

DATE: June 10, 2014

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: National Aboriginal Day

ORIGINATOR: Mark Liguori, Assistant Superintendent of Schools

RESOURCE STAFF: Lisa Beebe, Terry Godwaldt, Amanda Gould, Eileen Marthiensen, Athena McKenzie

REFERENCE: [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#)
[Truth and Reconciliation Commission Mandate](#)

ISSUE

Recognition of National Aboriginal Day at the June 10, 2014, public board meeting.

BACKGROUND

In 1996, former Governor General Roméo A. Leblanc proclaimed June 21 to be marked each year in Canada as “National Aboriginal Day”. This date was selected to reflect Aboriginal peoples’ observance of the summer solstice, an important time for many within Aboriginal communities. The significance of the event acknowledges the rights of Aboriginal peoples in Canada and celebrates the contributions and histories of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Canada.

The Edmonton Public School Board has honoured National Aboriginal Day at a public board meeting for the past seven years. Each year a teaching is introduced in collaboration with local Elders and the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education unit staff. The teaching for the June 10, 2014, board meeting will focus on Reconciliation.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

On June 10, 2009, The Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, Marie Wilson and Chief Wilton Littlechild were appointed as Commissioners to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada.

As a component of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the TRC is an independent body that oversees the process to provide former students and anyone who has been affected by the Residential Schools legacy, with an opportunity to share their individual experiences in a safe and culturally appropriate manner.

TRC is unique from other commissions around the world in that its scope is primarily focused on the experiences of children. Its focus of research spans more than 150 years, one of the longest durations ever examined. It is also the first court-ordered truth commission to be established. As such, the court plays an ongoing role in the implementation and supervision of TRC.

Mandate for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

“There is an emerging and compelling desire to put the events of the past behind us so that we can work towards a stronger and healthier future. The truth telling and reconciliation process as part of an overall holistic and comprehensive response to the Indian Residential School legacy is a sincere indication and acknowledgement of the injustices and harms experienced by Aboriginal people and the need for continued healing. This is a profound commitment to establishing new relationships embedded in mutual recognition and respect that will forge a brighter future. The truth of our common experiences will help set our spirits free and pave the way to reconciliation.”

On March 19, 2014, over 300 students, representing Treaty 6, Treaty 7, Treaty 8, Métis, non-status and non-First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, from five schools across Alberta gathered to collaborate, through the use of technology, in a Virtual Town Hall to discuss the youth’s vision for Reconciliation. Alberta youth exchanged ideas, debated alternatives and created a document that represented their voice. The Virtual Town Hall, called an “archetype of grassroots democracy” by Senator Grant Mitchell, was the culmination of over a month of online teamwork, 1,500 hours of student collaboration and a passion by Alberta’s youth to engage in the dialogue. The dialogue addressed three critical questions:

- What does Reconciliation mean to you? Your Community? Alberta/Canada?
- What can be done within our local communities to promote healing and reconciliation?
- What does Alberta/Canada need to do as a country to promote healing and reconciliation?

The TRC held its seventh and final [National Event in Edmonton](#) from March 27 to 30, 2014. In recognition of the legacy of Canadian Residential Schools and its impacts, 466 students and their teachers from 17 district schools participated in the TRC Education Day on March 27, 2014, at the Shaw Conference Centre. In the healing and reconciliation journey, participating students and staff gained an understanding of Canadian Residential Schools through meaningful activities and conversations.

CURRENT SITUATION

Students from Lillian Osborne and Queen Elizabeth schools who participated in the Virtual Town Hall will present on Vision for the Future: Alberta Youth’s Perspective on Reconciliation for the Board of Trustees.

“It will take the commitment of multiple generations and stakeholders but when reconciliation is achieved it will make for a better, stronger Canada. We the youth of Alberta, are a tremendous resource. We know how to use social media and organize in this political era. We can help you and we will be a powerful ally. We only have one request: we want to be an active part of the conversation, a part of the solution.” Virtual Town Hall Student Committee

The presentation at the board meeting will include the following:

- Opening remarks
- Prayer
- Students from diverse backgrounds will present their perspectives on reconciliation
- Gifting
- Closing Remarks

KEY POINTS

- Reconciliation is an ongoing, individual and collective process.
- [City of Edmonton Year of Reconciliation March 2014 – March 2015.](#)

RESOURCES

- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#)
- [They Came for the Children](#)
- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Interim Report](#)
- [Project of Heart](#)
- Towards Reconciliation: It Matters to Me [Twibbon](#) and [Personal Ribbon](#)

EM:cs