



## Official Opposition · l'Opposition officielle

Ontario NDP Caucus • Groupe parlementaire du NPD de l'Ontario

**Aug. 21, 2018**

The Hon. Lisa Thompson  
Minister of Education  
Mowat Block, 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
900 Bay Street, Toronto ON  
M7A 1L2

Dear Minister,

Last month, your government cancelled planned Indigenous curriculum writing sessions throughout the province, a major misstep on the road toward reconciliation that calls into question your government's commitment to important calls to action outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

At the time, you assured educators and families that your actions constituted a mere pause on the development of an Indigenous curriculum. Since then however, your government has moved us backwards, sidestepping commitments to clean up the mercury in Grassy Narrows, omitting any mention of Indigenous issues in the Speech from the Throne, and even dropping reconciliation from the Minister's title. Given these actions - and as the MPP representing Kiiwetinoong, a riding comprised of a significant percentage of Ontario citizens of First Nations descent - I'm deeply concerned about the future of an Indigenous curriculum in Ontario schools. With the 2018-19 school year just weeks away, I ask that you immediately resume Indigenous curriculum writing sessions and share an updated timeline of when this will be completed.

In July, educators, Indigenous elders and knowledge keepers, and survivors of residential schools were set to travel to Toronto to take part in writing sessions to enhance Indigenous perspectives but at the last minute, these sessions were cancelled by your ministry, threatening the future of this initiative. The cancelled writing sessions were intended to make final revisions to a reconciliation curriculum and develop a curriculum to introduce children to Indigenous languages. These curriculum updates incorporate the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples into subjects taught in our schools – a hallmark of the TRC calls to action to educate young Canadians about the real history of Indigenous/government relations. Experts agree that forming better understandings between peoples early in life builds positive relationships later. Further, our shared Canadian values place acceptance, tolerance and respect for each other at the forefront of our relationships. Without a fully developed reconciliation curriculum in Ontario schools, all of this is at risk.

---

**Ontario NDP Caucus Services**

Main Legislative Building, Room N200 • Queen's Park • Toronto, ON M7A 1A8 • [ondpcaucus.com](http://ondpcaucus.com)



## Official Opposition · l'Opposition officielle

Ontario NDP Caucus • Groupe parlementaire du NPD de l'Ontario

Finally, as a person who went to residential school myself, it troubles me that Ontario children may not learn about the traumatic experiences of many thousands of Indigenous children who suffered as a result of Canadian policy and law. Minister, delaying or cancelling Indigenous curriculum development will set progress towards reconciliation in this province backwards. Incorporating Indigenous content in our schools is vital to fulfilling Ontario's commitment towards reconciliation.

Again, I ask that you immediately resume the curriculum development and let Ontario families know when they can expect Indigenous content in our classrooms.

Miigwech.

I look forward to your reply.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Sol Mamakwa".

Sol Mamakwa  
MPP, Kiiwetinoong

cc: Hon. Greg Rickford  
Minister of Indigenous Affairs