

What's news at the KEC?



May 7, 2018

Evaluation of Language Program at Karonhianónhnha

As you may know, the KEC recently launched the Skátne Enionkwaió'ten Community Language Plan, a five-year plan for language revitalization in Kahnawà:ke. As part of the KEC's work in implementing critical steps towards language revitalization within our KEC schools, the KEC is pleased to announce that we are conducting an evaluation of the Kanien'kéha program at Karonhianónhnha Tsi lonterihwaienstákhkwa.

We are fortunate to have retained Tehotakerá:tonh Jeremy Green, a sessional lecturer and researcher at Six Nations Polytechnic in the Onkwehón:we Language Degree Program (B.A.) to conduct this evaluation. We are fortunate to have attained the services of Tehotakerá:tonh and his research assistant, Thotharátye Joe Brant and welcome them to our community.

We are excited to engage in such an important process towards a future that sees Kanien'kéha as the primary language in our homes, businesses and community. We consider this a lofty, yet achievable goal.

We are proud of the work done by KEC and school teams, and for consistently providing quality language instruction to our students. Our staff have been crucial to reaching this point in providing valuable insights throughout the strategic process.

The evaluation's purpose is to further KEC strategic goals based on staff input, and consultation reports provided by Donna Goodleaf, Kahtehrón:ni Stacey, and Christie Huff. The KEC focus is to establish a baseline from which we can build, strengthen, support and evaluate our language programs and how they impact other areas of study.

The evaluation will focus on three key points:

1. Target specific areas of need to build the Kanien'kéha speaking proficiency of students through effective second language pedagogy and assessment so that resources can be directed to these areas of need to improve the quality of the immersion program at Karonhianónhnha;
2. To improve children's language knowledge and proficiency acquired from Karonhianónhnha Kanien'kéha immersion to adequately prepare them for a successful transition to high school;
3. To assess the effectiveness of the current model of language streaming for Kanien'kéha, English and French at Karonhianónhnha to achieve the oral proficiency goals as outlined in Karonhianónhnha 2017-2018 success plan.

The evaluation process will include Tehotakerá:tonh consulting with teachers, administrators and education staff through interview, focus groups and in-class observations.

In order to have a full representation of Kanien'kéha levels Tehotakerá:tonh plans to meet with current Kahnawake Survival School (KSS) students that graduated from the Karonhianónhnha Kanien'kéha immersion program to seek their input through a questionnaire. He will also be asking for input from grade 5 and 6 students at Karonhianónhnha School.

Tehotakerá:tonh and Karonhianónhnha administrators have organized a focus group consisting of parents of L1 children (first language speakers) currently attending Karonhianónhnha or are enrolled at KSS. The focus group consists of eight to twelve parents. They scheduled their first meeting for May 9th at Karonhianónhnha from 6-9pm. These parents have already been contacted, however if you have not received an invitation and would like to partake, please contact Principal Lauren Jacco at Karonhianónhnha School.

These consultations are integral in the assessment process. We must stress that no names will be used in the presentation and data gathered will remain strictly confidential.

The KEC plans to offer a presentation on the complete consultation process at the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year. The presentation will highlight Tehotakerá:tonh's initial results, key points and recommendations for our education system to build upon our successes in the current immersion program according to Tsi Niionkwarihò:ten principles. The expected outcome is the knowledge to build a Kanien'kéha immersion program that encompasses a plentiful and immersive language experience for our students' scholastic careers-- from nursery through high school graduation.

This is indeed a large initiative, made possible by student, parent and staff input along with in-depth reviews conducted with independent consultants. This endeavor supports our strategic plan and its focus on building a strong curriculum rooted in Tsi Niionkwarihò:ten, driven and sustained on our rich history as a people.

Look for more KEC communication as the evaluation progresses on our Facebook page, website and emails as this exciting process unfolds.