

RAISED VOICES:

CARRIERS OF HOPE

YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION

Youth Leaders in First Nations Education Policy



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The Raised Voices: Carriers of Hope Youth Policy Forum on First Nations Education brought together 36 First Nations youth from nations across Canada between the ages of 13 and 18 to discuss their first-hand experiences and challenges in education. These young leaders developed five Calls to Action and a How-to-Guide aimed at driving change to support First Nations student success.

The objectives of this How-to-Guide are to:

- honour and promote the contributions and advocacy of First Nations youth;
- amplify youth priorities for improving First Nations education; and
- call upon both First Nation and non-First Nation students, teachers, schools, and leadership, to take prompt action in their community to advance each Call to Action.

The voices that informed this How-to-Guide are reflective of First Nations from each region across Canada. They encompass and represent diverse gender/sex identities, ages, and rural and urban experiences.



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YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #1

We call upon all levels of government to increase funding for education to have a male, female and/or a Two-Spirit Elders to have a significant role in schools; as counsellors or teaching traditional ways, which will support the mental, spiritual, physical and emotional wellbeing of First Nations youth in every school in Canada.





YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #1

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Become student liaisons in schools to support Elders.



Advocate for the inclusion of First Nations Elders in their classrooms through campaign letters, videos, petitions and/or presentations.



Invite Elders into classrooms to share cultural teachings.



Advocate to have a cultural space within schools to accommodate Elders.



Encourage the use of First Nations languages and cultures in classrooms.

The Carriers of Hope call upon Students to:

The Carriers of Hope call upon Teachers to:



Help perform cultural protocols when having Elders in classrooms. Ask an Elder how you can help.



Create relationships with local First Nations Elders by visiting cultural and community spaces.

Work with First Nations Elders to co-develop lesson plans informed by First Nations traditional ways.



Broaden the parameters of course assignments to include students who may wish to involve Elders' knowledge in their coursework.



Respect and honour First Nations Elders' role in students' everyday lives.



Engage in social media platforms to stay connected with Elders.



Practice self-care when engaging in difficult topics.

For more information go to: [f](#) [t](#) [i](#)



Research tokenism and avoid singling out First Nations students in the classroom.



Use textbooks that are written by First Nations Elders and authors on First Nations topics and subjects.



Research and become aware of protocols regarding Elders (i.e. providing tobacco, transportation, honoraria, sharing methods etc.)



Recognise First Nations Elders as knowledge keepers and allow their teachings and stories to be cited in assignments.

For more information go to: [f](#) [t](#) [i](#)



YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #1

YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #1



Create a space for a male, female and/or Two-Spirit Elders to be counsellors and teachers for First Nations students.



Schools should complete the costing for these positions.



Advocate for course curriculum dedicated to learning with First Nations Elders.



The Carriers of Hope call upon Schools to:



The Carriers of Hope call upon Leaders to:

Empower Elders to advise teachers and principals on First Nations students' needs. (i.e. excusing First Nations students from school-related responsibilities when necessary).



Pay for tobacco, transportation, and honorarium for Elders when brought into schools.



Invite Elders to school events and assemblies.



Meet with provincial school boards to discuss schools' Reconciliation action plans and progress.



Advocate for permanent First Nations Elder designated seats on school boards and school board associations.

For more information go to: [f](#) [t](#) [i](#)

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Invite a male, female and/or Two-Spirit Elder to sit on the school council.



Promote the inclusion of extracurricular cultural activities including beadwork classes, and powwow Zumba.



Advocate for increased investments to support Elders' presence and an Elders' space in schools.



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YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #2

We appreciate the significant investment in land and cultural programming announced by the Assembly of First Nations and the Government of Canada. This commitment matters to First Nations youth because culture and being on the land keeps our traditions alive while connecting us to ourselves, families, nations and ancestors. However, we call for the expansion of this current funding to all First Nations students, including the North, and those living off reserve. This becomes another resource to support their wellbeing and success.



YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #2



The Carriers of Hope call upon Students to:



Explore projects or research topics related to land-based learning (i.e. natural science through observation methods).



Research First Nations history, territory or Treaty they live and learn on. (Ex: Native-land.com).



Go to nearby rivers or ponds in your neighbourhood and notice the colours, shapes and smells around you. Take photos or write your observations down in a journal.



Take a social media break and go on a walk.

Present field trip ideas to teachers that involve land-based learning.



Look into the history of your neighbourhood, town or city. Locate statues, parks, street names or school names and research who or what they are named after and why.

For more information go to:



Follow influencers on social media that speak about traditional teachings and land-based knowledge.



YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #2



The Carriers of Hope call upon Teachers to:



Explore opportunities to learn First Nations languages, histories, and cultures.



Incorporate land-based learning options into lesson plans.



Plan seasonal field trips with First Nations that relate to First Nations cultures (i.e. strawberry-picking, maple syrup tapping, snowshoeing, gardening).

Consult knowledge keepers, language and culture teachers to support these lessons.



Assign learning opportunities that promote being on the land.



Learn about First Nations traditional activities and accommodate students who may need to miss class.



For more information go to:



YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #2



The Carriers of Hope call upon Schools to:



Provide cultural sensitivity/awareness training to teachers.



Hire Elders/ Knowledge keepers to teach once a week outside through land-based teaching.



Encourage teachers to include course content that focuses on First Nations cultures and land-based learning.



For more information go to:



Hold assemblies or group workshops inviting First Nations experts to talk about the importance of land-based knowledge and how it can be incorporated into curricula.



Create a school garden – either indoors or outdoors and encourage all teachers and students to take care of it. This will teach students about responsibility, teamwork, and immerse them in the concepts of land-based knowledge and sustainable communities.



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YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #2



The Carriers of Hope call upon Leaders to:



Support research on the outcomes of land/cultural-based learning.



Be more involved in the schools and participate in on-the-land learning exercises with students.



Lobby provincial/territorial ministries of Education to increase funding for land/culture-based programs.



Support lifelong learning for First Nations students and advocate for First Nations control of First Nations education.

For more information go to:



YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #3



We call for increased funding for Early Childhood Development (ECD), increased daycare options, and lowering the age requirement for First Nations children to access ECD programs. This will ensure there will be a safe and secure space for our children and sustain young First Nations parents' education.





YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #3



The Carriers of Hope call upon Students to:



Assist fellow classmates by creating a network of support for a student parent.



Engage in peer tutoring or mentorship.



Offer to take notes for absent students.

For more information go to: [f](#) [t](#) [i](#)



Practice leadership skills by promoting a safe and welcoming environment for all students.



YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #3



The Carriers of Hope call upon Teachers to:



Take Indigenous cultural competency training.



Ensure students are taught healthy and culturally relevant sexual education and healthy relationship education.



Post course content online for students that may need to miss class.

Accommodate young parents regarding their family obligations



For more information go to: [f](#) [t](#) [i](#)



Work with the student to create alternative ways of learning (i.e. working remotely, from home or allowing flexible deadlines).



YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #3

YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #3



Consider options to combine daycare and class spaces.



Hire Elders to help in daycare programs.



Ensure there is a safe and reliable daycare available for student parents.



Ensure communities provide culturally relevant parenting training and supports.



Advocate for subsidized daycare options.



The Carriers of Hope call upon Leaders to:



Advocate for increased investments in Aboriginal Head Start programs.



Enforce a school board-wide policy to ensure equality to student parents (no discrimination policy).



Consider the additional costs associated to support student parents when allocating funding to the education budget.



Ensure housing is available for young parents and young families.



The Carriers of Hope call upon Schools to:



Partner with local daycares to create a schedule that works for student parents.



Encourage partnerships with health professionals to provide support and resources to student parents.



Offer baby-sitting, parenting, CPR and First Aid courses.

For more information go to: [f](#) [t](#) [i](#)



Provide baby items, supplies and resources at schools.



Ensure there is a secure and private room available to deal with breastfeeding needs.



Ensure that all parents are accommodated if they need to miss courses or assignments.

For more information go to: [f](#) [t](#) [i](#)

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YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #4

We call for equitably funded Kindergarten to grade 12 schools with a sufficient amount of resources, supports, and culturally aware faculty for First Nations students in every Nation across the country.



YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #4



Create a student committee made up of First Nations and allies to advocate for cultural awareness in the school.



Advocate for First Nations leadership groups in schools.

The Carriers of Hope call upon Students to:



Have a conversation with your guidance counsellor on additional resources or support available.



Speak up when teachers are not respecting First Nations culture.



Suggest community members to invite to schools who can provide workshops, trainings, or events.

For more information go to: [f](#) [t](#) [i](#)



Create a newsletter to include a section highlighting First Nations initiatives, programs and events.



YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #4



YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #4



The Carriers of Hope call upon Teachers to:



Accept alternative forms of work in lessons (i.e. storytelling, dance, reports from First Nations youth gatherings or personal experiences).



Encourage regalia, or other cultural items to be brought in for awareness teaching.



Bring an Elder in to smudge the classrooms when needed.



Plan field trips to Friendship Centres, Elders' spaces, and other culturally relevant spaces for First Nation students. Consult with First Nations to assist in planning.

Include curriculum mandated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action. Subject areas may include Treaty Education, Residential Schools and First Nations historical and contemporary contributions to Canada.



For more information go to: [f](#) [t](#) [i](#)



Attend cultural competency training with a First Nations focus.



Consult sources created by First Nations to assist in lesson planning when including First Nations knowledge in course content.



Read the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and their recommendations regarding First Nations education.



The Carriers of Hope call upon Schools to:



Acknowledge the traditional territory during morning announcements.



Have cultural rooms, spaces and items available for students.



Offer First Nation languages courses taught by First Nation teachers.



Support student projects that promote First Nations initiatives, programs and events.



Ban inappropriate or racist symbols, imagery, mascots costumes and behaviours in schools.



Bring awareness to existing First Nations initiatives and social media campaigns (i.e. Have a Heart Day, Orange Shirt Day).



Fund First Nations motivational speakers to come into schools to speak to the students.

Insist guidance counsellors have an additional duty to report and record complaints about teachers/staff regarding cultural ignorance.



Create a policy for smudging practices (i.e. notifying your local fire department on protocols and procedures).



Encourage your cafeteria to include traditional First Nation recipes; First Nations Elders or community members could be invited in.

For more information go to: [f](#) [t](#) [i](#)



YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #4



Advocate for mandatory courses and additional qualifications that provide cultural competency training for teachers. These courses could prepare teachers to ensure the inclusion of First Nations perspectives and cultures in course curriculum.



*The Carriers of Hope
call upon Leaders to:*



Advocate for increased funding for First Nations extracurricular activities at school.



Advocate for increased funding for professional development of teachers regarding cultural training.



For more information go to:   



Advocate for increased mandatory training on indigenous history for all Members of Parliament, Members of Provincial/Territorial Parliament, Senators and Bureaucrats.



RAISED VOICES:

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YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #5

We call on the Assembly of First Nations, Federal Government, and national organizations to encourage the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to influence and advocate for the inclusion of our shared history and First Nations knowledge into curricula.





YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #5



The Carriers of Hope call upon Students to:



Write to Members of Provincial Parliament supporting increased representation of First Nations knowledge into curricula.



Utilize your social media platforms to spread awareness and advocate for the importance of including First Nations knowledge in schools.



Write to the Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC) by sharing concerns, questions and suggestion for the inclusion of First Nations knowledge into school curricula.



Advocate for and be allies to First Nation students and their wellbeing.



Advocate for the inclusion of the First Nations flag of that territory on school property.

For more information go to:



YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #5



The Carriers of Hope call upon Teachers to:



Include books written by First Nations authors in course reading materials.



Research existing guides and best practices for teaching First Nations cultures and histories in the classroom.



Research First Nations histories in Canada, written from the perspective of First Nations.



Include First Nations history and knowledge in curricula throughout the entire year.



Seek out First Nations content experts to invite to speak to the class. Consult with a First Nations education organization in your area for support.



Utilize the Assembly of First Nations It's Our Time Toolkit as a teaching resource. Visit <https://education.afn.ca/afntoolkit> for more information.

For more information go to:





YOUTH CALLS TO ACTION #5

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The Carriers of Hope call upon Schools to:



Encourage teachers to include First Nations histories and knowledge in the classroom to support students feeling welcomed in their school environments.



Budget for teacher training to ensure that courses on First Nations content will be taught appropriately.



Actively acknowledge the territory they are on by raising the First Nations flag.



Have blanket exercises at the beginning of the school year.



Invite the Provincial Minister of Education to schools so they can listen to First Nations students' questions, concerns, and suggestions.

For more information go to:



Hold school-wide activities to support Indigenous Education Days of Significance. For example: Orange Shirt Day, Treaty Day, National Indigenous History Month and National Indigenous Peoples Day.



The Carriers of Hope call upon Leaders to:



Advocate for increased mandatory subject matter regarding First Nations shared histories and knowledge in curricula.



Advocate for investments in the development of a living First Nations curriculum developed by First Nations for First Nations.

Acknowledge First Nations education as an Inherent and Treaty Right.



Implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action into syllabi.



Learn about and include land acknowledgements in their opening remarks.

For more information go to:



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