



CHIEFS OF ONTARIO - UPDATE

Preparation for All Ontario Chiefs Conference ~ June 2011:
Parallel Process

A recent decision by the Chiefs in Assembly mandates the ECU in partnership with the Tribal Councils that currently deliver second-level education services on behalf of First Nations, to develop a strategy to submit a made-in-Ontario report to the National Chief and the Minister of INAC. The decision for First Nations in Ontario to engage in a parallel process rather than directly engaging with the National Panel was informed by an independent analysis of the process that indicated several flaws.

Background:

- On December 9, 2010 – Minister Duncan announced that the federal government would work with AFN to establish a national panel to address First Nation education. Minister Duncan confirmed commitment that it would be joint report and that there would be regional sessions and varied ways in which First Nations would be directly engaged.
- AFN agreement to this process was based on a clear national mandate on the priority of education that was established by the Chiefs at the AFN Special Chiefs Assembly December, 2009.
- The National Panel is an independent body, created to lead an engagement process designed to explore and advise on the development of options, including legislation and potential features of legislation, to improve elementary and secondary education outcomes for First Nation children who live on reserve.
- Upon review of an independent analysis and some prepared presentations at the Ontario SCA in April 2011 the Chiefs in Assembly rejected participation in the National Panel process and passed Resolution # 11/19 that mandates the ECU to partner with Tribal Councils to develop a strategy to submit a made-in-Ontario report to the National Chief and the Minister of INAC.

Current Status/Analysis:

- The parallel process of the Ontario First Nations will take a rights based approach that positions Treaty rights at the core of the initiative.
- First Nations in Ontario will focus efforts on understanding resourcing constraints and issues of control as a means to address longstanding low education achievement levels of First Nations learners.
- The scope of the process will include First Nation rights to **all aspects** of lifelong learning as envisioned in the Treaties and the Assembly of First Nation's (AFN) policy document *First Nations Control of First Nations Education*.
- The final report will outline the reality of requirements of First Nations, First Nations organizations and First Nations peoples in Ontario as well as recommendations on improving their ability to improve lifelong learning initiatives that are linked to the strategic priorities outlined in the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) strategic plan.

- Among other things, the report will include an analysis of an Ontario adaptation of the modifications to the Band Operated Funding Formula (BOFF) by the First Nation Education Council of Quebec (FNEC), which will include recommendations to address comparability of funding and programming between First Nation schools and provincially funded schools.

Next Steps:

1. The ECU has prepared a draft work plan and is establishing a working group that includes Tribal Council participation to oversee the project and establish regular conference calls to monitor progress.
2. Submit proposal for resourcing to INAC region.
3. Determine extent of collaboration with other regions not participating in the National Panel process.
4. Establish a communication and information collection plan
5. Produce report to coincide with the National Panel report submission to the National Chief and the INAC Minister.

Attachments:

1. Letter from RCAT to NC
2. Concerns expressed by First Nations representatives in Ontario
3. Draft Work Plan