



British Columbia  
School Trustees  
Association

August 30, 2017

**The Honourable Carolyn Bennett**

*Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs*  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6, Canada

Dear Minister Bennett,

**RE: The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the Framework for Reconciliation**

During the BC School Trustees Association's spring 2017 Annual General Meeting, our member Boards of Education passed a significant resolution calling for the use of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.

The motions passed by our membership follows:

*That BCSTA call upon the provincial and federal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation in addressing the educational needs of First Nations, Metis and Inuit students.*

As stated in the rationale supporting the motion (attached), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is the most comprehensive, universal international human rights instrument explicitly addressing the economic, social, cultural, political, spiritual and environmental rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The declaration was officially adopted by the United Nations on September 13, 2007, with Canada issuing a statement of support endorsing this action in 2010. Since that time, we have seen action take place in the form of mandate letters from the Prime Minister of Canada seeking to implement the declaration.

We now call on you to incorporate this important declaration into the reconciliation process, especially as it relates to the educational needs of First Nations, Metis and Inuit students. The declaration identifies six key principals, which we ask that you consider as part of the process.

- The right to self-determination
- The right to participate in decision-making
- The right to cultural and spiritual identity
- The right to lands and resources
- The right to free, prior, and informed consent
- The right to be free from discrimination

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to hearing from you regarding any possibilities or proposals that you may have surrounding this important concern.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "G B Swan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gordon" and last name "Swan" clearly legible.

**Gordon Swan**

*President*

BC School Trustees Association

Enclosure

cc: Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada  
John Horgan, Premier of British Columbia  
Rob Fleming, Minister of Education  
BCSTA Member Boards of Education

## **16. THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AS THE FRAMEWORK FOR RECONCILIATION**

**SUBMITTED BY:** SD 62 (Sooke)

### **BE IT RESOLVED:**

That BCSTA call upon the provincial and federal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.

### **RATIONALE:**

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2007, after more than 20 years of discussion and debate. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is the most comprehensive, universal international human rights instrument explicitly addressing the economic, social, cultural, political, spiritual and environmental rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The wording for this motion comes directly from #43 in the Calls-to-Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report. SD62 recently finished the signing its second Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement-- an important document to our district that takes into consideration the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report.

### **REFERENCES:**

- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission – Calls to Action](#)
- [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)
- [SD62 Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement 2016-2021](#)