



NEWS FROM THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

APPLICATION FOR JUDICIAL REVIEW BY THE AFNQL AND FNEC: LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

On April 20, 2023, the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL) and the FNEC filed an application for judicial review with the Superior Court of Québec, seeking to have 14 sections of the Charter of the French Language declared null, invalid, unconstitutional and of no force and effect, on the grounds that these sections unjustifiably infringe upon the Indigenous rights of First Nations. In addition to the rights relating to First Nations languages, the application concerns the rights to self-determination and self-government in matters of education.

Since then, the FNEC has undertaken statistical, documentary and historical research to support its application. A common document for managing the procedure, containing among other things, the reasons, declarations and deadlines for filing the various documents in the file, has been adopted by the parties.

In the meantime, on July 7th and August 9th, Quebec's minister of the French language unilaterally enacted two regulations exempting students who reside, or have resided, on a reserve from the French language requirements for an Attestation or Diploma of Collegial Studies.

We invite you to consult the following site to submit an application to the "guichet des affaires collégiales" of the ministry of higher education: <https://www.quebec.ca/education/cegep/services/guichet-affaires-collegiales> (available in French only).

Nevertheless, the FNEC Chiefs' Committee sent a letter to the minister expressing serious concerns about the province's intention to regulate First Nations rights and their application to English-language programs. The Committee also denounced the absence of measures to support the educational success of secondary school students, access to regulated professions and the requirement to reside in a community's territory to benefit from an exemption. The Chiefs also denounced the discretionary power over college diplomas conferred on the Minister by the Regulation to authorize the Minister of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology to make an exception to the application of section 88.0.17 of the Charter of the French language.

Finally, in the wake of the FNEC's awareness-raising efforts, the acting National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Joanna Bernard, and the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages, Ronald E. Ignace, wrote to Quebec Premier François Legault to express their support for the FNEC and AFNQL's demands.

PROVINCIAL ROUND TABLE ON THE EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS OF INDIGENOUS STUDENTS, (THE "TABLE")

A new era is beginning...

The October 25th meeting of the Provincial Round Table in the Educational Success of Indigenous Students (or the "Table") saw the election of a brand-new co-chair, Ms. Loretta Robinson, a member of the Naskapi community of Kawawachikamach.

Quebec's ministry of education paid tribute to outgoing co-chair Denis Gros-Louis, who had held the position for four years, for his contribution to a number of different issues.

Here is the full text read by assistant deputy minister and Table co-chair Marie-Josée Blais:

"Our Denis" was nominated by one of his accomplices and colleagues, Annie Gros-Louis, during the seventh meeting of the Table on September 27, 2019, following the departure of Ms. Moses.

For those who remember, Denis was absent at that meeting, where he was elected unopposed. Table members got to know his collaborative leadership style at the following meeting, which led to the creation of an unlikely duo with Steven Colpitts, then MEQ assistant deputy minister. We're told that everyone was impressed by his boundless energy.

Under his chairpersonship, the Table adopted its first work priorities, which were renewed several times, and guided the allocation of funds as part of the government's response to the Viens Commission report, and continue to guide the Table's work to this day.

The Table went into virtual mode and managed emergencies during the pandemic, where it asserted its place as the MEQ's main Indigenous consultation body. Since February 2022, Denis has provided us with a number of services, and I'm delighted to be one of his "partners in crime".

The Table also adopted Competency 15 and spearheaded the work for the future strategy for the educational success of Indigenous students. Here are some of the presentations Denis contributed to during his tenure as co-chair of the Table:

1. Intercultural reconciliation project between Indigenous peoples and immigrants
2. Harricana School Board's "Montre ta fierté à la rentrée!" project
3. Support agent for Anglophones and Indigenous peoples dealing with bullying, MEQ
4. A guide to primary schoolyard design called *Guide d'aménagement d'une cour d'école* by MEQ
5. The reference guide for professional competencies in teaching, aka the *Référentiel de compétences professionnelles pour la profession enseignante* by MEQ
6. Agreement between the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux and the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur by MEQ
7. Provincial Forum on Reconciliation by Institut Tshakapesh
8. Quebec Citizenship and Culture curriculum
9. Research on access to and use of digital technologies in First Nations and Inuit communities in Quebec
10. Several extraordinary meetings for COVID-19
11. Announcement of \$19.4 million and three measures in response to the Viens Commission recommendations
12. Implementation of the MEQ's CSS/CS respondent network.
13. Brenda Whiteduck's arrival at the Table, her contribution to the Quebec Citizenship and Culture study program and to the overall optimization of study programs.
14. The concerns surrounding the adoption of what is commonly known as Bill 96, now the Act respecting the official and common language of Quebec, French.
15. The foundations of a future strategy, due to see the light of day in spring 2

To conclude, "Our Denis" inspires us, as does "Yoda"; we know he's of an unknown species and would surely be considered one of the most respected Jedi Masters in the Order. Despite his unusual professional profile... and his advanced age, he is nonetheless very agile and capable of competing with the greatest.

A big THANK YOU to Denis for your dedication and passion. Our expertise and wisdom are evolving thanks to you!

