

June 3, 2021

I was heartbroken to learn of the initial findings of the investigation into the 215 children found buried on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. While I have been deeply saddened by this news, I cannot imagine the grief and pain that the families and communities of the missing children and of all First Nations, Inuit, and Metis people across our country are feeling. My heart goes out to everyone as I am sure for many it reignites past trauma and reaffirms the gross imbalance that engendered all the pain and suffering that has been brushed aside for years.

The Surrey Academy of Innovative Learning stands with our Indigenous communities in seeking the truth about the missing children of residential schools. Furthermore, we commit to teaching our students the legacy of residential schools and to advance the process of reconciliation in our community. The awakening is underway. Through our classrooms and in conversations with our families, we will make the truth understood and reconciliation a priority. We will aim to teach and act in a way that brings honour to the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. We will work to create a better world for them to ensure they have a place in our country that is fitting of their place in our history, and in our lives.

In a few weeks, I will address our students and graduates and you will hear me explain that we all need to play a part in creating a peaceful world that is more equitable, fair and inclusive. It's 2021... It's time we stopped offering platitudes of support and inclusion. The Indigenous peoples of Canada must be equal participants in shaping our collective future. They can only do this if they are invited and present in the conversation. As we celebrate our school year, we must all collectively pause to recognize our past where many children were not permitted a future, let alone one filled with hope and promise.

As we move forward, we will all renew our commitment to support the families and communities affected by the dark legacy of the residential school system. We will honour the lives of lost children, and of the survivors, and never forget their stories. Let us never forget these children.

Sincerely,



Rex Hayes,
Principal

