

Our part in the journey so far...

2011

July 2011 – In response to the challenge put forth by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 2011, the Government of the Northwest Territories commits to educate students and teachers about the history and legacy of residential schools.

2011-2012 – The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), the Government of Nunavut, the Legacy of Hope Foundation and former residential school students partner together to develop a package of learning materials for Grade 10 Northern Studies students. The result of this collaborative effort is the first edition: *The Residential School System in Canada: Understanding the Past—Seeking Reconciliation—Building Hope for Tomorrow*.

Maggie Mercredi is one of several Resolution Health Support Workers available at the teacher training held throughout the NWT. Support Workers are a component of Health Canada's Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program. The program is set up for former students of residential schools, their families or those impacted by residential schools.

2012

June 2012 – Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, the Honourable Jackson Lafferty makes an offering of child-size slippers to the TRC, to represent the start of our journey in Saskatoon, SK.



October 2012 – Paul Andrew leads a feeding of the fire ceremony at the territorial training for the residential school curriculum in Yellowknife.



October 2012 – All NWT Northern Studies teachers are trained to teach the first edition of the new module. During the training many former residential school students share their experiences with the teachers, providing them with a greater understanding of their students, the communities that they live and work in, and their role as teachers.

October 2012 – Minister Jackson Lafferty and Nunavut Minister of Education, Honourable Eva Aariak, present the Residential Schools Teacher's Guide in both English and Inuktitut to Marie Wilson, TRC Commissioner.



2013

Feedback from the teachers of the Grade 10 module highlighted the importance and impact of the interaction with former students of residential school on their own learning.

Recognizing this, the Department set out to train all K-12 teachers on the history and legacy of residential schools.



2012-2013 – A research project measures the success and shortcomings of the module's first edition, by exploring how it is helping students and teachers to successfully meet the learning objectives.

Spring 2013 – The writing team made changes in several key areas identified in the 2012/13 research. This results in the production of a second edition of the teaching materials.

Fall 2013 – Northern Studies 10, which is mandatory for graduation in the NWT, changes from a 3-credit course to a 5-credit course. This allows more time to learn the material on residential schools.



“Not only has this been a tremendous healing and learning experience for my students but for me as well. I now understand something monumental about the community I teach in. I am learning that healing is possible and within reach for many. Not only am I taking something monumental from this module as a teacher, but as a human being as well.”
~ Northern Studies teacher



2014

Summer 2014 – Research on the second edition shows that improved learning and outcomes are taking place in Northern Studies classrooms. After completing the module, students and teachers reported increased student empathy, critical thinking skills and decision-making strategies. The development of empathy towards former residential school students was widespread and strong amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, including those who identify as being from immigrant families.

February 2015 – Angela Johnston shares her experiences at a residential schools training session.

2015

Feb. 19th, 2015 – All teachers in the NWT have been offered training on the history and legacy of residential schools.

Next Steps

June 2015 – As a member of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), Minister Lafferty will propose that Ministers work to ensure that all Canadian educators understand the impacts of residential schools and colonization on our country.

Fall 2015 – All teachers new to the NWT will be offered training.

“I hold eagle feathers and wear my grandmother's scarf to remind me of my ancestors, many of who died with their story. Each time I tell my story it helps to set me free. Having you listen to me helps me on my healing journey.”

Maxine Lacorne, intergenerational survivor, Feb. 19th, 2015

