

ACKNOWLEDGING TERRITORIES OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES WITHIN DIVISION EVENTS

Background

Catholic social teaching explains that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God and, therefore, has inherent dignity. No human being should experience one's personal dignity or freedom compromised. Since oppression and injustice make it impossible to live a life commensurate with dignity, it is important for our educational communities to pay full respect to the historical circumstances, traditional and existing lands, and cultural values of our First Nations and Métis people.

Acknowledging the territory is a way of honoring and showing respect for groups of people who have been living and working on the land of district meeting places from time immemorial. Therefore, this policy addresses processes through which our School Division will rightfully acknowledge First Nations and Métis territory within our Division.

Procedures

1. Distinctions need to be made regarding the case for welcoming and acknowledging First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. The only trustees or employees who would welcome a gathering of people to the territory where an event is being held are people who are traditionally/originally from the territory. Therefore, unless a First Nations, Métis and Inuit representative of the district is bringing greeting, all formal recognition will take the form of an acknowledgement of territory.
2. Acknowledging territory will be initiated at the beginning of any public meeting followed by the prayer. Schools will be expected to make an acknowledgement of territory at any public awards or school celebration gathering where the student and parent community has been invited. Specifics regarding acknowledgement at the school level will be addressed in AP 155 Event Protocol.
3. The Board Chair or designate for the purpose of chairing a board meeting, will acknowledge territory and will not ask a public member to acknowledge territory, as the meeting is the Board's responsibility on behalf of the public that the Board represents.
4. It is not necessary for the Board to rely upon a First Nations or Métis person to bring a territorial acknowledgement to a public meeting.
5. In the event that the Board is travelling and conducting a meeting in another traditional territory other than its own, the Board will make its best effort to seek out the name of the territory specific to the meeting place, and incorporate that territory into the acknowledgement.

6. The generally accepted acknowledgement for meetings will be as follows:

Holy Family Catholic Regional Division Board would like to acknowledge we are meeting today in _____ located within the ancestral and traditional territory of the Indigenous peoples of this area. This land has been and will continue to be home to the Cree, Dene and other First Nations and of the Métis within the boundaries of Treaty 8. We also wish to acknowledge the traditional knowledge holders and Elders who are still with us today and those who have gone before us.

7. In the spirit of supporting the outcomes of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the following addition to the previously stated acknowledgement will be stated at the opening Regular Board Meeting of the school year and the first Regular Board Meeting in January and at the last Regular Board Meeting in June:

We acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.