

Tribe announces plans to relocate J.K.L. Bahweting School

Contributed by Michelle Bouschor
Friday, 28 January 2011

Expand classrooms, build partnerships

SAULT STE. MARIE, Mich. — In an effort to expand class sizes and offer more to students, the Sault Tribe Board of Directors passed a resolution on Jan. 26 to designate a section of property at the Sault Tribe's 320-acre Odenaang housing site off Shunk Road as the site of a future school. The decision is just the first step in a lengthy process, which may take years, that will involve moving J.K.L. Bahweting School to a new location.

"It's a great move for our students at J.K.L. Bahweting," said Joe McCoy, tribal chairman. "It will not only increase the room students have, it will be able to house all of the classes in one building and we may be able to expand more grades by adding more classrooms."

The tribe has been unable to acquire enough land over the past three years to expand the school at its current location. "We're excited to hear the tribe is working on the possibility of a new site to expand and improve the school," said Su Palmer, J.K.L. Bahweting School superintendent. "We're filled to capacity right now and the tribe knows we need more space. Due to land limitations, we are not able to expand, so this is very exciting."

J.K.L. Bahweting School opened in 1994 as a tribal school fully funded by the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. In 1995, the school became chartered by Northern Michigan University to become a public school academy funded by the state of Michigan and the Bureau of Indian Education through the Sault Tribe. It was also then renamed Bahweting Anishnabe Public School Academy. The school was officially named Joseph K. Lumsden Bahweting Anishnabe PSA in honor of the late tribal leader in 1998.

The school is currently funded as a public school academy, chartered through Northern Michigan University and tribally controlled grants from the Bureau of Indian Education. "We need to start working together in partnership with each other," said Cathy Abramson, board member. "This is a great move for all of us to come together and do what's best for our kids."