

Ophea Position Statement

Indigenous Education: Truth and Reconciliation Curriculum Writing Sessions

Background

As part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action report, federal, provincial and territorial governments were called upon "to work in consultation with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples and educators to 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." (1)

This call to action, also supported through Ontario's First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Policy Education Framework, aims to fulfill the broader vision that "all students in Ontario will have knowledge and appreciation of contemporary and traditional First Nation, Métis, and Inuit traditions, cultures, and perspectives." (2)

Curriculum Writing Sessions

Beginning in 2016, the Government of Ontario hosted the first phase of writing sessions to begin integrating this content into school curriculum across grade levels. A second phase of writing sessions were scheduled to take place in July 2018, with the aim of expanding this work into other subject areas including Social Sciences, History and Geography, and Canada and World Studies. However, these writing sessions were cancelled and many organizations, including Ophea, are looking for more information on the future of this work and are concerned that the cancellation of these sessions sends a negative message to the education system on the importance being placed on Indigenous education in Ontario.

Ophea Beliefs and Call To Action

As a provincial subject association for Health and Physical Education, Ophea recognizes that physical education is implicated in Canada's colonialism. We look to provincial curricula for guidance and inspiration to support teachers across Ontario with the implementation of quality physical education. All of us would benefit from government direction on how to support greater integration of indigenous perspectives into our work.

As outlined in the most recent government progress report on Ontario's First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Policy Education Framework, released in Winter 2018, Ophea agrees that "curriculum can play a key role in shaping social attitudes and teaching respect, acceptance of diversity, inclusion, and intercultural understanding" and continued government support is invaluable in setting direction for the province. (3)

In light of the recent cancellation of writing sessions, Ophea calls on the Government of Ontario to re-engage with partners engaged in this work to clarify their commitment to the integration of indigenous perspectives into provincial curriculum, as outlined through Truth and Reconciliation and Ontario's First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Policy Education Framework.

References

- 1) Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Calls To Action*, 7.
- 2) Ministry of Education. (2007). *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework*, 7.
- 3) Ministry of Education. (2018). *Strengthening Our Learning Journey*, 6.

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