



School District No. 71 (Comox Valley)

Office of the Superintendent of Schools

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June 1, 2021

Dear Comox Valley Schools, Students, Staff and Families;

It is with deepest sorrow and sadness that we reach out to you today.

The devastating news discovering the remains of 215 children at the former site of the Kamloops Residential schools has shaken all of us to the core. Our heartfelt sympathy and deepest condolences go out to all the families and communities whose children were taken away to school and never returned home. The generational trauma caused by these events have left wounds and scars that run so deep that it will take all of us together to help those who have been effected.

Now more than ever is a time to reflect on the lost children, their families and communities who have endured years of suffering caused by the residential schools. We must stand together and deepen our understanding of residential schools and the generational trauma they caused.

We must also learn more about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and embed the recommendations of the calls to action into our everyday lives, whether at work or at home. As Chief Robert Joseph stated, "Reconciliation includes anyone with an open mind and an open heart who is willing to look into the future in a new way." Together we must stand shoulder to shoulder and support each other as we create "a new way."

As an education system it is our responsibility to not only support our Indigenous students, families, and communities, but to deepen our understanding of the past in order to initiate a better future. As the Honorable Senator Murray Sinclair stated, "Education is what got us here and education is what will get us out."

Over the next days we encourage all staff, students, and families to find their own way to support our Indigenous students and communities through a variety of events in our schools, and in our community.

We must continue to reflect and learn together to deepen our understanding and pave the path to a better tomorrow. For additional support please visit the School District website for more information and resources. <https://www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/>

Every Child Matters.

Respectfully,

Tom Demeo
Superintendent of Schools