



## Maskwacis Education Schools Commission

P.O. Box 58  
Maskwacis, AB  
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P: (780) 585-3333

November 2, 2020

The Honourable Adriana LeGrange  
228 Legislature Building  
10800 - 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB, T5K 2B6

Re: Response to leaked draft curriculum

Dear Minister,

I am writing on behalf of the Maskwacis Education Schools Commission (MESC) Board of Governors to express concerns regarding recently leaked draft curriculum documents. The intended vision and advice of the leaked drafts minimizes First Nations history, perspectives, contributions and experiences in Residential Schools and their legacy. If these drafts are actualized, we believe the government would not be honoring their commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (TRC), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and First Nations in Alberta.

Historically, the education system has not served First Nations well for the past 150 years. The results have been devastating. The history of Residential Schools and their legacy in education and society is misunderstood, minimized, ignored or dismissed altogether. For reconciliation to occur, it is the moral and ethical obligation of this government to ensure the Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum includes the true and complete history of Residential Schools and their legacy.

The recently leaked draft curriculum documents identified recommendations by Subject Matter Experts that demonstrated a lack of knowledge and understanding of Residential Schools and their legacy on First Nations survivors and generations of families across our nations. Nor do the documents align with the Ministerial Order (*Students will develop an understanding of and respect for the histories, contributions, and perspectives of Indigenous peoples in Alberta and Canada, including Treaty Rights and the importance of reconciliation*) and Professional Practice Standards. The Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum should be inclusive and unbiased and include Treaty Education and the history of Residential Schools and their legacy. Without this truth and shared understanding, the curriculum is incomplete.



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Furthermore, MESC is currently developing a curriculum that aligns with the architecture and design of the June 2019 draft curriculum version. We believe the following sections from the Maskwacis Cree - Alberta Government Framework Agreement support MESC in the development of local curriculum on residential school and Treaty education which can be influential in the AB curriculum:

- “AND WHEREAS the parties are committed to implementing the principles and objective of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action*;”
- “AND WHEREAS, the Alberta government has committed to acts of reconciliation and a fundamental shift in its relationship with the the Indigenous peoples of the province;”
- “AND WHEREAS Alberta recognizes the Treaty relationship between Maskwacis Cree Nations and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada;”
- “1. Purpose  
The parties have expressed the shared desire to develop strategies to strengthen the delivery of educational services with the express intent of improving the educational outcomes of Maskwacis students. “
- “3.2 Enhancing capacity:
  - b. Alberta will pursue financial supports to be provided under the Building Collaboration and Capacity in Education and Innovation in First Nations Education grant programs and through a conditional grant agreement to MESC for participation in education initiatives.”
- “3.3 Facilitating partnerships:
  - a. MESC will identify education partner organizations of interest that will build capacity to develop more effective education programming.”
- “3.4 Enhancing outcomes:
  - a. MESC will enhance student outcomes through community (i.e. parents, elders, and caregivers), school, and classroom-based strategies and actions that include the following:
    - i. Strengthened Indigenous languages and culture
    - ii. Locally developed courses and resources (e.g. outdoor/land-based education, weaving diverse Indigenous and community perspectives, traditions and worldviews into the curriculum and classroom)”
- “3.5 Accountability, Reporting, and Education Standard



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- a. MESC will develop appropriate approaches to student evaluation, and performance measures in order to report on progress to students, parents, and the communities in relation to this agreement.”
- “5. NON-DEROGATION  
That nothing in the agreement shall be construed so as to prejudice, abrogate or derogate the Treaty right of the Maskwacis Cree; Samson, Ermineskin, Louis Bull, Montana, and respective members or any obligation from the Government of Canada to the Maskwacis Cree pursuant to Treaties, Statutes and the Constitution, including and rights protected by Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.”

This government has the opportunity to honor the TRC Calls to Action and the UNDRIP by recommitting to mandate Residential School and their legacy and Treaty Education in the curriculum for all Kindergarten to Grade 12 students. It is our recommendation to reinstate the last public draft of the curriculum (June 2019) that gave voice to First Nations in all subjects, and created pathways of learning for students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 on Treaty Education and Residential Schools and their legacy.

MESC looks forward to maintaining an open, respectful and transparent partnership with the Government of Alberta and the Ministry of Education as well as a commitment to the Maskwacis Cree - Alberta Government Framework Agreement. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Ekosi pitama,

Dr. Shauna Bruno  
Chair, MESC Board of Governors

CC: Andre Corbould, Deputy Minister, Alberta Education