



# NEWS

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 57  
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For Immediate Release

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## **SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 57 (PRINCE GEORGE) SHARES REMORSE AND STEPS BEING TAKEN TO ADDRESS INSENSITIVE SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT**

On Friday, September 10, 2021, School District No. 57 (Prince George) received a complaint from one of our parents regarding an insensitive Social Studies 9 assignment. The assignment in question was a worksheet asking students to list the positive and negative impacts of colonization. The intent of the assignment was to spark a conversation about the negative impacts and enduring effects of colonization. "This is not an issue with the curriculum," says Acting Superintendent Cindy Heitman, "this is an issue with the resources and activities chosen to teach that curriculum."

"We are deeply sorry for any harm that this has caused to the students, parents, families and the Indigenous communities," adds Kap Manhas, School District Assistant Superintendent, "This assignment is not a reflection of our teachers or our commitment to truth and reconciliation. We are working through a restorative process with the parents, the teacher, the principal and our resource staff to apply safeguards to ensure this does not happen again."

Acting Superintendent Cindy Heitman agrees. "I also realize that saying 'We're sorry' isn't enough. We need to put action behind those words." School District No. 57 has developed an implementation plan for its new Five-year Strategic Plan. Within the implementation plan are a number of strategies meant to ensure Indigenous voices are heard. Strategies include:

- Reviewing resources to ensure they are culturally sensitive
- Increasing Elders and Knowledge Holders in schools to support and mentor staff in the education of Residential Schools, Indigenous culture and indigenous languages
- Reviewing curriculum to indigenize with local content and decolonize to allow academics to be learned through a cultural and inclusive lens
- Providing – and emphasizing – professional learning to staff about Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and Trauma Informed approaches.
- Developing an Education Council of First Nations leaders, Elders and the K-12 system leaders to discuss education within learning communities. In short 'Nothing about us without us.'

Our goal in School District 57 is to continue to decolonize our structures and curriculum, ensuring indigenous language, culture and perspectives are embedded in everything we do. We are sincerely hoping that we will have Indigenous Leaders in our communities help us with this vital and challenging work.

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