

Education Summit Report

to the SNEC Ad Hoc Education Committee

“A Saturday Well-Spent”

by Claudine VanEvery-Albert, Consultant

The Summit was very well attended, especially given the beautiful summer day on which it was held. More than fifty people attended. Some were teachers, some were retired educators, some were parents or grandparents and some were community people who have an interest. A list of participants is available upon request.

The morning session provided a basic history of Six Nations education from traditional times prior to contact with Europeans, through the education provided by early missionaries and by the Confederacy Chiefs' Six Nations School Board to education under Indian and Northern Affairs where we are today. A presentation was provided on the most recent School Evaluation conducted in 2000-2001 by the Six Nations Elected Council. The School Success Consortium, a group of Six Nations social services agencies and Brock University, made a presentation on some of the issues identified in their study that was completed in 2010.

Lunch time entertainment was provided by the First Nations Children's Choir conducted by Robin Maracle.

The afternoon session provided an opportunity for participants to undertake discussion at their “Kitchen Tables” to answer the question, *“What are your ideas for a quality education system for Six Nations?”* Each Table selected a Reporter who orally presented the Table's ideas on quality education for Six Nations. Participants at each table also had the opportunity to write **“A Final Comment”** - their own personal ideas on paper and submit them as an individual. All comments from all tables were typed and can be found in Appendix One and Appendix Two of this report. Appendix Three is a collection of working papers and the agenda for the Education Summit.

Members of the Six Nations Elected Council Ad Hoc Education Committee are: Councillors Helen Miller, Chair, Ava Hill, Bob Johnson, and Mark Hill. Marilyn Mt. Pleasant provided Admin Support for the Summit and Jody Hill designed the Education Summit flyer. David Moses of The DAM Studio provided the sound system and will provide a recorded copy of the day's proceedings for the record.

Methology for Categorizing Comments

In order to determine which items were most important to the Education Summit participants, the comments from the sheets provided were coded/counted by category. The top 10 categories are in order of the number of comments generated. The text below each category, is a basic summary of what was said at the Summit.

1. Education Program (30)
People were most concerned about the quality of the present education program. Many felt that there were significant gaps in the areas of Science, Math, Physical Education and Language & Culture. People were also concerned about students reaching high school and not being successful due to gaps in their education. There was also significant concern that cultural understandings were not the basis for school programs. There were some participants who noted that Six Nations did not need “to reinvent the wheel” and that Six Nations already has a quality education system. It just needs some support.

2. Language & Culture (23)
Most of the concerns in this area had to do with the students & staff not being fully knowledgeable about Haudenosaunee culture as the foundation for Six Nations education. There was also serious concern about losing our languages and that consideration be given to ensuring that all staff have an understanding of our languages. A bilingual education system was recommended by some.

3. Funding (20)
The main points regarding funding are that a Six Nations School system must have funding at least equal to what is provided by the province and that funding must be determined to be on-going and not based on the Federal Governments 5 year appropriation cycle.

4. Student Support (17)
People who wrote these comments felt that there needed to be more support, both academically and socially for our students. Participants spoke of student support on many levels - in the classrooms - more education assistants, in transitioning from Six Nations to high schools and providing academic support programs outside of school time.

5. Parents (13)
Most of the comments in this area said that parents must become more involved in the education of their children by ensuring that they have the right clothes, are fed and ready to attend school. Participants were also concerned about poor student attendance. One of the main comments was that young parents needed more support to raise their children.

6. **Teacher Support (13)**
There were both negative and positive comments in this area. Some comments noted that teachers need extra support in curriculum delivery, teaching methods and empowerment training so that empowerment can be passed on to the students. There were some comments that teachers should be respected and that they, as well as students need to be cared for.
7. **School Evaluation (13)**
There were negative comments made about the age of the data as presented in the School Evaluation of 2000-2001. Most participants felt that it was important to have an up-to-date school evaluation so that Six Nations people can see the true picture for the present and not have to make decisions based on old data.
8. **Education Board (13)**
Several participants noted that there needs to be some kind of education board. Some indicated that such a board could be made up of retired teachers, or elected persons or appointed persons. It was also mentioned that board members need proper training in order to do the job. There was some concern that Six Nations Elected Council would not be able to do the job of an education board.
9. **Council Role (10)**
There was some question as to what the role of the Council should be. Many thought that the Six Nations Council should not take over education but should work at arms-length with an education board. It was mentioned that some people thought that Council had already determined how education take-over would come about. Some people noted that it was important for Council to move forward fairly quickly while others thought that the process should not be rushed. People thought that Council should ensure that the Government of Canada - AANDC should not be allowed to abrogate their fiduciary responsibility for First Nations education. People mentioned that there should be immediate follow-up on the Summit.
10. **Human Resources (8)**
Responses indicated that some participants were concerned about how teachers were hired. They felt that how teacher hiring is presently done is unfair and perhaps there is a level of nepotism involved. One person mentioned that the non-native principal should be replaced.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are generated from the comments submitted:

Recommendation #1

That the Six Nations Elected Council begin negotiations with AANDC to take over education at Six Nations, and,

That SNEC ensure that education funds received meet the *real* needs of Six Nations students in all areas of their education experience, and,

That long-term funding be guaranteed, and,

That education funds should not be less than the funding that would be received from the province, and,

That SNEC set up an arms-length, community entity to work with Council regarding negotiations.

Pressure: Urgent

Timeline: Immediately

Suggestion: In the possible instance where AANDC would not provide take-over funding that does not fully meets the needs of equitable education for Six Nations students, that Six Nations Elected Council consider taking AANDC to Human Rights Court on this under-funding issue. Further information can be found at:

http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/whats_new/default-eng.aspx?id=694

Recommendation #2

That Six Nations Elected Council create an arms-length, community driven, fully funded entity whose mandate would be to conduct a School Evaluation similar to the one conducted in 2000-2001 and,

That Six Nations Elected Council secure the funding from AANDC to carry out said School Evaluation.

Pressure: Urgent

Timeline: Immediately

Recommendation #3

That, should Six Nations Elected Council or a Six Nations School Board, secure adequate, secure and on-going funding agreements, that the other recommendations, ideas or thoughts garnered from the Education Summit of June 23, 2012 be forwarded to the School Board for their consideration and action.

Pressure: Important

Timeline: Future

Next Steps

Given that there was some concern that the momentum for this education initiative be continued, the next recommended steps are make a report to the community and begin work on offering the three forums as originally discussed.

There were several ideas about the potential topics for the three forums. These are:

- Governance & Leadership,
- School & Youth
- Education Program Wants & Needs
- Special Education

Forums which would be no more than two hours long can be held in evenings during the summer. These would be smaller groups of 10 to 20 who would be prepared to discuss in depth the topics that are chosen. The consultant would select the dates, times and topics in conjunction with the Education Committee, organize the forum, facilitate the discussion and make the report.

The Education Summit Report and the Report of the Education Forums would be bundled to make a final report to the community.

Given that the community would like to keep the initiative alive, I am recommending that the Education Committee chose the Forum Topics and Dates immediately and that this information go in the local newspapers, on the radio and in the next SNEC Newsletter.