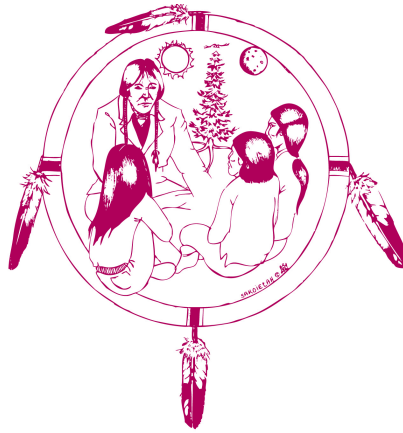


Ahkwesáhsne Mohawk Board of Education



POLICY 103 BOARD OF TRUSTEES Preservation of Ahkwesáhsró:nnon Culture and Kanien'keha Language

Please Note:

AMBE policies are governance documents that state the Board's decision related to an area of operation by stating purpose, guiding principles, basic procedures, and key responsibilities.

AMBE senior management is accountable for implementing Board policies, and expected to exercise good judgment when implementing the policies in the context of day-to-day operations. Where appropriate, senior management may decide to develop specific guidelines and procedures, Administrative Frameworks, to ensure the appropriate implementation of Board policy.

This policy was adopted for the first time by the Ahkwesáhsne Mohawk Board of Education (AMBE) on:
May 7, 2020

Subsequent amendments:
May 20, 2025

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2. Purpose

The purpose of *Policy 103: Preservation of Ahkwesáhsró:non Culture and Kanien'keha Language*, is to ensure the continued preservation, revitalization, promotion, and protection of Akwesasne Mohawk Community traditions. Preserving and revitalizing our culture and language play a critical role in ensuring that our children and future generations will continue to understand the importance of our unique identity, celebrate our heritage, and promote our values and ways of being with each other, as well as with the global community.

3. Definitions

In order of appearance

3.1	Culture	Culture is a way of being that defines and distinguishes a people or nation, as expressed through their customs, language, art (<i>stories, music, dance, visual arts, crafts</i>), cuisine, social institutions, achievements, and interaction with other peoples and nations. Culture in this Policy refers to Ahkwesáhsró:non culture. Culture is composed of: • <i>Non-material aspects</i>, including values, beliefs, customs, traditions and language, which influence our social norms, rules, and laws that govern our society. • <i>Material aspects</i> are composed of items that we make and use as an expression of our identity, which includes a wide variety of things, from buildings, clothing, stories, music, dance, visual arts, crafts and many others.
3.2	Preservation	The activity or process of keeping Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Kanien'keha language alive within Education and by extension within the community.
3.3	Revitalization	To give focused attention and importance to Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Kanien'keha language in Education and by extension within the community.

3.4	Promotion	The act of developing and integrating Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Kanien'keha language in the educational curriculum and community activities.
3.5	Protection	The act of saving Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Kanien'keha language in Education and by extension within the community.
3.6	The Board	Refers to the <i>Ahkwesáhsne Mohawk Board of Education</i> , which includes both the governance and administrative structure.
3.7	Board Members	Includes both Trustees (<i>Elected Members</i>) and Ex-officio Members (<i>Portfolio Chiefs and the Director of Education</i>).
3.8	Curriculum	The program of study of various subjects.
3.9	Cultural Diversity	The existence of different cultures and in turn different knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, norms, customs and values systems within society.
3.10	Knowledge Keepers and Elders	It is recognized that among the Mohawks of Akwesasne there are individuals who possess unique and specific knowledge of <i>Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Kanien'keha language</i> , whose knowledge should be preserved, revitalized, promoted and protected, and will be required in the development of curriculum.
3.11	Pedagogy	The teaching methods and practices that are used to implement the curriculum.

4. Principles and Directives

4.1. Preserve, Revitalize, Promote and Protect:

- 4.1.1 The Board actively seeks to preserve, revitalize, promote and protect Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Kanien'keha language.
- 4.1.2 The Board is guided by the Hotinonshon:ni principle of seven generations. This principle will ensure that the Board considers the effect decisions today regarding Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Kanien'keha language will have on descendants seven generations into the future.
- 4.1.3 The Board ensures our Kanien'keha birthright is transmitted through our educational system and is consistent with Hotinonshon:ni teachings.
- 4.1.4 The Board supports the Ahkwesáhsne Mohawk Board of Education's participation in local, provincial and federal indigenous programs, initiatives and committees in order to identify strengths, challenges, opportunities and lived experiences of our students and staff.

4.2. Identity and Enhanced Quality of Life:

- 4.2.1. The Board believes that culture is important for shaping social relationships, determining how we make sense of the world and our place in it, and shaping our everyday actions and experiences in society. Therefore, having a deep understanding of our culture and being fluent in our language will increase the pride in our identity and hope for the future of our students and community.
- 4.2.2. The Board acknowledges that understanding our culture is an asset, and our students, through education, must be familiar with the contributions we have made towards humanity. The contributions we have made can then be used to cultivate economic opportunities in areas leading to an improvement in the quality of our students' lives and the Akwesasne Community as a whole.

- 4.2.3. Areas that should be considered include, but are not limited to: academics (*language, mathematics, technology*), sciences (*medicinal, environmental, nutritional*), social sciences (*geography, history and economics*), arts (*dance, music, visual, crafts*), mindfulness (*philosophy, beliefs, spirituality*), and governance (*laws, regulations, processes and services*).

4.3. Strength in Cultural Diversity

- 4.3.1. The Board believes in the critical role culture plays in the creation of material and non-material forms of knowledge and recognizes that the knowledge produced by our community has benefited humanity.
- 4.3.2. The Board also recognizes that, while it is important to preserve, revitalize, promote and protect our culture and language, it is also important to recognize and respect the uniqueness of other cultures, and value cultural diversity among First Nations and global communities.
- 4.3.3. The Board believes and respects the uniqueness of each culture, recognizing that celebrating cultural diversity strengthens our society by increasing empathy and dialogue, which are the foundation for human peace and progress.
- 4.3.4. Therefore, the Board strongly supports the goal of ensuring our students become thoughtful engaged global citizens and leaders through their understanding of the role and importance of our Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and language, as well as that of others.

4.4. Shared Responsibility:

- 4.4.1 The Board has the responsibility for the revitalization and enhancement of the Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Kanien'keha language through education.
- 4.4.2 The Board considers education as a partnership and a shared responsibility among students, parents/guardians, staff, the Akwesasne Community and the Board with the guidance of our Knowledge Keepers and Elders.

4.5. Innovation in Education:

- 4.5.1 The Board seeks innovative ways to integrate traditional teachings into our current education system in order to provide our students with the skills they need to thrive in the modern world along with a firm knowledge of and respect for the past.
- 4.5.2 The Board strongly believes that our curriculum must be reflective of a 21st century curriculum, which successfully harmonizes a deep understanding of Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Kanien'keha language, while taking into consideration the principles of cultural diversity.
- 4.5.3 The Board supports a dual language curriculum which will result in increased economic opportunities for students leading to a higher quality of life. Kanien'keha, our traditional language, will allow students to access the wisdom of our Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Hotinonshon:ni traditions, while English will enable our students to participate fully on the world stage.
- 4.5.4 The Board ensures that Mohawk language expert(s) are hired to prepare curriculum, train fluent speakers to be immersion teachers, and train non-fluent teachers to be speakers. Mohawk language experts will also develop separate curriculum and programs for the community through continuing education.
- 4.5.5 The Board encourages reciprocal partnerships between the Ahkwesáhsne Mohawk Board of Education and First Nations Schools, First Nations Boards of Education, and non-First Nation aforementioned institutions in the spirit of celebrating cultural diversity. Partnerships will result

in building bridges, encouraging opportunities, developing networks, and exchanging knowledge and ideas.

5. Procedures

- 5.1.** Drawing on knowledge, understanding and experiences of Board Members and the community's Knowledge Keepers and Elders, the Board will consider how it can preserve, revitalize, promote or protect Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Kanien'keha language through the development and implementation of appropriate curriculum and pedagogy.
- 5.2.** The Board in its decisions will consistently consider Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Kanien'keha language, as well as, the Hotinonshon:ni principle of seven generations, taking into consideration the longer-term impact on students, parents/guardians, staff and Akwesasne Community.
- 5.3.** The Board will ensure that the Ahkwesáhsne Mohawk Board of Education has clear goals and strategies for building Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Kanien'keha language into the curriculum, so as to:
 - Build a stronger Ahkwesáhsne Mohawk identity;
 - Encourage personal pride and sense of self within the community;
 - Increase employment opportunities; and
 - Improve quality of life in general.
- 5.4.** In the development of the Ahkwesáhsne Mohawk culture and language curriculum, the Board will:
 - 5.4.1.** Confirm that knowledge contributed by our people to humanity have been included in the curriculum and shared with the community, including: academics (*language, mathematics, technology*), sciences (*medicinal, environmental, nutritional*), social sciences (*geography, history and economics*), arts (*dance, music, visual, crafts*), mindfulness (*philosophy, beliefs, spirituality*) and governance (*laws, regulations, processes and services*) amongst others;
 - 5.4.2.** Support the Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Kanien'keha language as a mandatory course for all students attending our schools and centres, by:
 - Training fluent speakers to be immersion teachers;
 - Training non-fluent teachers to be speakers; and
 - Designing a life-long learning curriculum for students and community members.
 - 5.4.3.** Promote Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Kanien'keha language within the curriculum, special school/centre events and the community.
- 5.5.** The Board will confirm that the Ahkwesáhsne Mohawk Board of Education continues to grow in its capacity to deliver a 21st century curriculum that harmonizes a deep understanding of Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Kanien'keha language, while considering the importance of cultural diversity as a bridge between the Akwesasne Mohawk community and other communities and peoples, including:
 - 5.5.1** Ensuring that staff are adequately prepared to participate in local, provincial and federal First Nations programs, initiatives and committees.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Board Members will:

- 6.1.1 Ensure that the Ahkwesáhsne Mohawk Board of Education makes every effort to preserve, revitalize, promote and protect Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Kanien'keha language through the development and implementation of appropriate curriculum and pedagogy.
- 6.1.2 Continue to grow in their knowledge and understanding of Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Kanien'keha language and the role each have in building a stronger Akwesásne Mohawk identity; encouraging personal pride and sense of self within the community; increasing employment opportunities; and enhancing quality of life for our students and community;
- 6.1.3 Expand their knowledge related to how our people have contributed towards development of humanity through: academics (language, mathematics, technology), sciences (medicinal, environmental, nutritional), social sciences (geography, history and economics), arts (dance, music, visual, crafts), mindfulness (philosophy, beliefs, spirituality) and governance (laws, regulations, processes and services) amongst other areas of knowledge;
- 6.1.4 Seek to understand and advocate for the importance of respecting the uniqueness of all cultures and the critical role Ahkwesáhsró:non collectively play in increasing empathy and dialogue; and
- 6.1.5 Use their individual knowledge and understanding of the Akwesasne community in assessing the impact of Board decisions.

6.2 The Director of Education will:

- 6.2.1 Support the Board of Trustees to ensure that the Ahkwesáhsne Mohawk Board of Education makes every effort to preserve, revitalize, promote and protect Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Kanien'keha language through the development and implementation of appropriate curriculum and pedagogy;
- 6.2.2 Offer workshops on the critical role culture and language have in building a stronger Akwesásne Mohawk identity; encouraging personal pride and sense of self within the community; increasing employment opportunities; and enhancing quality of life for our students and community;
- 6.2.3 Provide supports highlighting material and non-material forms of knowledge produced by our community; detailing how our knowledges have contributed to the progress of humanity; and
- 6.2.4 Ensure that all supports underscore the importance of cultural diversity and its role in promoting empathy and dialogue.

7. Policy Review and Revision

Principles and Directives:

- 6.2.5 It is important for the policies of the Ahkwesáhsne Mohawk Board of Education to remain current and serve the best interest of Akwesasne students and the Akwesasne community.
- 6.2.6 The Board of Trustees recognizes that this policy should be reviewed at a minimum of every 5 years and/or when the legal or regulatory requirements of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne change or the Board must meet new government obligations.

Procedures:

- 6.2.7 The Board of Trustees will establish a timeline for the regular review of this policy that requires the policy be reviewed at the minimum 5 years from the date of approval by the Board or as required by new circumstances or obligations.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- 6.2.8 Board of Trustees will:
- Establish a timeline for the regular review of this policy and ensure that it is respected; and
 - Ensure that this policy is reviewed at a minimum every 5 years from the date of approval, or when the legal or regulatory requirements of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne change or the Board must meet new government obligations.
- 6.2.9 The Director of Education will:
- Initiate a review of this policy at a minimum every 5 years from the date of approval, or when the legal or regulatory requirements of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne change or the Board must meet new government obligations.