

Nishnawbe Aski Nation Declaration on Our Inherent and Treaty Right to Education

We are sovereign people. Our sovereignty was recognized in the Royal Proclamation of 1763.

We, the Treaty Peoples, stand united.

As stated in the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Declaration on July 6th, 1977, we will protect our custodial rights by any means necessary. We recognize the principles of the Declaration of Commitment signed January 23rd, 2013.

We, the people of Nishnawbe Aski Nation, have Inherent Rights given to us by the Creator to govern our peoples and our lands. We cannot relinquish our Inherent Rights. We have an obligation to exercise these Inherent Rights to protect our lands and our people.

We, the Treaty people, have rights to education pursuant to Treaties 5 & 9.

We have endured over a century of educational neglect and abuse as Canada continues to use inadequate funding and its program regime against First Nation education as a tool to advance its assimilation policy. This is unacceptable.

All of Canada's imposed educational regimes for our children including Residential Schools, Church Schools, Sixties Scoop, Indian Day Schools and underfunded delegated authority for local administration, have failed to meet the educational needs of our children and students. The education achievement gap between our students and those in the mainstream continues to grow under Canada's watch.

There can be no meaningful change until we, the First Nations of Nishnawbe Aski Nation, assert our inherent jurisdiction over education.

Canada shall respect and honour our Inherent and Treaty Right to Education and commit to the educational promises made by the Crown to our people. Our Inherent and Treaty rights supersede any federal and provincial legislation that is enacted without our free, prior and informed consent.

The First Nations of Nishnawbe Aski Nation have developed local education systems that have had many successes despite the underfunding and lack of implementation of the Treaty Right to Education by the Federal Government.

We have a sacred trust to our people and to the seventh generation to provide lifelong holistic education that respects our identity, culture, values, traditions, and languages, and enables safe, healthy and productive lives. We accept this sacred trust.

We categorically reject any legislation imposed on us by the Federal and

Provincial Government, as it is a direct violation of the Treaties. We will take action if the Federal or Provincial Governments should proceed with any such legislation.

We, the people of Nishnawbe Aski Nation, will remain united on this Declaration on Our Inherent and Treaty Right to Education.