

Ministry of Education

Deputy Minister

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Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

Ministère de l'Éducation

Sous-ministre

Édifice Mowat
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2



Memorandum To: Directors of Education

From: Bruce Rodrigues
Deputy Minister

Date: November 21, 2017

Subject: Indigenous Names, Logos and/ or Mascots

The Ministry of Education remains committed to supporting all Ontario school boards in their efforts towards reconciliation and rebuilding of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, through trust, understanding and respect.

I know that many boards are collaboratively engaging with Indigenous community members and partners to foster safe and inclusive environments and making reconciliation a high priority. Following my memo to boards in January, I know that many schools have taken additional steps and continue to work closely with their Indigenous Education Board Leads, Indigenous Education Advisory Councils, School Councils, Parent Involvement Committees, students and Indigenous community partners to respectfully consider any concerns about school team names, logos and mascots. Staff, teachers, students, parents and community members are learning together why the continued use and display of such logos or symbols may be inappropriate.

I want to thank you for the work that has been done to date and ask that you continue discussions in your schools and communities about the wearing or displaying of Indigenous-themed sports clothing, logos, mascots or symbols. As you know, perpetuating stereotypes, biases and/ or false generalizations about Indigenous peoples, cultures or traditions, can have a negative impact on individuals, staff and communities, as well as on the school climate itself.

I encourage you to further consider the issue of students wearing Indigenous-themed sports clothing or costumes to school, and take any steps necessary to promote a safe, inclusive and accepting school climate, including with respect to safe school policies and practices such as school dress codes and bullying prevention plans. Boards may additionally wish to include questions in school climate surveys or consult through their Indigenous Education Advisory Councils, community Elders and Chiefs, on the most appropriate response for optimal learning. Together we can ensure that our schools are

safe, inclusive and welcoming environments for all students.

As we implement the actions in *The Journey Together: Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples*, we continue the essential work of identifying and eliminating discriminatory practices, stereotypes and biases. Ontario recently released the *Education Equity Action Plan* to provide more resources to help boards in this task. The ministry has also taken important steps to make system-wide changes. This includes targeted funding, professional development and support for the integration of First Nation, Métis and Inuit perspectives into the curriculum.

As always, the ministry stands ready to help. For boards looking for ideas and best practices, we are happy to share with you contact details of those who have developed some excellent new ways of working on these issues, in respectful collaboration with our Indigenous partners.

Thank you for your commitment to ensuring safe, welcoming, respectful, and inclusive learning environments for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce Rodrigues". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "B" and a long, trailing "s" at the end.

Bruce Rodrigues
Deputy Minister

- c. Council of Ontario Directors of Education
Doug Crichton, Field Services Branch
Taunya Paquette, Indigenous Education Office
Ruth Flynn, Inclusive Education Branch
Debbie Thompson, Safe and Healthy Schools Branch