



June 6, 2016

The Honourable Liz Sandals
Minister of Education
22nd Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister:

The Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations (OFHSA) is a provincial organization of volunteers actively supporting public education and committed to ensuring that the education, health, safety and social well-being of children and youth are a priority for all.

OFHSA members have long believed that students in Ontario should be taught the complex history of the Canadian Aboriginal. We support the province's plan to ensure that the impact of residential schools, the history of colonization and the importance of treaties is added to the curriculum in Ontario's public schools.

At the April 17, 2016 OFHSA Annual Meeting, members voted to enhance our policy from 1968 that called for the history of Canadian Aboriginals in Ontario to be published and designed to provide Ontario teachers with the whole story ' *to include the history of residential schools*'.

We urge the Minister and Ministry of Education to develop a curriculum on the history of Indian Residential Schools (IRS) in collaboration with leading Indigenous Peoples educators, to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal People of Canada, including treaties, and incorporate the history of Indian Residential Schools as an integral compulsory part of the Elementary and Secondary curriculum.

The government has recently recognized the devastating effect of colonialism and the 'civilizing mission' carried from the 18th century as revealed in 2008 by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and has apologized to Ontario's Indigenous communities for the decades of mistreatment of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people.

Our members applaud the government's investment in new initiatives that will help build trust, respect, opportunity and security into the lives of Indigenous people. School boards have taken steps to create FNMI programming, acknowledging the culture of the First Nations people, but this is not enough.

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To accurately relate the legacy of residential schools in Canada to Ontario students, there must be high level Ministry staff dedicated to integrating aboriginal content related to the history of Indian Residential Schools, crafted by Indigenous Peoples educators, into the curriculum. Consultation needs to be made with aboriginal leaders, anthropologists and sociologists so that materials can be assembled and published which are designed to provide Ontario teachers with the history of the relationship between European settlers and Indigenous Peoples in Canada which includes the ongoing legacy of church-run residential schools.

As declared by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, empower Indigenous Peoples to educate this generation to fully understand the history, traditions, culture and heritage of Canada's Indigenous Peoples; First Nations, Metis and Inuit.

In keeping with the spirit of TRC recommendations, working with aboriginal leaders to shape policies and programs will honour the knowledge, values and skills of Indigenous Nations as fundamental to the fabric of Canadian history and will build capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect among Ontarians.

Sincerely,

Sandra Binns
President

Cc Hon Kathleen O. Wynne, Premier of Ontario
Hon David Zimmer, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs

The Best for Each Student

A MEMBER OF THE CANADIAN HOME AND SCHOOL FEDERATION