

May 31, 2021

Surrey Schools Statement on the Kamloops Residential School Burial Site

This past Friday, Tk'emlúps te Secwé pemc First Nation in Kamloops, B.C. announced the discovery of the remains of more than 215 children buried at the site of what was once a residential school. This news was a heartbreaking reminder of the trauma of residential schools, and the impacts that remain in our province today.

To honour these children and all those who suffered trauma and harm at the former residential school in Kamloops, all flags in our district will be flown at half-mast until further notice.

This horrific tragedy serves as a difficult reminder for survivors of residential schools and their families, of the hurt and intergenerational trauma they have endured. We will continue to care for our staff, students, and families in need of our support or resources, and we encourage anyone who needs additional support to reach out to their school. We must all continue to take care of each other.

As a public education institution, the Surrey School District remains committed to revealing and correcting miseducation around the shameful legacy of residential schools and the ongoing need for Truth and Reconciliation. As the Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, once said, "Education got us into this mess and education will get us out of it."

There cannot be reconciliation without truth and understanding. Our district is committed to having meaningful discussion about the effects of residential schools and the legacy they have left behind. While these conversations on history and the impact of residential schools are taking place within our schools, we encourage families to also continue the learning at home. The [Indian Residential School Survivor Society](#) (IRSSS) and the [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#) (NCTR) have several resources on their site for families to learn more.

Our hearts go out to the families of the children and to all communities closely impacted. Please take a moment to reflect on this recent discovery and to reach out and support one another.

For Support

- [National Indian Residential School Crisis Line](#): 1-866-925-4419
- [KUU-US Crisis line](#): 1-800-588-8717
- [First Nations Health Authority](#) (virtual counselling): 1-855-344-3800