

STATE OF EQUITY IN EDUCATION

SUMMARY & CALLS TO ACTION

WINNIPEG INDIGENOUS
EXECUTIVE CIRCLE

The issues regarding the lack of equitable Indigenous representation in the city of Winnipeg involving (1) the board of trustees; (2) teachers within school divisions; and (3) students enrolled and graduating from faculties of education are rooted in colonial relationships. Michael Hart and Gladys Rowe (2014) define colonialism as:

The evolving process where we, as peoples of this land, face impositions—from genocide to assimilation, to marginalization—of views, beliefs, values and practices of other peoples at the cost of our lives, views, beliefs, values, practices, lands and/or resources. It is when we, as peoples of this land, are stopped, hindered, cajoled, and/or manipulated from making and enacting decisions about our lives, individually and as a group, because of being a person of the peoples of this land. These decisions include how we are going to be who we are, and how, if at all, we are going to incorporate the ideas, beliefs, values and practices of other peoples (P.35).

Iris Young (1990) brings attention to the impact of inclusion and exclusion in the decision-making structures, how these structures enact and reproduce their power, and how these decision-making structures causally condition the distribution of rights, opportunities and resources.

The *State of Equity in Education Report* has identified that:

1. According to the 2018 school trustee election results in the city of Winnipeg, 54 school trustees were elected but only 2 self-identify as Indigenous.
2. According to data gathered from the 2013/14 Government of Manitoba Report on Self-Identified Indigenous Students and Teachers, there is a shortage of almost 600 Indigenous teachers in the city of Winnipeg's six school divisions.
3. In 2017/2018, the Faculties of Education at the University of Manitoba, University of Winnipeg and Université de Saint-Boniface had 42 self-identified Indigenous B.Ed graduates.

The key guiding principle of this *State of Equity in Education Report* is based on the belief that in order for educational outcomes to improve for Indigenous students, they must see themselves better reflected in the curriculum and teaching staff in their schools. This cannot be achieved without acknowledging and addressing the colonial and structural barriers faced by Indigenous peoples in the education system.

The following Calls to Action identify the next steps that need to be taken in order to address the shortage of Indigenous teachers in our community.

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SEPTEMBER 2020

CALLS TO ACTION

CALL TO ACTION #1: The limited Indigenous representation on school boards needs to be structurally addressed by establishing designated seats on governance structures, whether this is the elected board of trustees or appointed advisory councils, for Indigenous peoples that reflect and is proportionate to the population of Indigenous students being served. As well, in order to further address the issue of representation marginalization, consensus decision-making rather than majority-rule processes should be mandated to ensure all voices are authentically included around decision-making tables.

CALL TO ACTION #2: School divisions in the city of Winnipeg need to be more intentional and accountable about addressing the shortage of Indigenous teachers by establishing targets and monitoring results through the development and implementation of an employment equity policy and program in each of the school divisions in Winnipeg.

CALL TO ACTION #3: The employment equity policy and program could be modeled after the *Employment Equity Toolkit for Recruiting and Retaining Educators of Aboriginal Ancestry in British Columbia*, developed by the Education Partners of British Columbia in 2007.

CALL TO ACTION #4: Employment equity reports should be released by school divisions on an annual basis that are readily accessible to the public in order to promote transparency and accountability.

CALL TO ACTION #5: Existing human resource policies and practices within school divisions should be reviewed to identify barriers and promising practices regarding the recruitment, hiring, retention and promotion of Indigenous teachers.

CALL TO ACTION #6: Employment equity policy should be modernized and based on the setting of targets proportionate to the student population of the school division in order that the number of Indigenous teachers working in schools better reflects the Indigenous student population being served.

CALL TO ACTION #7: The faculties of education should set equity enrollment targets for Indigenous students similar to the Diversity Admissions Policy established by the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. An annual Indigenous student equity enrollment/graduation report should be released publicly in order to promote transparency and accountability.

CALL TO ACTION #8: The universities of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Saint-Boniface and Brandon should disaggregate or breakdown employment equity data for the respective universities as a whole to faculty levels and provide annual employment equity reports that include (1) targets for Indigenous faculty and staff; (2) self-identification form completion rates; (3) identification of employed faculty and staff by job categories, including number of self-identified Indigenous peoples; (4) retention rates of Indigenous faculty and staff; and (5) promotion data of Indigenous faculty and staff. This annual faculty employment equity report should be released publicly and readily accessible in order to promote transparency and accountability.

CALL TO ACTION #9: The Department of Education and Training of the Manitoba provincial government should publish on a three-year period basis self-identification student and teacher data for Indigenous peoples broken down by individual school divisions.

CALL TO ACTION #10: Indigenous representation and voice needs to be at the decision-making tables in order to de-colonize initiatives which address the shortage of Indigenous teachers in the city of Winnipeg. Indigenous organizations, Manitoba School Boards Association, Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, Manitoba Teachers Society, Deans of the Faculties of Education, and Ministry of Education and Training should establish a *More Indigenous Teachers Initiative* to:

- a) identify the barriers faced by Indigenous peoples to become teachers;
- b) develop recruitment strategies to increase the pool of Indigenous peoples to become teachers;
- c) develop and implement teacher education programs for Indigenous peoples that address their needs and aspirations, including (1) a Bachelor of Education – Indigenous Knowledges program governed by Indigenous peoples that includes a bursary program to address poverty-related barriers and considers the learning time needed to become a teacher; (2) Indigenous educational assistant teacher education laddering programs; (3) Indigenous high school student teacher education stepping-stone initiatives; (4) Indigenous language teachers transition programs; (5) Indigenous teacher education programs that specialize in working with adult learners; (6) federal funding support for student living allowances for Indigenous teacher education programs; (7) federal funding for program and capital infrastructure development requirements for Indigenous teacher education programs, and; (8) continued work on the development of Indigenous curriculum, lesson plans and teaching tools that can be pragmatically implemented in the classroom.
- d) develop and implement retention and promotion initiatives within school divisions for Indigenous teachers and staff; and
- e) develop a 5-year action plan with clear benchmarks and timelines, including annual update reports that would be released publicly to promote transparency and accountability.

REFERENCES:

1. Hart, M. and Rowe, G. 2014. Legally Entrenched Oppressions: The Undercurrent of First Nations Peoples' Experiences with Canada's Social Welfare Policies. In H. Weaver (ed.), *Social Issues in Contemporary Native America: Reflections from Turtle Island*. (23-41). Buffalo: Ashgate Publishers.
2. Young, I. 1990. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.