



June 3, 2021

STATEMENT FROM BLOOD TRIBE/KAINAI CHIEF AND COUNCIL

On behalf of the Blood Tribe/Kainai we extend our condolences and offer prayers to the relatives of the 215 children in the recent discovery of the unmarked grave sites at the Kamloops Indian Residential School within the territory of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation.

This discovery has brought on memories for many residential school survivors across the country and we respectfully offer our support of understanding and empathy to them as well.

We share the common understanding and experience with Indian Residential Schools and we believe that Canadians owe it to themselves to learn about the facts about the history of Canada and its relationship with all Indigenous peoples, as dark as it may be. We believe that more Canadian political leaders should have known about these historical facts and show the proper respect to the Calls to Action which were brought forward by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015.

Our people, Kainai, had experiences at five different residential schools, four of which were located on the Blood Reserve. St. Joseph's Industrial School (Dunbow), the first Catholic residential school in Standoff, the first Anglican New School in Old Agency, St. Paul's Anglican Residential School, and Immaculate Conception St. Mary's Catholic residential school. In addition, it is necessary to include the experiences of our people in the Blood Indian Hospital.

Today, we all continue the work to overcome what happened to us and to our ancestors. Unfortunately, many of the children who reached adulthood could not endure the traumatic effects and found their own ways to silently cope. Many found ways of unhealthy coping led to problems beyond the reach of their stolen childhoods because the trauma was much more than they could bear.

When our ancestors made treaty with the British Crown, the intent of including education was to benefit Blood Tribe/Kainai members and not the inadequate education and trauma brought about by the residential school system. This 'education system' is now attributed to our current Opioids crisis from the intergenerational trauma.

Although words of condolence and acts of kindness are appreciated now is the time to seek tangible outcomes from the governments of Canada and Alberta on how they can put their words into action. These actions should include, but are not limited to, the following key items: The Province of Alberta must act now to include accurate Indigenous content in K-12 curriculum so our future leaders learn more about our ways of life; leaders must also work together to direct provincial legislation to promote and protect our Indigenous languages; and the Canadian government must learn to work with Indigenous leaders on matters that are currently set before them.

It is of utmost importance that we all move forward in order for the innocent souls of the 215 children to finally be at peace along with the over 100 souls of the children of Kainai who suffered a similar fate. Our prayers are strong and join to strengthen our brothers and sisters during this difficult time and will always remember our friends and family members who did not return home from the residential school.

The discovery of the unmarked grave sites is a significant human tragedy but it is all too familiar to many Indigenous communities as we have known of these incidents all along. We will continue to turn these experiences around to strengthen us and try to do our best so our children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren will never have to endure those hardships. Our education will always include ways to teach them to be proud of who they are and where they come from. We still move forward to restore and strengthen our language in order to connect with our identity and way of life.

Chief Roy Fox – **Makiinima**

Councillor Floyd Big Head – **Piitaakaa'tsis**

Councillor Clarence Black Water – **Aakaota'si**

Councillor Diandra Bruised Head – **Itoomsaokaa'sii**

Councillor Winston Day Chief – **Ksistsikominaa**

Councillor Tony Delaney – **Kataopii**

Councillor Dorothy First Rider – **Itomomahka**

Councillor Martin Heavy Head – **Ponokaiksiksinam**

Councillor Travis Plaited Hair – **Aakaayaamihtsinima**

Councillor Richard Red Crow – **Ko'ko'**

Councillor Maria Russell – **Itoominnimaakii**

Councillor Piinaakoyim Tail Feathers

Councillor Marcel Weasel Head – **Aapao'tokaan**