

Maskwacis Cree Declaration on Education

Iyiniw Mamtohnehicikan (Cree thinking) is the foundation of education for Maskwacis people. Iyiniw Mamtohnehicikan is an all encompassing way of seeing and understanding the world through the Cree perspective. Our language, ceremonies, values and understanding of good relationships all contribute to Iyiniw Mamtohnehicikan. Education systems that foster the Cree way of thinking are integral to pursuing self-determination as Cree peoples and ensuring the health and happiness of Maskwacis people. Exercising control over the formal systems of education is how we revitalize and pass on Cree ways of thought.

To guide our actions, we will follow cultural and traditional teachings, in particular Wahkohtowin. Wahkohtowin is the belief that all things are related and connected, that all of existence has spirit and that living in a good way requires us to maintain good relationships with each other and other aspects of existence. We recognize that respect for mother earth, elders, youth, and the Treaties are paramount to planning ahead and making decisions for future generations.

We have a responsibility to honour and protect Treaty and historical sites, and share our knowledge with the world about Treaty. We recognize that in order to ensure we have strong systems of education it is important to revitalize a treaty relationship with the Governments of Canada. This relationship emanates from our sacred and historic relationship between ourselves and the Crown created through the signing of Treaty Six. Treaty Six imparted a responsibility onto the Government of Canada to help us create schools that allow us to succeed in Canadian society.

Our treaty partners have not always respected the treaty relationship between us. The imposition of residential schools damaged the relationship between us. We feel that one of the primary avenues through which this relationship can be repaired is by properly funding education systems that are under our control and design. The Crown has a fiduciary duty, obligation and responsibility to provide unencumbered funding that allows Maskwacis to educate our children in our own ways.

We have the inherent right to operate our own schools, decide our own curriculum and determine our own outcomes. Motivated by our identity as Maskwacis Nehiyawak, our curriculum will focus on our history, culture and language. Nehiyaw teaching methods and perspectives relevant to Maskwacis will be included in all aspects of the education system.

All children in Maskwacis are important, are valued and will be at the centre of our decision making regarding education. Our schools will have the ability to work with the needs and aspirations of all students. Our schools will go above and beyond to ensure the success of our children and provide a safe environment conducive to learning.

A standardized Nehiyaw language curriculum will be continually and repetitively integrated into the daily life and activities of our schools. We will ensure land based forms of education are important aspects of the learning process.

We will motivate our children and build their self-esteem and personal wellness by promoting a balanced educational system. While passing on Nehiyaw Mamtohnehicikan remains the core of

schools, we will also utilize various teaching methods to suit the diversity of our children. This includes being innovators and national leaders in providing special needs education and keeping current with relevant technology. We aim to prepare our children for future success in various fields of education and employment.

Parents and the community will be involved and engaged in all aspects of learning. Elders will be involved in the daily lives of students, through sharing our oral history, ceremonies, and storytelling. We affirm that it takes strong parental, elder and community leadership to ensure the success of our children's education.

We affirm the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Truth and Reconciliation, "Calls to Action" and the Maskwacis Nehiyawewin Declaration that affirms Nehiyawewin is the Official Language of Maskwacis.

As Maskwacis Cree, we engage in a continual process of teaching and learning about how we enact our values and philosophies in the present. This includes enhancing our understanding of Treaties and Treaty laws, and the continual process of defining and practicing how we maintain respectful treaty relationships with others. It is through these practices of Iyiniw Mamtohnehicikan and wahkohtowin that we will maintain and strengthen our education systems for future generations.

June 13, 2017

Signed by:



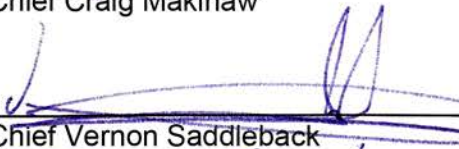
Chief Irvin Bull

November 29, 2017
Date



Chief Craig Makinaw

November 29, 2017
Date



Chief Vernon Saddleback

November 29, 2017
Date



On behalf of Montana First Nation

November 29, 2017
Date

The following declaration was collectively created and reviewed by citizens of the Maskwacis Cree in the Winter and Spring of 2017. The process was led by the Maskwacis Education Schools Commission (MESCC), reviewed by a panel of elders, recommended by the Board of MESCC and approved by a Maskwacis Cree motion on June 13th, 2017.