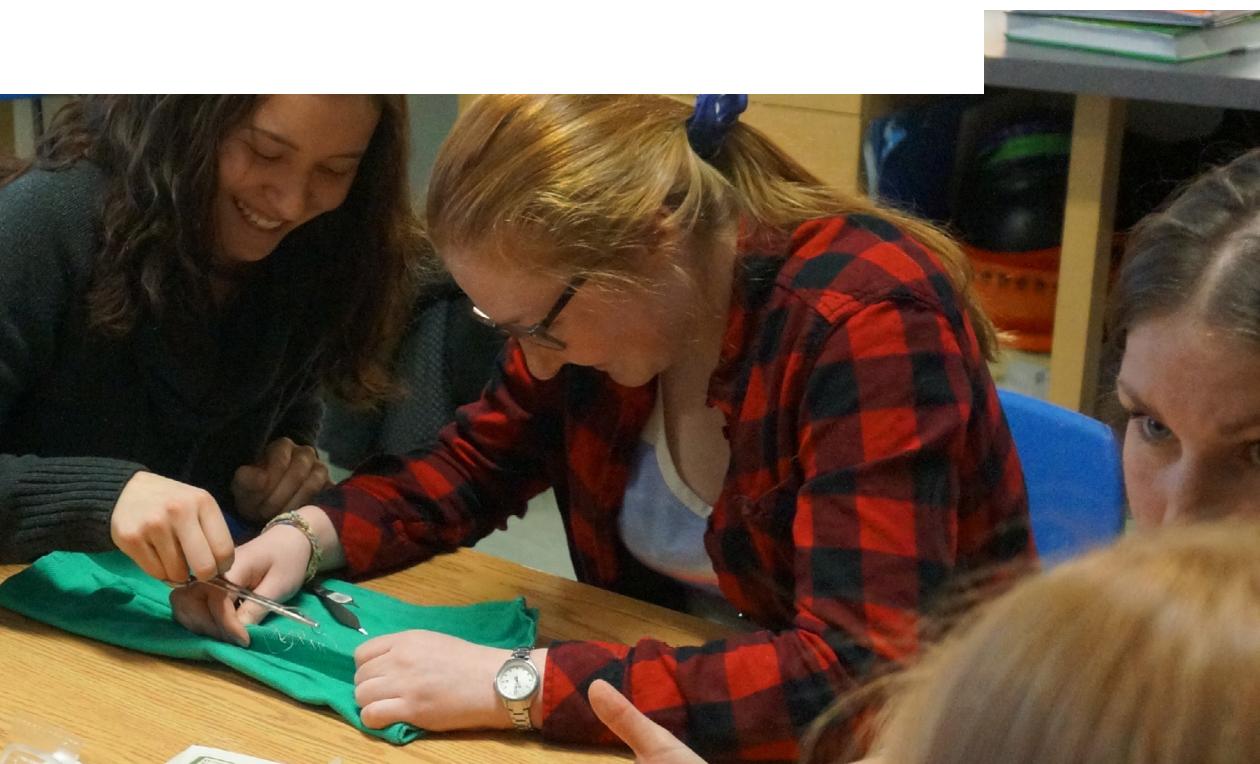


Implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action : Teach for Canada

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The Gordon Foundation undertakes research, leadership development and public dialogue so that public policies in Canada reflect a commitment to collaborative stewardship of our freshwater resources and to a people-driven, equitable and evolving North. Our mission is to promote innovative public policies for the North and in fresh water management based on our values of independent thought, protecting the environment, and full participation of indigenous people in the decisions that affect their well-being. Over the past quarter century The Gordon Foundation has invested over \$37 million in a wide variety of northern community initiatives and freshwater protection initiatives.



The Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship is a policy and leadership development program that recognizes leadership potential among young northern Canadians who want to address the emerging policy challenges facing the North. The two year long program is built around four regional gatherings and offers skills training, mentorship and networking opportunities. Through self-directed learning, group work and the collective sharing of knowledge, Fellows will foster a deeper understanding of important contemporary northern issues, and develop the skills and confidence to better articulate and share their ideas and policy research publicly. The Fellowship is intended for young northerners between 25 and 35 years of age, who want to build a strong North that benefits all northerners. Through the Fellowship, we hope to foster a bond among the Fellows that will endure throughout their professional lives and support a pan-northern network.

How can Teach for Canada implement the Truth and Reconciliation Committee's Calls to Action?

Teach For Canada is a non-profit organization that aims to address high teacher turnover rates in northern First Nations communities and endeavours to examine the educational gaps in learning achievements and other educational deficits.

The First Nations community partners that Teach For Canada serves are Ojibwe (Anishnaabe, as they traditionally call themselves), Oji-Cree and Cree. These First Nations communities are located in northern Ontario and have a high dropout rate as a combined result of residential schooling under-funded federal schooling and high teacher turnover rate, among other factors.

Canada mandated the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to gather the written and oral history of residential schools, while working toward reconciliation between former residential school students and the rest of Canada.

The 'Nish Group have identified three main options for Teach For Canada to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's "Calls to Action" in their final report. First, Teach For Canada can choose the "Wait and See" option without implementing any of the calls to action. Second, Teach for Canada can choose to implement the "Do All Possible" option, which addresses all the relevant calls to action. Third, Teach For Canada can choose to implement the "First Four" option, which addresses a narrow selection of relevant calls to action.

The 'Nish Group recommends that Teach For Canada implement the "First Four" option, which aims to apply a narrow selection of relevant calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report.

Who is Teach for Canada?

Teach For Canada is a non-profit organization that attempts to transform education in northern Ontario First Nations communities. Teach For Canada receives applications from qualified teachers across Canada who want to teach in a northern Ontario community and are willing to sign a two-year commitment agreement. From April to June, working alongside thirteen First Nations school partners, Teach For Canada brings education directors from these communities to Toronto, Ottawa and Thunder Bay to run interviews with pre-screened teachers. Teachers who are selected by the interview panels are entered into an online teacher database and Teach For Canada's community partners make hiring decisions on their own. The selected teachers then complete a three-week training program before entering the classroom in September. Teach For Canada provides teachers with professional and personal support throughout the two-year time frame.

Since the program's beginning, Teach For Canada teachers have been involved with the community beyond their classrooms: they have launched student councils, coached hockey teams, created music programs, started choirs, organized field trips, launched school websites and run outdoor education events.

The motto of Teach For Canada is: "Together, we can make education more equal."

What is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was created as a result of the largest class-action lawsuit in Canadian history. Former students of Indian residential schools decided to settle an out-of-court agreement with the federal government and four national churches. As a result, former residential school students are assured their stories are not lost. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was mandated to gather the written and oral history of residential schools, while working toward reconciliation between former students and the rest of Canada. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission held seven national events between 2010 and 2013, where they gathered stories from residential school survivors. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission have since collected more than 6,500 statements from residential school survivors, which resulted in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report containing the 94 "Calls to Action."

Who are the First Nations Community Partners?

The First Nations communities that Teach For Canada serves are located in northern Ontario and their populations are largely Ojibwe (Anishnaabe), Oji-Cree and Cree. The 13 First Nations communities that Teach For Canada serves are Deer Lake, Eabametoong, Fort Severn, Keewaywin, Kl (Big Trout Lake), Marten Falls, North Spirit Lake, Sandy Lake, Poplar Hill, Big Grassy River, Lac La Croix, Lac Seul and the Ojibways of Onigaming. Many children in these communities do not have access to high schools in their home communities. Therefore, they often leave home to attend high school in Sioux Lookout, Thunder Bay, Winnipeg or elsewhere. The community populations range from Big Grassy River with a population of 280 to Sandy Lake with a population of 2,571. Student enrollment for each of the schools ranges from 57 to 586.¹ In these First Nations communities, three out of five students will drop out of high school, largely as a result of historical and systemic education injustices, such as residential schooling and teacher recruitment and retention difficulties, among other factors.²

Who are the Jane Glassco Northern Fellows?

The Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship is an initiative of The Gordon Foundation. It is a policy and leadership development program aimed at young northerners, aged 25 to 35, who want to build a strong North that benefits northerners. The Fellowship is a two-year-long program, in which the Fellows work on individual and group research projects. The 'Nish Group has been tasked with this group research project, in which they take on the role of a team of consultants writing an advisory report for a client, Teach For Canada. The 'Nish group comprises NWT Fellows Dawn Tremblay and Thomsen D'Hont, and Nunavut Fellows Angela Nuliayok Rudolph and Clara Wingnek. All members of the group have diverse skills and interests relevant to this project and all have lived and have professional experiences in northern Indigenous communities. Short biographies of the group members can be found below. In this policy paper, the 'Nish Group would like to emphasize that they are not from Northern Ontario and therefore lack local knowledge specifically to Teach For Canada's endeavours in this context. However, there are many similarities between the territories' educational issues and Northern Ontario educational issues, and therefore there are lessons to be learned from both regions. For the purposes of this exercise, this group of Fellows, the 'Nish Group, plays the role of a team of consultants writing an advisory report for a client, Teach For Canada.

¹ Sara-Christine Gemson, director of communications, personal communication, August 24, 2016.

² Teach For Canada, *Program Overview*, (Toronto, April 2016, p. 4).



Clara Wingnek

Clara Wingnek is from the western Nunavut community of Cambridge Bay. She studied Business Management at Grant MacEwan University and has worked in several fields in the North, including tourism and education. Currently, Clara is a regional finance manager working with the Department of Health, Government of Nunavut. Aside from this, she is a member of the Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship, a board member with the Nunavut Joint Planning and Management Committee for Territorial Parks, and recent co-chair of the Ikaluktutiak District Education Authority. As a board member with the Ikaluktutiak District Education Authority she worked closely with K–12 schools in her community to ensure that effective policies were adopted and implemented, endorsed the value of education to the community, monitored school plans and provided direction to principals on how to oversee these schools. Her passion includes setting the stage for change in local governance models and is focusing her Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship research in this area.



Thomsen D'Hont

Thomsen D'Hont was born and raised in Yellowknife, NWT, and from a young age has been connected to his Métis culture and community in the North. Currently, Thomsen is a medical student at the University of British Columbia's Northern Medical Program in Prince George, BC, and after his training he plans to return to the Northwest Territories to practise as a physician. Thomsen is passionate about primary healthcare, social determinants of health, and reducing barriers to medical education for Indigenous students. For his individual Jane Glassco Fellowship project, Thomsen is exploring how the Northwest Territories can implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #23 for more Indigenous healthcare workers from the territory working in Indigenous communities in the territory. In his spare time, Thomsen loves cross-country skiing, mountain biking, hunting and pretty much anything else that gets him out in the bush.



Dawn Tremblay

Dawn Tremblay was born in Fort Simpson and raised in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories (NWT). After high school, she went south to university. She returned home with a political science degree, and an appetite for more northern knowledge. So, Dawn sought out opportunities and completed a certificate in circumpolar studies with the University of the Arctic through Aurora College, followed by a semester at the Dechinta Bush University. Dawn is currently working for Ecology North, an environmental non-profit organization with charity status. Her Fellowship research is about sustainable waste management, with a focus on a tire stewardship program for the NWT and the organics recycling program in Yellowknife. In her spare time, Dawn likes to get outside with her son and her dog.



Angela Nuliyok Rudolph

Angela Nuliyok Rudolph is an Inuk from Gjoa Haven, Nunavut. Currently she is completing graduate studies at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, with a focus in Indigenous Arctic Policy. Through her master's thesis she is exploring how colonization has shaped the Inuit identity, and how Inuit gender cultural practices prepare Inuit men and women to endure and respond to colonization differently. Angela's policy focus in the Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship focuses on how Inuit throughout the circumpolar north can come together and build leadership capacity to address international issues that Inuit face. Prior to Angela's research endeavours, she worked as a high school teacher in her hometown of Gjoa Haven at the Qiqirtaq Ilihakvik High School, teaching grades 10–12 social studies and Aulajaaqtut (the Nunavut school health curriculum). Angela received her Bachelor of Education from Lakehead University with a focus in Intermediate and secondary levels in Native Studies and Social Science. Angela did her student-teaching in Thunder Bay at Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School and McKellar Park Elementary School, schools that serve an entirely Anishinaabe or majority Anishinaabe student body, respectively. This experience has helped her tremendously through this group project.

1 Wait and See

For Teach For Canada, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action represent a daunting challenge. Even for a non-governmental organization deeply committed to improving Indigenous education outcomes, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission agenda requires powerful political will and the summoning of considerable human and financial resources. Even with the best of intentions and leadership acumen, it is difficult to know how to start implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. One practical option would therefore be to wait and see what others will do with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and then to follow their lead.

2 Do All Possible

The 'Nish group recognizes that it is unrealistic for Teach For Canada to implement an approach to address all 94 Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Report. The "do all possible" option is the next best option. This option would see Teach For Canada implement ten of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, selected by the 'Nish group as relating to Teach For Canada's mandate, which are identified in Appendix A.

3 First Four

Rather than doing nothing in the "wait and see" option or doing more than Teach For Canada can afford in the "do all possible" option, we suggest Teach For Canada focus on four education-related Calls to Action that are most relevant to the agenda for Teach For Canada. This option will be referred to as the "first four" option, which is identified in Appendix B.

While there are 94 calls to action in total, the main criteria used to analyze and prioritize the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action by the 'Nish Group were **1/** Relevance to Teach for Canada's mandate **2/** Cost **3/** Teach for Canada's ability to implement them.

This section analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of implementing the different policy options.

Wait and See

Now and in the coming years, numerous organizations across Canada, including federal departments, provincial ministries and municipal administrations, as well as NGOs, will digest the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations and consider how best to respond to the numerous Calls to Action. A tiny NGO might decide that a realistic strategy would be to wait and see how similar organizations with comparable mandates might act. From the actions of many organizations from every province and territory might emerge a consensus about viable approaches. And from this consensus, Teach For Canada might identify a viable action.

ADVANTAGES

Mandate

As a young organization committed to learning, Teach For Canada can benefit from the experience of similar organizations in developing best-practices;

Cost

the immediate cost of this option is minimal; and

Implementation

for the immediate future, this option has few implementation challenges.

DISADVANTAGES

Mandate

For an organization committed to Indigenous education, a "wait and see" or "do nothing for now" response would amount to a serious sign of bad faith in relation to their mandate and their First Nations community partners;

Cost

the money saved by a failure to act on Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action would not be worth the reputational risk to Teach For Canada; and

Implementation

the perception that Teach For Canada responded slowly to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's challenge or "played catch-up" could damage its fundraising potential.

Do All Possible

Since Teach For Canada cannot feasibly implement all 94 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action the 'Nish group has identified a "do all possible" selection of 8 Calls to Action that could be implemented, which are relevant to a teacher organization such as Teach For Canada. If Teach For Canada were to choose this option, they would show a strong commitment to the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, which would solidify their reputation in First Nations education. However, this option is the most costly, requiring a lot of money and resources to effectively implement, which, as a small teacher organization, Teach For Canada may not have access to.

This list of the "do all possible" option is available in Appendix A.

ADVANTAGES

Mandate

Implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions Calls to Action will successfully contribute to Teach For Canada's values of humility, transparency, culture and collaboration. Teach For Canada would also demonstrate the highest degree of commitment to reconciliation;

Cost

the money spent by Teach for Canada in their effort to "do all possible" to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action would build a respectable reputation; and

Implementation

Teach For Canada would demonstrate a dedication to excellence, which supports the option of aiming to implement all the relevant Calls to Action.

DISADVANTAGE

Cost

A drawback to implement this option would include the need for increased resources in terms of human and financial resources. Teach For Canada would have to do additional work to create and implement the "do all possible" option; and

Implementation

Teach For Canada would run the risk of over-extending itself: they would risk doing a poor job addressing a large number of calls to action, instead of a doing a good job of addressing a few calls to action.

First Four

The main criteria used by the 'Nish Group to prioritize the Calls to Action for Teach For Canada were 1) relevance to mandate, 2) cost, and 3) ability to implement. Based on these criteria, some Calls to Action are easily eliminated as not relevant to an educational organization such as Teach For Canada. For example, several Calls to Action address tasks outside the scope of Teach For Canada. The Nish Group has selected Calls to Action that align with Teach For Canada's mandate, which have been termed the "first four."

This list of the "first four" option is available in Appendix B.

ADVANTAGES

Mandate

The "first four" are the most consistent with Teach For Canada's mandate and values;

Cost

a small organization with limited resources, such as Teach For Canada, needs to focus on the most relevant Calls to Action. The 'Nish Group believes the chosen four are the most feasible for Teach For Canada at this time. The "first four" option is also a more cost-efficient option in comparison to the "do all possible" option; and

Implementation

Teach For Canada would apply the limited resources it has as a small teacher organization to effectively implement a small number of very relevant Calls to Action very well.

DISADVANTAGES

Cost

This option is more expensive than the "wait and see" option; and

Implementation

Teach For Canada would exclude the opportunity to implement other Calls to Action, which would provide benefits to Teach For Canada and the First Nations community partners they serve.

RECOMMENDATIONS



From the three policy options provided, the 'Nish Group recommends that Teach For Canada implement the “first four” option. In terms of the criteria used to analyze the three different policy options, the advantages of the “first four” option greatly outweigh the disadvantages to Teach For Canada’s mandate, cost to implement and ability to implement. Moreover, the advantages and disadvantages for the “first four” option are more favourable than the advantages and disadvantages of the other two policy options (“wait and see” and “do all possible”).

Consultants in the 'Nish Group are not from Northern Ontario but rather from the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. They have considerable experience with educational issues in the Far North, including the effects of policies imported from the South, and understand the issues that arise out of this process. This group would also like to highlight that they have had little interaction and research opportunity with the Northern Ontario communities who will

be affected by this policy recommendation. As a result, the 'Nish Group very strongly recommends that Teach For Canada engage with their Northern Ontario communities to understand whether or not they support the policy recommendation of the “first four.”

The 'Nish Group has taken the Calls to Action identified as important Calls to Action for Teach For Canada to implement from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Final Report and modified them to make them applicable to Teach For Canada. Within some of the Calls to Action of the “first four” there are many sub-sections; in this case some of the sub-sections are not feasible or within the scope of Teach For Canada’s ability to implement. Therefore, we have omitted some sub-sections from various Calls to Action to correspond with the feasibility of Teach For Canada to accomplish within their current scope of ability. The Nish Group recommends the “first four” option, as follows:

- 10.** We call on [Teach For Canada] with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples [to] incorporate the following principles:
- ii. Improving education attainment levels and success rates.
 - iii. Developing culturally appropriate curricula.
 - iv. Protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages.
 - v. Enabling parental and community responsibility, control, and accountability, similar to what parents enjoy in public school systems.
 - vi. Enabling parents to fully participate in the education of their children.
 - vii. Respecting and honouring Treaty relationships.

- 57.** We call upon [Teach For Canada] to provide education to [their teachers] on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

- 62.** We call upon [Teach For Canada], in consultation and collaboration with [residential school] Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:
- ii. Educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.
 - iii. Utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.

- 63.** We call upon [Teach For Canada] to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:
- i. implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools [in the classroom and their summer training program].
 - 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.

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APPENDIX A : DO ALL POSSIBLE

Below is a compiled list of eight of the Calls to Action that the 'Nish Group have identified as important for Teach For Canada to implement in the “Do All Possible” option.

DO ALL POSSIBLE : TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION CALLS TO ACTION

- 10.** We call on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples. The new legislation would include a commitment to sufficient funding and would incorporate the following principles:

 - ii. Improving education attainment levels and success rates.
 - iii. Developing culturally appropriate curricula.
 - iv. Protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses.
 - v. Enabling parental and community responsibility, control, and accountability, similar to what parents enjoy in public school systems.
 - vi. Enabling parents to fully participate in the education of their children.
 - vii. Respecting and honouring Treaty relationships.
- 13.** We call upon the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights.
- 14.** We call upon the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act that incorporates the following principles:

 - iv. The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities
- 57.** We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
- 62.** We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:

 - 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.
- 64.** 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.
- 1.** We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.
- 1.** We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel.

APPENDIX B : FIRST FOUR

Below is a compiled list of four of the Calls to Action that the 'Nish Group have identified as important for Teach For Canada to implement in the “first four” option.

FIRST FOUR : TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION CALLS TO ACTION

- 10.** We call on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples. The new legislation would include a commitment to sufficient funding and would incorporate the following principles:
 - ii. Improving education attainment levels and success rates.
 - iii. Developing culturally appropriate curricula.
 - iv. Protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as.
 - v. Enabling parental and community responsibility, control, and accountability, similar to what parents enjoy in public school systems.
 - vi. Enabling parents to fully participate in the education of their children.
 - vii. Respecting and honouring Treaty relationships.

- 57.** We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

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

- 64.** 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.

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