

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Manifesto was envisioned by the Ontario First Nations Chiefs-in-Assembly as a means of providing a foundation for change in First Nations education. The resolution to mandate this project was moved by Chief Roberta Jamieson, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, and seconded by Chief Ralph Akiwenzie, Chippewas of Nawash, both of whom must be commended for their leadership role.

The Manifesto is an undertaking of considerable scope and responsibility. The project was initially circumscribed by time frames identified by the funding agent, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and in the resolution of the Chiefs-in-Assembly which called for a report by June, 2004. Without the project coordination services of Dan Gaspe and Anne Chabot this Manifesto may not have left the concept stage. Both Mr. Gaspe and Ms. Chabot worked with the COO Education Coordinator in developing an implementation plan and schedule for the project, worked with the writers and researchers, and conducted initial editorial reviews. Their exceptional organizational skills, vision and dedication are gratefully recognized.

The structure and content of the Manifesto was initially informed by a series of regional consultations hosted by Grand Council Treaty #3, Nishnawbe-Aski Nation, the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians and the Union of Ontario Indians. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux facilitated the regional consultations and completed the reports which were provided to all Manifesto researchers and writers to inform their reports. Pat Baxter facilitated a similar series of consultations at the same time on First Nations parental engagement in education. These reports were also provided to all Manifesto researchers and writers. Both facilitators, and their helpers behind the scenes, must be acknowledged for their high quality work which set the stage for the rest of the Manifesto.

The Manifesto project is unique in ensuring that the primary writers and researchers are all First Nations peoples, and comprise the finest leaders, visionaries and practitioners in First Nations education. Each of the writers must be acknowledged for their contributions and timely responses to challenging timelines and editorial requests made by the COO Education Coordinator. Their work is first rate. Niawenkowa, Meegwetch and Great Thanks to Richard Powless, Rose-Alma McDonald, Richard Hill Jr., Harvey McCue, LuAnn Hill, Dr. Emily Faries, Laura Horton, Sheila Orwick, David Anderson, Karen Hill, Kim Anderson, Priscilla George, Claudine Vanevery-Albert, Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, Lise Chabot, Dan Bird and Kim McKinnon from Seven Generations Educational Institute, Elizabeth Bigwin, and Lissa McGregor

Dr. Emily Faries, Dr. Pamela Toulouse and Peter Hill conducted important peer reviews for many of the Manifesto research papers. Their peer reviews were invaluable to the completion of this project. Their assistance and contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

Further acknowledgement is due to April Powless of the Chiefs of Ontario, and LuAnn Hill of the Aboriginal Institutes Consortium for editorial contributions on key papers.

Acknowledgements are also due to the First Nations Education Coordination Unit consisting of Education policy representatives from First Nations organizations in Ontario. Their patience and support is appreciated. The Chair of the FNECU is Nelson Toulouse, Deputy Grand Chief of the Union of Ontario Indians and the COO Portfolio holder for Education and Languages. The Deputy Grand Chief has provided encouragement, guidance and a push or two when needed. My personal thanksgiving is extended for his support and help.

Finally, thank you to the many First Nations people who have taken the time to contribute their views, opinions and expertise to the Manifesto project either through direct participation in consultation sessions, or through direct communication with the Chiefs of Ontario Education Coordinator. We have made every effort to ensure that this project reflects all the input which has been received, and hope that all of our people can see a little bit of themselves reflected in various places throughout the Manifesto.

Karihwakeron Tim Thompson,
Education Coordinator
Chiefs of Ontario
April, 2005