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Ian MacRae, Director of Education

February 18, 2020

Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
5th Floor, 438 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

Dear Minister Lecce:

Lakehead District School Board's Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee (AEAC) was established in November 2004. The Committee is comprised of Aboriginal parents/guardians, an Aboriginal youth, Aboriginal agencies, a Trustee, Elders/Knowledge Keepers and internal Lakehead Public Schools staff with the mission statement "Connecting for Success". The mandate of the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee (AEAC) is to advise the Board on matters relating to the education of Aboriginal students.

The mandate also includes:

- Increasing the cultural awareness of all Board Trustees and personnel through professional development and/or other related activities;
- Expanding the awareness of effective programs for the educational needs of Aboriginal students;
- Facilitating initiatives for all Aboriginal students;
- Providing advice on initiatives including, but not limited to, student programs, Aboriginal studies, student retention and alternative education programs;
- Developing and enhancing partnerships with community-based agencies that support Aboriginal students and their families;
- Responding to the Board on requests for advice and recommendations on matters that the Board may direct to the committee.
- Advocating both provincially and locally for specific needs of Aboriginal students;
- Identifying community issues that impact education; and
- Responding to other initiatives as they arise.

Given AEAC's commitment to student success and effective programs and supports for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, we are writing to request that the Ministry of Education carefully consider the priorities outlined by elementary and secondary teachers, education workers and support staff in negotiations with the provincial government.

AEAC supports the current structure of the Full Day Kindergarten program with the balanced, play based and inquiry approach as well as the current staffing model. This supports a solid education foundation for future success, which is critical for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students.

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Lakehead District School Board

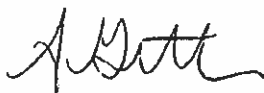
AEAC also recommends continued investment in First Nations, Métis and Inuit education, including updated curriculum for K-3, as well as mandatory learning in secondary schools. We have seen tremendous progress over the years and do not want to lose the important positive momentum that is making a difference for our students, families and community members.

Programs and supports afforded students with special needs have benefited students greatly and we recommend continued funding to support innovative strategies and professional development to ensure students can access the curriculum in a supportive, caring and safe learning environment.

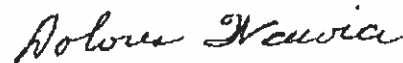
AEAC strongly advocates for maintaining class sizes to continue to provide timely supports for students and the breadth of course offerings that engage students in their learning. We respectfully request that the Ministry of Education maintain the current structure and staffing of elementary and secondary schools, programs for students with special needs and supports for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students.

AEAC values respectful relationships with education partners and larger public consultation with respect to budget priorities and welcomes the opportunity to engage in further conversations with the Ministry of Education.

Sincerely,



Anika Guthrie, Co-Chair
Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee



Dolores Wawia, Co-Chair
Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee

- c Premier Doug Ford
- MPP Michael Gravelle
- MPP Judith Monteith-Farrell
- MPP Kathleen Wynne, Education Critic
- MPP Marit Stiles, Education Critic
- Sam Hammond, President, ETFO
- W.R. (Rusty) Hick, Executive Director, OPSBA
- Cathy Abraham, President, OPSBA
- Michael Judge, President, LETO
- Harvey Bischof, President, OSSTF/FEESO
- Richard Seeley, President, OSSTF Thunder Bay Branch