

ACKNOWLEDGING TERRITORIES OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES WITHIN DIVISION EVENTS

Background Statement

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, Métis, and Inuit people.

Acknowledging the territory is a way of honouring and showing respect for groups of people who have been living and working on the land of division meeting places from time immemorial. Therefore this policy addresses processes through which our Board of Trustees and schools will rightfully acknowledge First Nations, Métis, and Inuit 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 division is bringing greetings, all formal recognition will take the form of an *acknowledgement* of territory.
2. Acknowledging territory will be initiated immediately following prayers to begin any public meeting of the Board. 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 160: 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, Métis, or Inuit 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 acknowledgment for meetings will be as follows:

The Greater St. Albert Catholic School Board acknowledges that it is meeting on the original lands of the Cree, those of Treaty 6, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. [Kinanâskomitin Manito](#) (Thank you Creator). ([Kinanâskomitin Manito sound file](#))

7. In the spirit of supporting the outcomes of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the following addition to the previously stated acknowledgment will be stated at the opening Regular Meeting of the School Year, and the first Regular Meeting in January, and at the last Regular 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.

8. At the discretion of the Board chair, the additional acknowledgment stated in item 7, may be read when chairing a meeting.

9. Prior to liturgies and masses in schools and division buildings, the accepted acknowledgement to be used has been [approved](#) by the Catholic Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories and supported by the Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta (CCSSA) and Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA):

"We acknowledge that Treaty 6 territory on which we stand, is the ancestral land of the Indigenous peoples, and is common home to everyone in virtue of God, our Creator's, gracious gift."

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