



The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe Of Michigan

PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan's Tribal Police Department has completed an investigation regarding allegations of child abuse to children who attend the Sasiwaans Immersion School. A thorough investigation was turned over to the Tribal Prosecutor and US Attorney's Office who agreed the allegations were unsubstantiated and declined prosecution.

Allegations were brought to the attention of the local media in January 2016 by a former employee and parent of a student.

"The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan takes allegations of abuse involving our Tribal youth very seriously. Appropriate steps have been followed to ensure the safety of our children," states Tribal Chief Frank Cloutier.

An Act of Congress, which passed in the late 1800's, appropriated federal funds to establish American Indian boarding schools. The schools were designed to assimilate American Indian children into "civilized human beings." American Indian languages and cultures were forbidden. The boarding school era lasted from the late 1800's to 1988.

The Anishinaabe Language Revitalization Department's Sasiwaans Immersion School is the only Ojibway immersion language school in Michigan. The school services Tribal children from the ages of 18 months to 4 years old. Sasiwaans (meaning nest) has been in operation for six years without incident and is fully funded through Tribal allocations.

Since the Ojibway language is near extinction on the Isabella Reservation due to the boarding school era, 100% of the teachers who teach at the school come from Canada, specifically, Wikwemikong, Manitoulin Island. Parents are required to attend language classes in order to speak to their children. Each class room has live camera available where parents can view and hear what is being said.

Please contact Erik Rodriguez, Interim Public Relations Director, at (989) 775-4076 or at erodriguez@sagchip.org for further information on the announcement.

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