

## Indigenous history, culture now mandatory part of Ontario curriculum



Revisions to courses like Social Studies and History have begun, to be complete by fall 2018

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From left, Ontario Regional Grand Chief Isadore Day, Hayley Williamson, Education Minister Mitzie Hunter, Lauri Hoeg, Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Minister David Zimmer, Pamala Agwa and her two daughters at the announcement of changes to Ontario's curriculum at Milliken Mills High School in Unionville, Ont. (Rhiannon Johnson/CBC)

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Ontario will incorporate the contributions, histories, culture and perspectives of Indigenous peoples into a revised curriculum for all students in the province, the education minister announced Wednesday.

Mitzie Hunter made the announcement at Milliken Mills High School in Unionville with David Zimmer, Ontario's Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.

"As part of Ontario's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, our commitment was to bring learning about First Nation, Métis and Inuit people [into] Ontario's education curriculum," said Hunter.

The announcement was made in conjunction with Ontario's Treaties Recognition Week.

"This is about recognizing the role of treaties; this is about bringing education into the classroom for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students," said Hunter.

## Revisions started

Students will learn about the histories, culture, and contributions that Indigenous people have made to Canada. The curriculum revisions already started this fall and will be fully implemented by fall of 2018. Courses in both elementary and secondary schools such as Social Studies, History and Geography will be revised.

The revisions were made in co-ordination with residential school survivors, First Nations, Métis and Inuit partners.

"The announcement today around curriculum and the education system in Ontario now formally recognizing treaty recognition is a huge step forward," said Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day.

"With reconciliation, you need truth. Part of the education effort is to actually get to the bottom of the real history of the relationship between the Crown and Indigenous people."



Ontario Regional Grand Chief Isadore Day addresses students at Milliken Mills High School during the announcement of provincial curriculum revisions, in conjunction with Treaties Recognition Week. (Rhiannon Johnson/CBC)

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## Response to Calls to Action

Bringing knowledge about treaties, Indigenous rights, cultures and perspectives to the classroom as a mandatory part of the province's curriculum is a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions Calls to Action 62 and 63.

The province is investing \$2.7 million support capacity building for educators to teach the new curriculum.

The gym at Milliken Mills High School was filled with about 1,000 students and faculty for the announcement.

Neha Naqvi, a Grade 12 student, said Indigenous issues should be talked about at school.

"We shouldn't ignore these issues just because they happened in the past. It still affects people today and we should talk about them not only with the government but First Nation people themselves and help each other."

This is the second annual Treaties Recognition Week in Ontario, running Nov. 5-11.

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