

September 15, 2021

Memorandum to: Directors of Education
Secretary/Treasurers of School Authorities

From: Nancy Naylor
Deputy Minister

Subject: **September 30, 2021 – National Day of Truth and Reconciliation**

As many of you know, earlier this year, there were tragic discoveries confirming the remains of Indigenous children found on the sites of some former Residential Schools. In June, the federal government passed legislation that designated September 30 as a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to commemorate the history and legacy of Residential Schools in Canada.

An Opportunity for Learning about Truth and Reconciliation

With Ontario students in class on September 30, school boards and schools are encouraged to allocate a portion of the day to age-appropriate opportunities for learning and reflection about Truth and Reconciliation.

Every one of us has a responsibility to reflect upon our role in reconciliation with Indigenous peoples by educating ourselves on the Indigenous history, cultures, the legacy of systemic discrimination and the residential school system and their ongoing impacts on First Nation, Métis and Inuit children, families and communities.

Learning Resources

September 30 also falls within the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation's (NCTR) Reconciliation Week, which runs from September 27th to October 1, 2021.

The NCTR, in collaboration with national and provincial partners and funders from across the country, have organized a 5-day national event and virtual gathering reaching thousands of teachers and students from grades 5 to 12.

- Each day has a specific focus; Commemorating Treaties 1, 2 and 11, Languages and Culture, Reconciliation, Orange T-Shirt Day, and Calls to Action.
- Indigenous representatives from across Canada will be participating, including a number of Indigenous artists, leaders, and Knowledge Holders from Ontario.

The NCTR's Indigenous-led events will address First Nations treaties, Métis and Inuit land claims and the Residential Schools system and will include a tribute to the First Nation, Métis and Inuit children that never returned home from the residential schools.

This meaningful educational experience provides an opportunity to learn first-hand from Residential School Survivors, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, artists, and leaders from across the country. Over 500,000 teachers and students participated in the 2020 event.

Educators can register free of charge for this important programing on the NCTR website at <https://nctr.ca/education/trw/>.

The NCTR also has a page dedicated to teaching resources (<https://nctr.ca/education/>) as well as a Teacher's Guide to discussing Orange Shirt Day (Every Child Matters) specifically (<https://nctr.ca/education/every-child-matters/teachers-guide/>).

Other options for bringing this important learning into the classroom include working with Indigenous communities and organizations in your area to invite an Elder and/or Knowledge Keeper for a classroom visit or exploring Indigenous developed resources related to Truth and Reconciliation and/or residential schools. For example, Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) has developed in-depth resources to support learning about Indian Residential Schools (<http://rschools.nan.on.ca/article/history-3.asp>).

Moving towards reconciliation

Whatever activities your board and schools decide to undertake, this day will be an important opportunity for all students and education staff to learn about and reflect on the history of Residential Schools and to honour the lives lost. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to Indigenous Education and to supporting learning for all students on the histories, perspectives, and cultures of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

Sincerely,

Nancy Naylor
Deputy Minister

- c: Executive Director, Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario (ACÉPO)
- Executive Director, Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC)
- Executive Director, Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA)
- Executive Director, Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)
- Executive Director, Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE)
- Executive Director and Secretary-Treasurer, Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO)
- General Secretary, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA)
- General Secretary, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)
- General Secretary, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF)
- Chair, Ontario Council of Educational Workers (OCEW)
- Chair, Education Workers' Alliance of Ontario (EWAO)
- Co-ordinator, Canadian Union of Public Employees – Ontario (CUPE-ON)
- Executive Director, Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes (ADFO)
- Executive Director, Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (CPCO)
- Executive Director, Ontario Principals' Council (OPC)