



LEADERSHIP, ADVOCACY AND SERVICE FOR MANITOBA'S PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS

Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

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Hon. Brian Pallister  
Premier of Manitoba  
Room 204 Legislative Buildings  
450 Broadway  
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Mr. Chris Goertzen  
President  
Association of Manitoba Municipalities  
1910 Saskatchewan Avenue W.  
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Dear colleagues:

Since the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) calls to action in spring, 2015, the Manitoba School Boards Association has undertaken to work with our partners in public education, including the Manitoba Teachers' Society and Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, to implement the steps necessary to fulfill these important recommendations.

Important work has been achieved in terms of establishing inclusive curriculum and schools designed to ensure that future generations of Manitobans benefit from an understanding of the residential school experience and treaty relations. Cross-sectoral initiatives are being undertaken to increase educational achievement of Indigenous students and staff. Language and cultural revitalization initiatives are well underway and it is our goal that all school aged children will graduate from high school with an appreciation for their own, as well as for others' cultures, languages and collective experiences.

Many of the calls to action tabled by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission address mandates and responsibilities under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Government of Canada. Others call upon multiple levels of government to address implementation of particular calls to action, including the provincial and municipal levels of government. Where applicable, school boards across Canada and also in Manitoba, have interpreted such calls as shared direction for the future. Along with our partners, we have moved forward with implementation according to our own specific mandates and responsibilities.

Two calls to action in particular however, do speak to Federal, Provincial and Municipal authorities and we would like to take the opportunity to signal our support to you for the implementation of these particular calls to action as follows:

43. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as the framework for reconciliation.

44. We call upon the Government of Canada to develop a national action plan, strategies, and other concrete measures to achieve the goals of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

The Manitoba School Boards Association is of the perspective that, by working together, we can jointly ensure that these two calls to action are achieved for local, provincial and national benefit. We would qualify that from our perspective, the rights of Indigenous Peoples remain vested at all times in the Peoples themselves. These rights are inviolable and protected not by virtue of an international declaration, constitutional provision, treaty agreement, or other written instrument but rather, by virtue of the sui generis reality that Indigenous Peoples are guaranteed the exercise of such rights, and are entitled to remain beneficiaries of the obligations that flow from such rights, due to their place as the first and founding peoples of this nation.

While the above perspective provides guidance to school boards in Manitoba concerning the framework that we have established for the important work of acknowledging truth and championing reconciliation, we do recognize that the specific principles and statements that are enshrined within the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* have met with the formal approval of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. We therefore fully endorse TRC calls to action 43 and 44 and do wish to offer our support to you as our colleagues at the Federal, Provincial and Municipal levels of Government, as you move forward with implementation of these recommendations.

If there is any way that the school boards of Manitoba can be of support or assistance to you in this sacred endeavour, we request that you not hesitate to rely upon us for such partnership.

With a spirit of cooperation and hope toward lasting reconciliation in Canada,

The Provincial Executive  
Manitoba School Boards Association