative framework that supports each First Nation Government
- Proposed FNEA endangers treaty and inherent rights
- Federal government has failed First Nations in its duty to consult
- Federal government has failed to uphold UNDRIP
- Design of a framework for an education system must evolve locally under local jurisdiction acknowledging treaty rights, inherent rights
- Danger with proposed FNEA-Minister has all the authority and no liability and First Nations have no authority with all the liability
- New legislation should specify AANDC in a new relationship with First Nations Governments and the provincial government that will recognize the education jurisdiction of the First Nations; and in addition, inform other federal government departments regarding funding and the appropriate adjustment of policies
• Televised national debate of party leaders, Minister Valcourt and First Nations leadership to bring the issue to Canadians

**Education Systems**

• AANDC does not have a system to administer First Nations education or professional staff like a Ministry of Education, First Nations deliver and administer locally an AANDC styled education system defined by budget priorities and today this is not control or jurisdiction
• Proposed FNEA positions the Minister of AANDC as a national Minister of Education without the professional capacity of his department set in place
• Current state of First Nations education is that there are no mechanisms to support our systems, they are underfunded, language and culture are critical key elements that do not receive enough funding or priority
• Of 515 First Nations schools, only 1 is immersion in the Indigenous language, language is the cornerstone of identity
• Education Standards must mirror First Nations needs and values not the provincial model
• First Nations must set education standards
• Residential school closes and First Nations children are sent to provincial schools
• First Nations have been incredibly innovative in developing their education systems with little support from AANDC in policy or funding
• Lifelong learning was intended in the provisions of the Treaties for First Nations and in inherent rights, and this includes post-secondary education where the funds from AANDC have not kept pace with the increasing population of First Nations students on long waiting lists to go to school
• Curriculum is demanded that is reflective of our way of life, spirituality, values
• First Nations will create education standards, safe learning environments, extracurricular activities, language, cultural traditions, professional learning communities, literacy coaches, numeracy coaches, IT coaches
• Require an integrative look at the overlap of social, emotional, spiritual and cognitive programming offered in many ministries, departments and funding sources
• Project results in Manitoba in the Frontier District School Board where the First Nations school was given equal funding to the provincial school nearby, results in First Nations student achievement were astounding and proved the long term effects of underfunding First Nations education are directly related to poor student achievement levels
• Proposed FNEA deals only with K-12 for on reserve education assuming the students attending provincial schools off reserve are status quo; lifelong learning is the goal
• First Nations need to call the province and its School Boards to account for the quality and effectiveness of the education it is paid to provide for First Nations students

**Funding Formulas and Mechanisms**

• Modern funding formulas are needed that factor in geographic remoteness, escalators to bring the systems up to standard, needs based, long term funding commitments to sustain First Nations education systems
• Replace the AANDC formula in use now from the 1980’s called BOFF
• First Nations are financially accountable-Auditor General, Sheila Frazier has stated this fact, over accountability exists as thousands of reports are sent to AANDC but few are read
• Funding gap is related to the achievement gap for First Nations students, high teacher turnover, low school attendance, continuity of classroom experience is not present, students
lose interest and commitment to their school, students lose confidence in the school, lack of educational resources, teachers lack professional development opportunities, teachers lack IT coaches, literacy and numeracy coaches, lack of administration support within the school(s), lack of building funds, salary discrepancies of 30%-40% between Band operated funding for school teachers and the salaries of the same qualified teachers in the School Boards

- FNEA shows a clear pattern of off-loading the responsibility for First Nations education to the province of Ontario for governance and funding
- Data is key to telling our story as First Nations
- Education successes have occurred in First Nations despite the minimal AANDC financial support or policies that respect First Nations control
- 1996 federal government placed a 2% cap on all federal departments to deal with the deficit, and the cap was removed from each one but AANDC, cap persists today 17 years later in education programs while provincial education budgets have grown at a rate of 4-7% per year
- Proposed FNEA does not specify how government intends to fund and after 30 years of running our own education system, there is no way to give that authority back to government, nor would we consider it
Round Table

Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario

November 20, 2013

Moderator: Dr. Susan Hill - University of Western Ontario

Panelists:

Rebecca Jamieson - Six Nations Polytechnic, Six Nations Grand River Territory, Ohsweken, Ontario
Ava Hill - Elected Chief, Six Nations Council, Six Nations Grand River Territory, Ohsweken, Ontario
Amos Key - Director of Language Programs, Woodland Cultural Centre, Brantford, Ontario
Bryan Laforme - Chief, Mississaugas of New Credit, Hagersville, Ontario
Gord Peters - Grand Chief, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, London, Ontario

Summary of the Issues

Jurisdiction

- First Nations have the inherent right to jurisdiction over education
- First Nations must develop their own education laws
- Canada must stop its assimilation policy with intent of termination, slow genocide, “kill the Indian in the child” is still prevalent in paternalistic and colonial attitudes and practice of making laws over First Nations, deciding what is best in education standards, curriculum, oversight
- We do not want to be “willing partners” in genocide
- Review history for an understanding of First Nations rights
- FNEA does not support First Nations jurisdiction over education
- FNEA is not the answer, one size does not fit all, it is a smoke screen for the 1969 White Paper on termination of First Nations rights and status in Canada
- From October 2012, First Nations have rejected the FNEA
- Nothing in the FNEA will help our communities
- “Willing partners” sought by AANDC are those who agrees with what you say, polite racism
- FNEA is off loading to the Province of Ontario

Education Systems

- 7 federal schools in Canada, 5 are at Six Nations, teachers are federal employees and not accountable to Six Nations Council
- AANDC should be accountable to the people it serves, First Nations, let’s look at a flexible framework
- Engage the Canadian public in our issues through forums like this and other communication strategies
- Our vision of education is embedded in the Two Row Wampum, our values and way of life although none of this appears to be honoured in the FNEA
• Youth services, housing, education are all intertwined and call for a coordinated investment in our children
• Develop our own curriculum, policies with the involvement of Elders and Knowledge Keepers that suit First Nations needs
• We need a manifesto in education, an Ontario based First Nations Education Trust
• History, culture and language are the foundation of education
• FNEA is harmful if it does not perpetuate our ways
• Many answers are in the studies already in hand
• Parents need to be more involved in the education of their children
• Students will succeed if they see themselves in the learning path, 15 elements of emotional intelligence must be embedded in the course work for students and valued as much as the cognitive achievements
• TAKE ACTION: rallies, international news, meet with MPs, Idle No More

Funding

• Reform first and funding later is not acceptable, no basis for trusting the federal government
• If we do not block the FNEA, then government will continue to force assimilation upon us
• Understanding new funding formulas is critical to the reform process
Round Table

Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario

November 25, 2013

Moderator: Kahontakwas Diane Longboat - Education Consultant, Six Nations Grand River Territory, Ohsweken, Ontario

Panelists:

Brenda Small-Vice President - Centre for Policy in Aboriginal Learning, Confederation College
Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux - Vice Provost, Aboriginal Initiatives, Lakehead University
Prof. Dennis McPherson - Chair and Associate Professor, Indigenous Learning

Summary of the Issues

Jurisdiction

- First Nations do not need a government crafted FNEA; government has a strategy to prevent the exercise of jurisdiction by First Nations
- What should such an Act look like? Constitutional and legal framework holds an obligation for some results.
- Purposeful process means engaged dialogue between the Minister and First Nations without excluding voices where rights are endangered; misinformation, generalizations, undermines First Nations voices, government cannot look from a distance
- Consultation for the FNEA has not been a joint process
- Government actions are dismissive of the First Nations voice and moves ahead to its own purpose with the FNEA
- How do we pull back the FNEA to reflect our needs, budgets and data?
- What kind of future do we see for our children? How do we discharge our responsibility to our children?
- First Nations have never given up jurisdiction over education or the responsibility to educate our children by virtue of our inherent rights and treaties
- FNEA legislation is developed unilaterally and externally to First Nations and will never match community values or aspirations
- There is a need for legislation to protect First Nations education and provide direction to government on its obligations to fund and recognize First Nations jurisdiction over education
- Understand the history of enfranchisement and relationship between the federal government and First Nations (if we don’t do what they want, they will take it away from us)
- First Nations are bound by the law of the land and the law of relationship; when we control our knowledge systems we have successful children
- Guard our core values, land, culture, language that define who we are as peoples and perpetuate those in the education systems of First Nations
Education Systems

- Provincial curriculum is further victimizing our children
- Present education system is an AANDC system, question the federal government’s capacity to run a system
- Look at models that have graduated successful students who have gone on to post-secondary or the workplace not only in Canada but elsewhere in the world and also look at models that are not doing well so they can be assisted in their evolution; review survival school models for exemplary practices. What have we managed to achieve?
- Study the value of home schooling, informal education, call to consciousness of our responsibilities to the children
- Celebrate our successes to transmit pride to students, teach critical thinking and analysis, create value for our stories, history, worldviews, a long legacy of community living and shared responsibility to community
- Home schooling is an important part of community action when parents decide to take responsibility for the learning of their children
- Bilingual school is needed in each community, skills to walk freely in the community and elsewhere in the world
- Include spirituality as part of education
- Young teachers in the north had trouble relating to the culture and community life, had no children of their own, followed rules of the south without question as in omitting the Lord’s Prayer from school opening each morning
- First Nations Youth will make these changes in their generation
- Be mindful of the AFN Declaration of Jurisdiction Over Education
- Responsibilities come from the Creator and are taught as home values, family values, extended family and clan aspirations, strengthened as action in ceremonies

Funding

- Indian Trust Funds of AANDC pay for our education, not tax payers money
- Public events to inform the Canadian public are essential to avoid polarization of viewpoints
- Unit cost of education takes us away from understanding real costs, a small school with few students still has the operational costs of a larger school yet the per unit student cost will not reflect the true value
- Lack of government will to discuss funding formulas or need is not fair, arbitrary, arrogant, not a legitimate starting point but is indicative of how the government treats First Nations in entrenching oppression through legislation
- Who signs on to legislation without an understanding of funding formulas and real costs that factor in geography, escalators, and indexing, remote transportation costs? Government says to First Nations that the ACT applies to them but funding will appear in the Regulations at a later date

Communication

- Communication is essential so that Canadians can feel empowered and dialogue with us about our experiences in the educational system
- What do you want Canadians to do in order to assist and support First Nations education?
- Campaigns for social justice, social activism, involve youth
• Mentor youth, rallies for public education, public speaking, Canadian Roots
• Land based living taught culture, language, survival, culture for a strong character and set a foundation for life

Media can be useful to influence public opinion, public education of our issues in education
  o Unity among First Nations for messaging, one platform of multiple strategies
  o Social programming must accompany the education program of studies
  o Campaign for Shannon’s Dream
  o Letter campaign to Members of Parliament
  o Educate our membership for intelligent militancy
  o Petitions from Chiefs of Ontario
  o Legal injunction to prevent the Minister from introducing the FNEA to Parliament
November 5, 2013

Dear Panelist:

We will be contacting a number of knowledgeable persons such as your self to participate in a round table discussion to discuss the Government of Canada, “A Proposal for a Bill on First Nation Education” which was released earlier last month. ONECA will be hosting a Round Table in Thunder Bay at the Oliver Road Community Centre on November 25, 2013 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

The Round Tables are just one of many activities that ONECA will be coordinating over the next couple of months. We have also committed to preparing Communication Kits, completing an analysis of the proposal and coordinating district meetings throughout Ontario so that people receive information and understand the proposed new Federal Law on First Nations Education so that they can determine for themselves the impact the new law will have on the functioning of your education system and the many changes coming ahead.

One of the objectives under which ONECA was incorporated is to provide a forum for discussion of problems relating to Native student counselling and Native education in general. Through this forum we hope to engage in a dialogue, share information and bring awareness to this critical issue and provide an opportunity for everyone to become informed.

I would like to thank you in advance for considering our request, and look forward to having you participate as a member of the Round Table.

Please confirm your acceptance of this invitation by contacting Roxane Manitowabi at the ONECA office at (705) 692-2999 or email her at oneca@oneca.com.

Sincerely,

Roger Chum, President.