

From: Curriculum Branch (MET) [<mailto:cap@ontario.ca>]

Sent: June-28-16 2:17 PM

To: info@ofhsa.on.ca

Subject: inclusion of indigenous community members in curriculum development regarding the history of residential schools in Canada

Dear Sandra Binns,

Thank you for your letter of June 6, 2016, in which you inquire about the inclusion of indigenous community members in the development of curriculum around the history of residential schools in Canada. On behalf of the Minister of Education, The Honourable Mitzie Hunter, I am pleased to respond.

The Ontario government is committed to helping improve the learning opportunities for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners related to First Nations, Métis and Inuit ways of knowing. That is why, in 2007, we launched the Aboriginal Education Strategy, which supports learning and achievement for Aboriginal students and seeks to increase the knowledge and awareness of *all* students about Aboriginal histories, cultures and perspectives, including residential schools.

A critical element of reconciliation is a better understanding among all Canadians of the lasting impacts and trauma caused by residential schools. You will be encouraged to know that the ministry released several revised curriculum policy documents during the spring and summer of 2013 and 2015 that contain significantly more opportunities for students to learn about Aboriginal histories, cultures and perspectives and topics of significance, including residential schools and Treaties, in a developmentally appropriate way. These curricula include the revised *Social Studies, Grades 1 to 6; History and Geography, Grades 7 and 8 (2013); Canadian and World Studies, Grades 9 and 10 (2013); Canadian and World Studies, grades 11 and 12 (2015)* and *Social Sciences and Humanities, Grades 9 to 12 (2013)*.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission made an important Call to Action regarding the inclusion of age-appropriate learning about residential schools, treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada. Under the leadership of the Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC), Ministers across the country have been working to ensure students over the course of their education gain an understanding of how residential schools have affected Indigenous peoples and Canada as a whole. One of the commitment's coming out of the most recent meeting of Canada's education ministers was to advance Indigenous education and ensure all students gain an understanding of residential schools and their impact.

As you stated in your letter, working with indigenous leaders and community members is an integral part of any policy or strategy that is about indigenous history, culture, and contemporary issues. That is why the Ministry of Education of Ontario is moving forward on a comprehensive plan with First Nations, Métis and Inuit partners and education stakeholders to enhance this learning in an age and grade appropriate manner. As part of this plan a Truth and Reconciliation Curriculum Steering Committee was established, composed of residential schools survivor(s), Métis Nations of Ontario (MNO), Tungasuvvingat Inuit (TI), First Nations Trustees' Council, Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC), Ontario Native Women's

Association (ONWA) and Ministry of Education representatives. The first meeting of Truth and Reconciliation Curriculum Steering Committee was held on May 25, 2016.

Through this partnership, it was decided that the initial writing of curriculum enhancements would occur in the summer of 2016 and will focus on strengthening the mandatory Indigenous learning, including the residential school experience, in the mandatory elementary and secondary curricula for *Social Studies, History, and Geography*, and *Canadian and World Studies*. Writers for this project have been nominated by their organizations and provincial subject/division associations based on a set of criteria, including their expertise in Indigenous perspectives and curriculum development.

As part of the comprehensive plan, a variety of professional learning and capacity building opportunities are anticipated, consistent with the learning that takes place for all revised curriculum documents.

Again, thank you for writing to share your thoughts and concerns about the inclusion of mandatory learning on the history, traditions, culture and heritage of Canada's indigenous peoples.

Sincerely,
Original signed by
Karen Gill
Director
Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch

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