

## **Indigenous Education Action Committee’s Statement in Support of Orange Shirt Day on September 30<sup>th</sup>**

On September 30<sup>th</sup> of each year, it is [Orange Shirt Day](#). A day where Canadians pay tribute to, show their support of residential school survivors and remember the history of residential schools in Canada. It is estimated that there were 150,000 Inuit, First Nations and Metis children who were forcibly taken from their families and their communities and put in residential schools for the sole purpose of stripping them of their Indigenous languages and cultures.

The [Indigenous Education Action Committee](#) (IEAC) calls upon the Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as its members and students, to wear orange shirts on September 30<sup>th</sup> to show your support. The IEAC also calls upon the legal profession to read Phyllis Webstad’s, “[The Orange Shirt Story](#)” with your children or loved ones.

The IEAC also supports, and encourages the Law Society, governments and organizations to implement the [Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action](#) numbers 62, 63, 64 and 65. These Calls to Action include:

### **“Education for reconciliation”**

62. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:

- i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples’ historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.
- ii. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.
- iii. Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.
- iv. Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to {“including”} Aboriginal content in education.

63. We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:

- i. Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.
- ii. Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.
- iii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.

iv. Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above.

64. We call upon all levels of government that provide public funds to denominational schools to require such schools to provide an education on comparative religious studies, which must include a segment on spiritual beliefs and practices developed in collaboration with Aboriginal Elders.

65. We call upon the federal government, through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, post-secondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and its partner institutions, to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation.

Law Society members are encouraged to visit the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission's website](#) to access resources such as the TRC's reports and findings. From this site you can also access the website of the [National Center for Truth and Reconciliation](#) which carries on the work of the TRC.

Residential schools are a part of the province's history as the Innu and Inuit of Labrador were forced to attend residential schools. Although the TRC and the federal Indian Residential School Settlement did not extend to Newfoundland and Labrador, several residential school survivors from this province worked tirelessly to have their lived experience recognized.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Supreme Court's decision of [Anderson v. Canada](#) certified the class action lawsuit. The decision was later appealed to the Court of Appeal and the decision was [upheld](#). In 2016, some nine years after the original statement of claim was filed, Labrador residential school survivors [settled their claim](#).

It is important as the Indigenous Education Action Committee, to highlight that this is a part of Canada's history, and a part of the province's history. Although, it is rarely taught throughout educational institutions, we as the legal profession can pioneer new ways to educate ourselves on the history of Indigenous peoples within the province. By wearing your orange shirt on September 30<sup>th</sup>, you are showing your support for the 150,000 Indigenous children who were forcefully removed from their families, while also raising awareness about residential schools.

Please also reflect on measures you can take to implement TRC's Calls to Action numbers 62, 63, 64 and 65.