

Christian Provenzano
Mayor



Corporation of the
City of Sault Ste. Marie

June 3rd, 2015

Chief Dean Sayers
Chief Lyle Sayers

RE: Release of Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report

Chiefs,

As you know, on Tuesday June 2nd the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its report on residential schools and recommendations for moving forward.

There is much to consider in the report but perhaps the most arresting passage is the declaration of the commission that the residential schools policy represented a form of cultural genocide. This assessment will undoubtedly be very difficult for many Canadians to take; however, it is an assessment that I personally agree with. The judgement of the commission is one that I feel we must accept, if we are to have hope of arriving at a true state of reconciliation.

Sault Ste. Marie has its own tangled history with the residential school system. It is a history that we must not forget and also one that we must be willing to confront when necessary. I have no doubt that a long road remains ahead for the survivors of residential schools and the subsequent generations who have been affected to find healing. I do not know what every step along that road will be, but I believe that the first ones must be to acknowledge the inherent wrongness of the residential school system, the harm it caused and the impacts that continue to be felt today.

It is my desire to see the City of Sault Ste. Marie play a role in this process. We are already making efforts to train our municipal employees on cultural competency and in fact my office will be hosting one such session later this month. In the time ahead, we will consider the other recommendations of the report that are targeted at municipal governments to see how we might best satisfy them.

I have long been of the opinion that our local Anishinaabe population—both your communities and the urban Anishinaabe residents of Sault Ste. Marie—are a great asset to this area. Strengthening the relationship between communities and cultural groups will benefit everyone and lead to a more resilient area. It is my sincere hope that we, our respective councils and all local residents will be able to work towards this goal together.

Sincerely,

Christian Provenzano, Mayor