



June 17, 2021

Via e-mail to Clerk of the Committee:
Harjit.Gill@Peelregion.ca

Regional Municipality of Peel
Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism Committee
10 Peel Centre Drive
Brampton, Ontario L6T 4B9

Dear Members of the Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism Committee:

RE: Communications

Agenda Item 7.1 Government of Canada, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs
Canada
Statement on the Discovery Around Kamloops Indian Residential School

and

RE: Reports

Agenda Item 6.1 Update on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the Region of Peel
Section 2. Region of Peel Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Framework

- Partnering with stakeholders to plan, identify and address systemic barriers (Community and Workforce)

and

Section 3. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Efforts

- c) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Events & Observances
“Moving forward, workforce and community facing events will continue to be planned to promote:
 - Community engagement
 - Opportunities for learning
 - Acceptance of differences amongst community members

As a Member of Peel Poverty Action Group and founder of Building Up Our Neighbourhoods civic engagement initiative, since February 2010 I have attended meetings of Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy. Currently I Since January 2020, I have attended the PPRS-Advocacy and Awareness Roundtable when it was first established.

At the June 8, 2021 meeting of PPRS-AAR our members held a moment of silence to grieve the deaths of the 215 Indigenous children whose remains were discovered in unmarked graves on the grounds of the former Kamloops Residential School. Following silence, PPRS-AAR members wanted to know more about how to respond to the 94 Calls to Action made by the Truth and Reconciliation Committee.

With a summer break in the Region of Peel legislative calendar, I make the following request:

REFERRAL TO Corporate Services
RECOMMENDED _____
DIRECTION REQUIRED _____
RECEIPT RECOMMENDED _____

Request: To help advance the community-facing efforts of Region of Peel's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Framework, the DEAR Committee is requested to explore how communities who participated in the Region of Peel Courageous Conversations Series convened September 2020 – February 2021 can be engaged for explicit representation and dedicated advocacy at Roundtables of the Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy (PPRS), commencing in September 2021.

The DEAR Committee is further requested to prioritize such explicit representation within PPRS at the PPRS-Advocacy and Awareness Roundtable in consultation with Courageous Conversations communities. A foremost engagement can be an advocate for the First Nations, Métis and Inuit people.

Rationale: On May 27, 2021 the news broke that the remains of 215 Indigenous children in unmarked graves were discovered by using ground-penetrating radar at the former Kamloops Residential School located on Tk'emlups te Secwépemc First Nation in Kamloops, B.C. National outcry at the undocumented deaths led to vigils, observances where children's shoes were placed at monuments and public buildings, and flags flown at half-mast in mourning for 215 hours on Parliament Hill and elsewhere across the country at civic, public school board, institutional locations and businesses of all kinds.

On June 1, in the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) statement to mark the first day of Indigenous Peoples History month and the June 2 anniversary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action, the AFN decried the Kamloops unmarked graves as the most recent evidence of genocide. In its statement, the AFN said: Every single government and person in Canada can help drive change, to honour our shared history and commit to doing better as a country.”ⁱ

On June 2, [Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada](#) set up national toll-free and confidential National Indian Residential School Crisis Line 1-866-925-4419. On June 14, the Ontario government announced a \$10 million fund over three years to identify, investigate and commemorate residential school burial sites across the province.

Indigenous communities, and all of us, will experience psychic and mental health distress. Tk'emlups te Secwepemc Nation chief Chief Rosanne Casimir, who announced the discovery of graves at the former Kamloops Residential School, said, “There's a lot of shared hurts and traumas and triggers that have been opened... I know it's something we all have to face,” in her interview with The Canadian Pressⁱⁱ

Background: At the June 8, 2021 meeting of PPRS-AAR our members held a moment of silence to grieve the death of the 215 Indigenous children whose remains were discovered in unmarked graves on the grounds of the former Kamloops Residential School. Following silence, PPRS-AAR members wanted to know more about how to respond to the 94 Calls to Action made by the Truth and Reconciliation Committee.

The Social Justice & Advocacy Consultant from the Anglican Diocese of Toronto raised awareness of [Indigenous Justice](#) resources available on its website. In 1993, an apology to Indigenous peoples was issued for the Anglican Church of Canada's role in the residential school system. The Anglican Church was among the signatories to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement in 2006 and participated in the public hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) across the country between 2008 and 2015.



Catherine Sople

cc. Peel Poverty Action Group

cc Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy -

Azzovcacy and Awareness Roundtable

ⁱ June 1, 2021 (Ottawa, ON) Assembly of First Nations Statement: [National Chief Demands Action for Missing First Nations Children and Grave Sites](#)

ⁱⁱ Jun 16, 2021 (Kamloops, BC) Canadian Press/Toronto Star: [Kamloops chief says more unmarked graves will be found across Canada](#)