

## Background

The [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#) includes Call to Action #57, #62 i. and #63 which are relevant to education:

**#57** *We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.*

**#62** *We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:*

- i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.*

**#63** *We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues.*

The Division honors and respects the historical significance and contributions of Aboriginal Peoples to Canada and it recognizes the important role that the Aboriginal community plays today and in the future.

The Division strives to increase understanding of all members of the learning community regarding First Nations, Métis and Inuit history and culture.

## Definitions

Derived from [Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada](#), the following list serves to support a general understanding of some terms used in reference to First Nations, Métis and Inuit. These terms are listed in [Words First: An Evolving Terminology Relating to Aboriginal Peoples in Canada](#).

**Aboriginal Peoples of Canada:** The descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people — Indians, Métis and Inuit. These are three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.

**First Nations:** A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word "Indian", which some people found offensive. Although the term First Nation is widely used, no legal definition of it exists. Among its uses, the term "First Nations peoples" refers to the Indian peoples in Canada, both Status and non-Status. Some Indian peoples have also adopted the term "First Nation" to replace the word "band" in the name of their community.

**Indian:** Indian people are one of three cultural groups, along with Inuit and Métis, recognized as Aboriginal people under section 35 of the Constitution Act. There are legal reasons for the continued use of the term "Indian". Such terminology is recognized in the Indian Act and is used by the Government of Canada when making reference to this particular group of Aboriginal people.

**Inuit:** Inuit are the Aboriginal people of the Arctic. They live primarily in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, Labrador, and Northern Quebec. The word Inuit means "the people" in the Inuit language of Inuktitut. The singular of Inuit is Inuk.

**Métis:** People of mixed First Nation and European ancestry who identify themselves as Métis, as distinct from First Nations people, Inuit or non-Aboriginal people. The Métis have a unique culture that draws on their diverse ancestral origins, such as Scottish, French, Ojibway and Cree.

## Procedures

1. With the intention of strengthening relations and building bridges with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples living in and contributing to our communities of learning, past, present and future, the Division commits to acknowledging the Treaty 6 (and Treaty 7 and 8) Territory and the Aboriginal people in our communities with the following Acknowledgement Statement.

- 1.1. The Acknowledgement Statement shall be recited as part of the Opening Remarks of each public Board Meeting and at Division Professional Development days.
- 1.2. Furthermore, the Acknowledgement Statement shall be recited as part of the Opening Remarks at significant school / community special events and gatherings.
  - 1.2.1. Significant events would include the more formal events that are moderated by a Master of Ceremony, particularly when there are other guests and dignitaries present, such as a Remembrance Day assembly or a Graduation ceremony. The acknowledgement statement would not be recited at regular student assemblies.
  - 1.2.2. Teachers may choose to use it on the first day of classes, if they wish to make such an acknowledgement.

- 1.3. **Acknowledgement Statement**

*Information regarding the construction of this statement:*

*The first sentence is intended to honor the past.*

*The second sentence is intended to honor the land and the people of Treaty 6, 7 or 8.*

*The third sentence is intended to connect us for the future, and bridges to the Division's motto, "Together we learn".*

*Note: When the event is attended by dignitaries from a First Nation, it is honorable to welcome them by name and nation after making the statement.*

- Treaty 6: Events occurring in Edmonton and most Division schools, except Swan Hills
- Treaty 7: Events occurring in Lethbridge or Calgary
- Treaty 8: Events occurring in Swan Hills

**We honor the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries. We acknowledge that the land on which we**

gather is Treaty (State one) [6] [7] [8] territory, an ancestral and traditional meeting ground for many indigenous peoples. We honor the presence and contribution of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit people who live, work and learn together in our communities.

We are pleased to welcome           name           of the           name the nation           to today's event. Thank you so much for joining us today.

2. The Division commits to demonstrating support of Call to Action #63, under "Education for Reconciliation", of the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#) by participating in:
  - 2.1. *The development and implementation of Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.*
  - 2.2. *Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.*
  - 2.3. *Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.*
  - 2.4. *Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above.*
3. The Division commits to teaching students to understand and respect the importance of the following Canadian events:
  - June 3, 2015 – [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) (TRC) closing ceremony
  - June 10, 2008 – [National Statement of apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools](#)
  - June 21, 1996 – [National Aboriginal Day](#)
  - 3.1 Schools are encouraged to plan to honor these dates with special announcements, and/or assemblies and/or events, on these dates (or before when these dates fall on a weekend).

## Resources

[United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (Canada)  
[Aboriginal Peoples of Alberta Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow](#)  
[100 Years of Loss](#)

## Reference

[Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada](#)  
[Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#)  
[Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#)  
[National Statement of apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools](#)  
[National Aboriginal Day](#)  
[Words First: An Evolving Terminology Relating to Aboriginal Peoples in Canada](#)  
[University of Alberta - Augustana Campus: Statement of Acknowledgement of the Traditional Territory](#)  
[Traditional Owners Statement - City of Darwin](#)  
[First Nations in Alberta](#)