

Date: 3/2/2026 10:52:12 PM

From: Nadine Gagne

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I am a: Parent/Caregiver

Message:

March 2nd, 2026

Indigenous Education Department
1040 Hollywood Road South
Kelowna, BC V1X4N2
Central Okanagan Public Schools (School District 23)

Dear Indigenous Education Department,

Subject: Formal Métis Nation BC Citizen and Parent Submission - Required Revisions to the 2025 - 2030 Equity in Action Agreement

I am writing in my capacity as a Métis Nation British Columbia citizen and as a Métis parent within Central Okanagan School District 23. I am submitting this letter as a formal request for immediate review and revision of the Equity in Action Agreement for Truth and Reconciliation 2025–2030

After a thorough review of the twenty-two-page Agreement, it is deeply concerning that Métis Nation culture, language (Michif), land-based knowledge systems, and Nation-specific histories are entirely absent from the pedagogical and cultural framework of the document. While the Kelowna Métis Association is listed as a partner (p. 2–3), and Métis partners are acknowledged administratively, there is no substantive inclusion of Métis worldview, Métis teachings, or Métis cultural continuums embedded within the commitments, priorities, action plans, or evidence measures.

Instead, the cultural and pedagogical framework is drawn exclusively from syilx (Okanagan) captikwł, the Four Food Chiefs teachings, and nsyilxcen language instruction (see pp. 10–14).

Most notably, page 13 states: “Each learner will participate in classroom, school, and district based cultural activities that focus on syilx (Okanagan) teachings.”

This positions syilx teachings as the singular Indigenous framework for all Indigenous learners in the district — including Métis children.

This is not equity.

This is not reconciliation.

This is assimilation through omission.

Structural Erasure of Métis Nation Identity

The Agreement's Land Acknowledgement (p. 4) recognizes the syilx people and states that the District "also recognizes the contributions of other First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and urban Indigenous partners." However, recognition without representation in pedagogy, programming, measurable outcomes, or language revitalization commitments constitutes symbolic inclusion rather than substantive equity.

The complete absence of:

- Michif language instruction or preservation,
- Métis land-based pedagogies,
- Métis governance or Nation-specific histories,
- Métis cultural teachings,
- Métis-specific graduation ceremonies or identity-affirming programming, across all pillars of equity reflects a continuation of systemic Métis erasure within educational policy.

As outlined in my attached academic paper recently submitted to my post secondary institute, *Walking as Métis Nation BC Research: Erasure, Resurgence, Resilience and Relational Accountability - Métis people have historically been rendered "invisible" through colonial mechanisms such as the scrip system and road allowance displacement. Educational systems have played a significant role in maintaining that invisibility. When contemporary policy frameworks collapse Métis learners into a generalized "Indigenous" category while centering one Nation's worldview exclusively, it reproduces that same erasure in modern form.*

Legal and Ethical Obligations

The Equity in Action Agreement cites:

- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action,
- The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA),
- Professional Standards for BC Educators (Standard 9), (p. 22)

These frameworks require recognition of the distinct rights, identities, and cultures of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples affirms the right of Indigenous peoples to:

- Maintain and strengthen distinct political, legal, economic, social, and cultural institutions,
- Revitalize and transmit language, culture, and traditions to future generations,
- Access education that reflects their own cultural methods of teaching and learning.

Métis children are not a subset of syilx identity. Métis Nation BC is a distinct, rights-bearing Indigenous Nation.

Our children deserve to see themselves reflected in the documents that govern their education.

Impact on Métis Children

When Métis Nation culture and Michif language are absent from district policy:

- Métis children internalize invisibility.
- Métis identity is implicitly positioned as secondary or non-local.
- Belonging is undermined.
- Cultural continuity is disrupted.

Equity cannot mean requiring Métis learners to learn another Nation's teachings as their primary cultural framework while their own Nation is omitted.

That is not culturally responsive education.

That is displacement.

Required Actions

I am formally requesting the following:

1. Immediate consultation with Métis Nation BC and Kelowna Métis Association & Métis Community Service Society of BC representatives to co-design Métis-specific inclusion within the Equity in Action Agreement.
2. Revision of Priority Statements (particularly p. 13) to reflect Nation-specific inclusion, ensuring Métis learners have access to Métis cultural teachings, language, and identity-affirming programming.
3. Inclusion of Michif language and Métis cultural frameworks within the K–12 Connecting to Culture Continuum (p. 14)
4. Development of measurable Métis-specific outcomes within the Evidence and Monitoring sections (pp. 16–19)
5. A formal written response outlining how the District will address this structural exclusion.

Moving Forward

This letter is not written in opposition to silyx teachings. I honour and respect the host Nation.

However, equity does not require one Indigenous Nation to disappear to uplift another.

True reconciliation requires:

- Distinction,
- Accuracy,
- Nation-specific inclusion,
- Relational accountability.

The Métis Nation is not invisible.

We are not historical.

We are not optional.

We are a living, thriving Nation in British Columbia with 28,000 registered Métis Nation BC citizens and 98,000 self-identifying— and our children deserve to grow up knowing exactly who they are.

I look forward to a written response outlining the District's plan to correct this omission and to engage in meaningful consultation with Métis Nation BC citizens and families.

Sincerely,

Nadine Gagné Métis Nation British Columbia Citizen Métis Parent – Central Okanagan School District [REDACTED]

Cc: Superintendent of SD23 Schools
SD23 Board of Education
Indigenous Education Council SD23
Cheryl Dodman - Kelowna Métis Association
Collette Trudeau Métis Nation BC Leadership
Sydnie Lovey - Métis Nation BC Education Specialists
Jesse Bruce - Director of Instruction - Indigenous Education and Equity
Jon Rever - Superintendent of Schools
Raquel Steen - Assistant Superintendent
Kevin Kaiser - District Vice Principal, Indigenous Education
Christie Russell - District Vice-Principal, Indigenous Education
Westbank First Nations – Nicole Werstuik, Wilfred Barnes, Denise Clough, Jordan Coble
Ann Bell - Lake Country Native Association
Allan Louis & Peggy Joe – Councillors of Okanagan Indian Band
Bill McKenna Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society
Deanna Necan – Indigenous Parent and Family Education Council
Candace Jack - Indigenous Parent and Family Education Council
Aaron St. Pierre – Executive Director, Ki-low-na Friendship Society
Brad Dahl – Kelowna Metis Association Trustee
Garrett Millsap - Métis Community Services Society of BC – Board of Directors
Lisa Guderyan – Board of Education, Central Okanagan Public Schools