

# Truth Before Reconciliation

## How to Identify and Confront Residential School Denialism

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Pathways to Indigenous Health, September 12, 2023



**University  
of Manitoba**

## Senator Lynn Beyak donated to Donald Trump's re-election campaign



VICE News reports the controversial Ontario senator's office claims the donation was made in 'error'

 [John Paul Tasker](#) · CBC News · Posted: Oct 27, 2020 3:52 PM ET | Last Updated: October 27, 2020



POLITICS

# Lynn Beyak, who defended 'good' of residential schools, retires early from the Senate

By The Canadian Press

Mon., Jan. 25, 2021 | 3 min. read

# Outline

- Historicize residential school denialism
- Contextualize denialism in relation to genocide studies and Indigenous Studies literature
- Theorize denialism
- Analyze Beyak's speech and support letters
- *Warning: This presentation contains details that may be upsetting. The Indian Residential School Survivors and Family Crisis Line can be reached 24 hours a day at 1-800-721-0066.*





# Anglican Church of Canada

There was nothing good: An open letter to  
Canadian Senator Lynn Beyak

BY ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA ON MARCH 20, 2017

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POLITICS

# Senator Beyak demands residential school survivors apologize for her suffering

MARCH 28, 2017 by **ALEX HUNTLEY** - @AJHUNTLEY





## Letters of Support



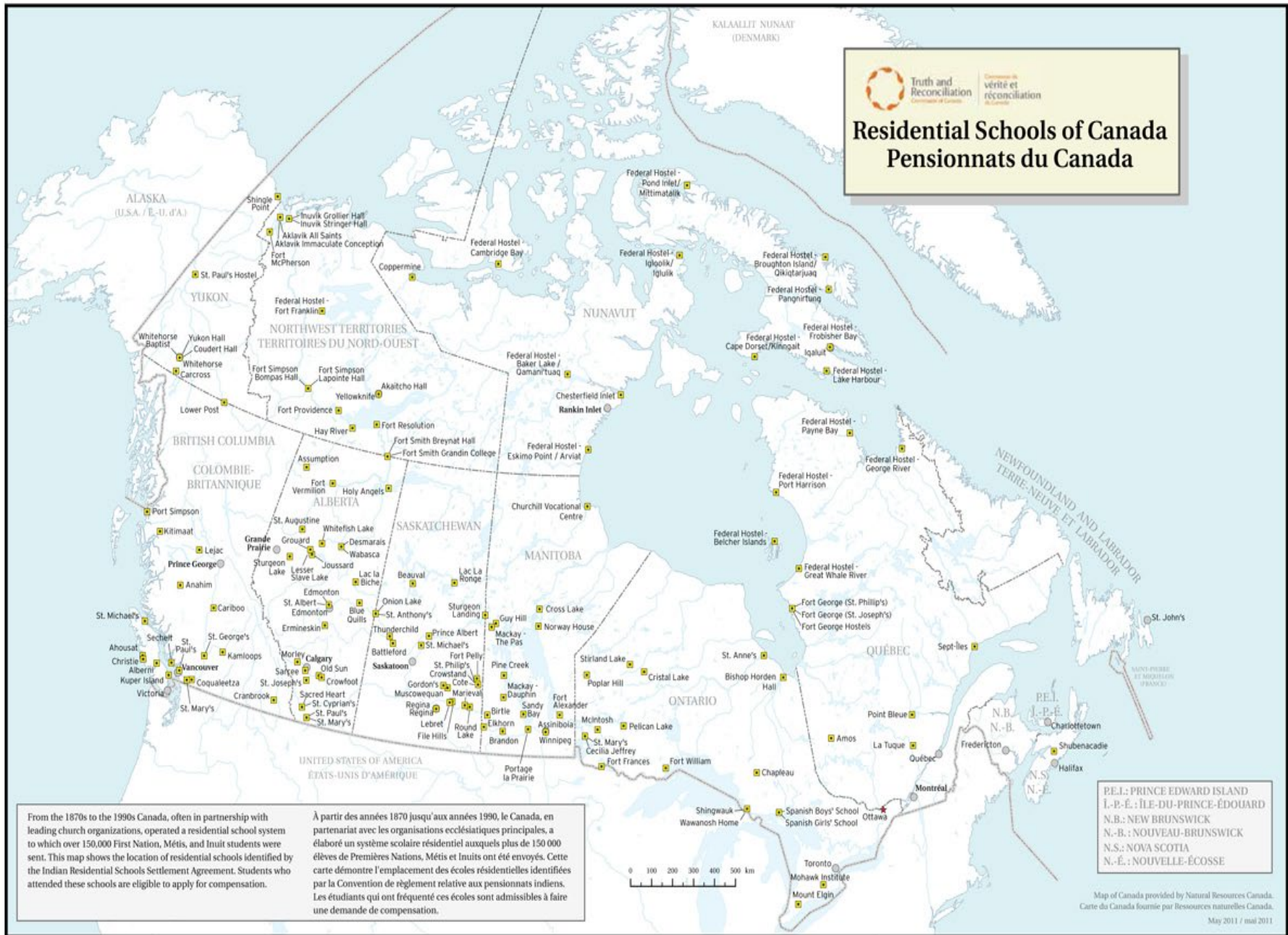
After my Speech of March 7, 2017 I received overwhelming support. Many people wrote me telling their personal stories and how going to a Residential School was a positive experience for them. Those people feel that they acquired useful skills and benefited from recreational activities and sports.

I've discovered that numerous people, who actually read my remarks, sent an avalanche of support from across our great nation.

Below, I have included some of those letters of support.

- 👉 [Message from the Senator](#)
- 👉 [The Senator's Speech in the Senate - March 7, 2017 - Residential Schools](#)
- 👉 [Biography](#)
- 👉 [Role of the Senate](#)
- 👉 [About Parliament](#)
- 👉 [Bills Sponsored by the Senator](#)
- 👉 [Speeches by the Senator](#)
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- 👉 [Letters of Support](#)
- 👉 [Thoughts on the Senate](#)
- 👉 [The Whole Truth/A Meaningful Way Forward](#)
- 👉 [Senator's Committee Reports](#)
- 👉 [Free Speech](#)
- 👉 [Important Links](#)

# Residential Schools of Canada Pensionnats du Canada

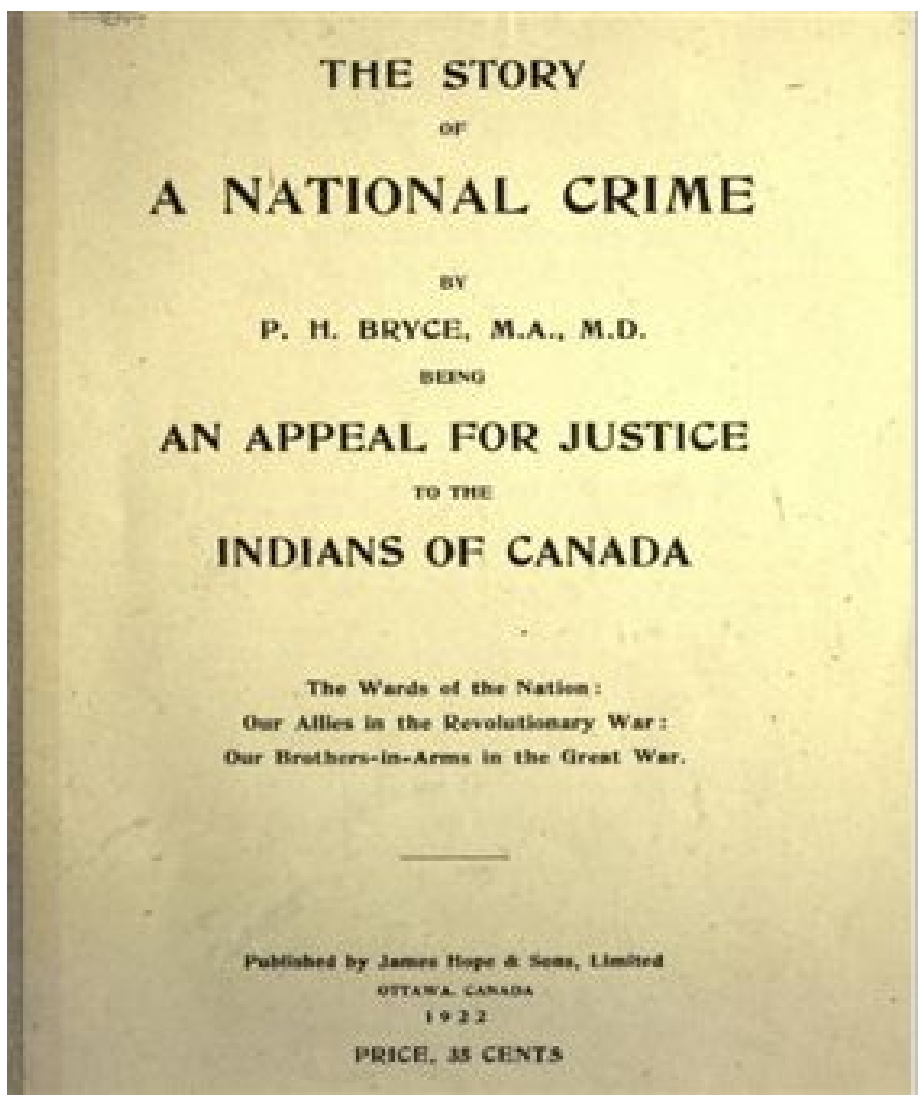


From the 1870s to the 1990s Canada, often in partnership with leading church organizations, operated a residential school system to which over 150,000 First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students were sent. This map shows the location of residential schools identified by the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. Students who attended these schools are eligible to apply for compensation.

À partir des années 1870 jusqu'aux années 1990, le Canada, en partenariat avec les organisations ecclésiastiques principales, a élaboré un système scolaire résidentiel auquel plus de 150 000 élèves de Premières Nations, Métis et Inuits ont été envoyés. Cette carte démontre l'emplacement des écoles résidentielles identifiées par la Convention de règlement relative aux pensionnats indiens. Les étudiants qui ont fréquenté ces écoles sont admissibles à faire une demande de compensation.

P.E.I.: PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND  
I.-P.-É.: ÎLE-DU-PRINCE-ÉDOUARD  
N.B.: NEW BRUNSWICK  
N.-B.: NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK  
N.S.: NOVA SCOTIA  
N.-É.: NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE

Map of Canada provided by Natural Resources Canada.  
Carte du Canada fournie par Ressources naturelles Canada.  
May 2011 / mai 2011



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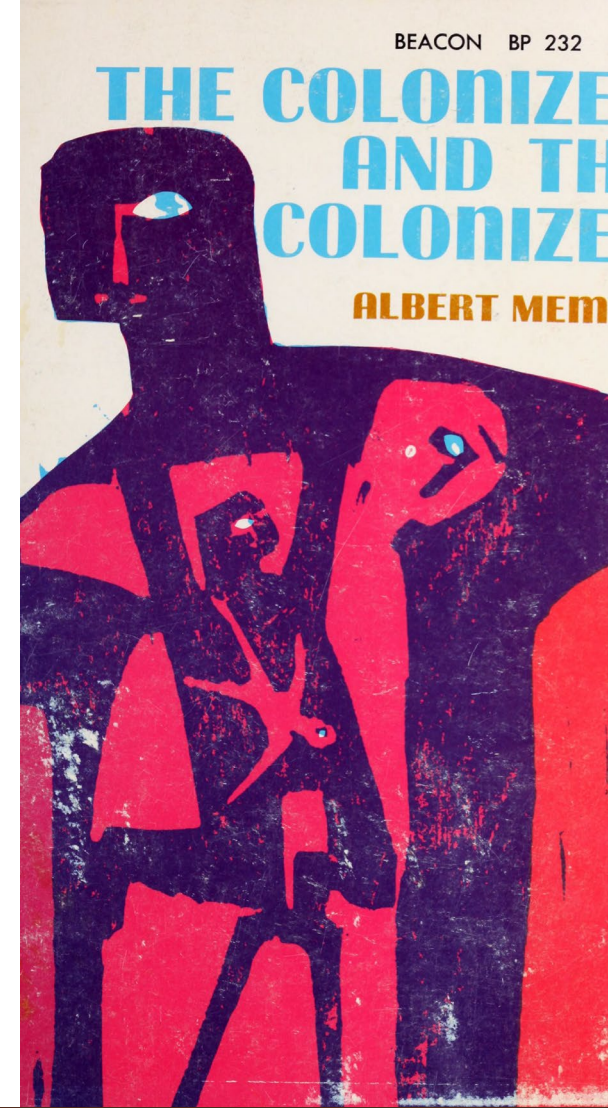


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- Genocide studies: “willful amnesia”, “politicized forgetting”, selective remembering of the past heads off cognitive dissonance.
- Indigenous studies literature; Starblanket and Hunt (2020), Maracle (2017), Simpson (2017), denial is a defensive strategy
- Anti-colonial theory: Memmi’s psychological portrait of “colonizer who accepts” helps explain Beyak and supporters.



# Outline

- Historicize residential school denialism
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- Analyze Beyak's speech and support letters





# Beyak's Speech

- Beyak's speech deployed "false balance," a form of bias that suggests an issue is more balanced between opposing views than evidence suggests i.e. the "good" and "bad" are equal parts of the "whole" story.
- TRC acknowledges some positive experiences, but outlines the overall genocidal effects.





# Clustering Comments

- 1. Personal knowledge
- 2. Ignorance and anti-Indigenous racism
- 3. Worldviews-in-collision (those that promote assimilation)





**Senator Lynn Beyak**  
Ontario

Senator  
Lynn Beyak

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## **Your Attempts to Offer "Balance" in the Historical Perspective of Residential Schools**

March 8, 2017

Senator Beyak,

We wish to commend you for your attempts to offer "balance" in the historical perspective of Residential Schools, with the "good" that many dedicated educators accomplished over the years. As retired educators ourselves, with a combined experience of 26 years in Aboriginal and Metis schools, we witnessed first-hand the positive anecdotes and experiences of those who gained from their attendance at Residential Schools. Unfortunately, current orthodoxy forces their "voices" to be silenced.

We appreciate your efforts to shine a light on this matter, as lonely as it may be, in highlighting that the Residential Schools experience was not "dark" for all, and that many owe their subsequent success in life, and that of their children and grandchildren, to the values and skills they gained.

Sincerely,

Richard



**Senator Lynn Beyak**  
Ontario



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## **Thank You for being Courageous**

March 20, 2017

Dear Ms. Beyak:

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! I was to express my sincere gratitude to you for having the courage to say what millions of Canadians have been thinking for years - that yes there were terrible things that happened at residential schools but not everyone that attended a residential school had a bad experience. The politicians and the media perpetuate the negative narrative and enable the first nation people to continue to see themselves as victims.

I attended a First National Art Exhibition in Fort McMurray and I met a native artist who told me how grateful she was to the nuns and priests in her community who ran the school because for her it was a place of refuge, she said that her parents would go out on the trap-line and leave them to fend for themselves and she would go sit on the steps of the school and hope someone would help her.

I myself am a product of a Catholic convent school and while some people who attended that school with me will now say that the nuns were racists and treated them unfairly, that was not my experience. Yes, they were strict, but the principles of kindness and consideration for others were held in high esteem and they instilled in me values that successfully took me through more than 40 years in the business world.

For you to make an observation that is considered "politically incorrect" is very praiseworthy and commendable.

I appreciate you and thank you for your boldness.

Marcia

## Your remarks about residential schools

March 9, 2017

Your remarks to the effect that teachers and leaders involved in the program were by and large well intentioned are obviously true.

It's too bad that you are under attack for speaking truthfully.

Kevin

### I support you

March 10, 2017

Hello Ms. Beyak

I am not a Conservative and I likely disagree with most of the Conservative Party's policies, however I do not agree with the backlash that you have received over the residential school remark. It is abhorrent that Romeo Saganash compared your comments to that of Hitler's genocide of Jews.

I feel that the current dialogue re: this part of our history is grotesquely unbalanced. You are right to mention that it was neither the residential school employees or government intention to be cruel or to wipe out an entire race. You were merely citing what the climate was at that particular time in history. Tomson Highway (Cree playwright) states himself in a 2015 interview: [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/12/15/tomson-highway-residential-schools\\_n\\_8787638.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/12/15/tomson-highway-residential-schools_n_8787638.html) that not ALL residential schools were bad, and that not all survivors were traumatized. As an ex-residential school person he says himself that he is a prime example.

What you meant and what you said may not have mixed well with the Aboriginal community and the majority of people. I do wish people would think more critically before jumping on the 'politically correct' bandwagon. To imply that all people who attended residential schools are 'survivors' implies that all were traumatized and mistreated.

This is simply wrong.

C



# Residential Schools

March 14, 2017

What is going on?! I was so sorry to see the response to your comment about some good that came out of Residential Schools. Of course, there was good and there are Indigenous people out there who would agree. Unfortunately, they are afraid of being ostracized if they speak up and, from your recent experience, one can see why.

I brought up the subject at my Discussion Group yesterday and set off "a box of fireworks" too! Many Canadians have embraced the one-sided Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Report because there has been very little discussion allowed on any good that came from the schools.

I feel great concern for truth and freedom of speech when I see the sort of reaction any discussion on Residential Schools brings. What are we trying to hide?

What are we afraid of?

Like you, I believe the institution of Residential Schools was well intentioned and was an attempt to solve the "Indian problem" by integrating the children into the new way of life in order that they could function better with language, health and skills. Unfortunately, as in any area of life, there were some who abused the situation and were overly harsh in their choices of discipline.

Times were difficult for many families during the era of Residential Schools, life on the reservations was not necessarily good, TB and Smallpox were the diseases of the time affecting many Canadians. My neighbour, before he died, told of having to go to school without shoes as his family could not afford them. There were many other hardships at the time.

Why are we not allowed to put Residential Schools in context of what was happening in Canada during the period 1884 -1948 and later?

I appreciate your attempt to put the record straight and do hope you will not suffer too much from opposing views.

Please continue to stand up for what you believe.

Best wishes,

Linda

# I Support You

March 19, 2017

I agree with you 100%. When viewed through the lens of the times, I believe that the decision makers did not act with malice in trying to address the poverty and absence of education in the first nation communities. Certainly, the decision to assimilate first nations into Canada was and remains to be the correct one. History is full of past injustices and I feel no personal responsibility for the plight of first nations over and above my general feeling of the obligation to help people that are less fortunate. Further, I deeply resent having to pay taxes that are in part used to subsidise first nation programs that perpetuate the problems in first nation societies.

First nations now seem to have a total upper hand. A story that always has stuck with me is related to an almost decimated caribou herd that the first nations were 'poaching' in defiance of hunting limits. The leader of the band responsible was quoted as saying the their drums and their dreams told them that there were plenty of caribou. I won't make the effort to explain what is wrong with this logic. Anyway, I digress. Stick with it, you are speaking for a very significant portion of the Canadian population.

Regards,

Terry

# Residential school deniers, white supremacists biggest barrier to reconciliation says Murray Sinclair

Brett Forester

Jan 12, 2021

*Outgoing Independent senator says there needs to be a paradigm shift away from colonial thinking of the past*



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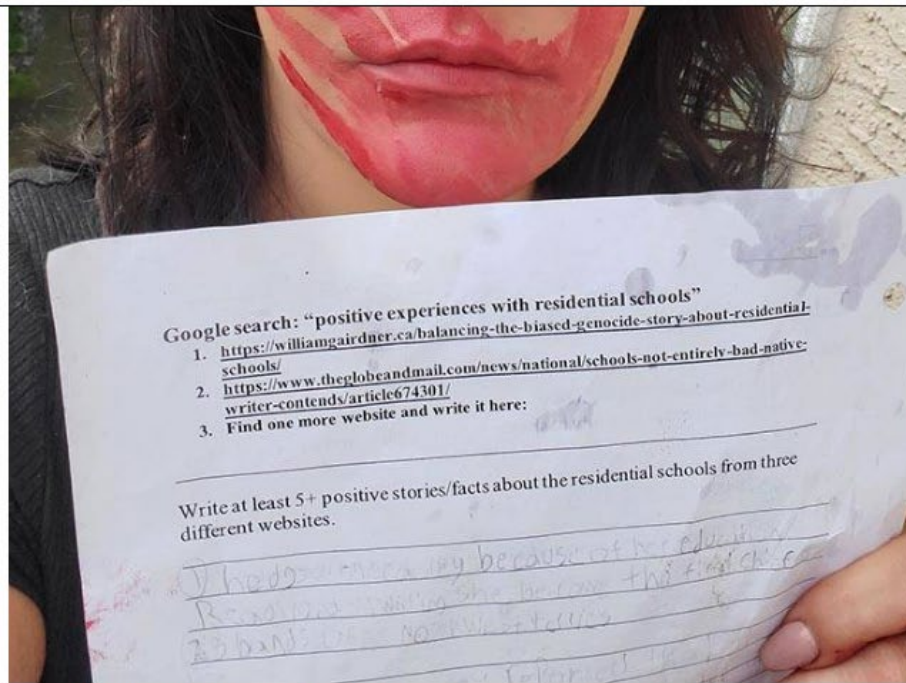
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THE ABBOTSFORD NEWS



Krista Macinnis, with a red handprint across her face that symbolizes the silencing of First Nations people, displays the homework assignment that her Grade 6 daughter received on Tuesday. (Submitted photo)

# Abbotsford mom angry that students asked to list positive stories about residential schools

Daughter's Grade 6 class asked to write down 5 positive stories or facts



Erin O'Toole Claimed Residential School

Architects Only Meant to 'Provide

Education' to Indigenous Children



New York Post @nypost

'Biggest fake news story in Canada': Kamloops mass grave debunked by academics [trib.al/hyPwz2i](https://trib.al/hyPwz2i)



10:08 PM · May 29, 2022





Danielle Smith @ABDanielleSmith  
Danielle Smith



### It really was fake news

A friend told me I had to read this Terry Glavin piece in the National Post. I remember last year being alarmed about how the “unmarked graves” story was being reported and interpreted by the public when one person told me she believed the schools murdered children and dumped their bodies in mass graves. That’s not what happened.

“As for the most recent uproars: not a single mass grave was discovered in Canada last year. The several sites of unmarked graves that captured international headlines were either already-known cemeteries, or they remain sites of speculation even now, unverified as genuine grave sites. Not a single child among the 3,201 children on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 2015 registry of residential school deaths was located in any of these places. In none of these places were any human remains unearthed.”

The fact that there are still journalists like Glavin who will report this in MSM is good news.

But it’s even better news that we have people like Candace Malcolm at True North News who reported all of this a year ago.

The alt media are the watchdogs of the MSM. I used to read something in alt media and wait until I saw it in mainstream media to believe it. Now I see a story in MSM and I wait for alt media to verify it. How far the legacy media has fallen.

<https://tnc.news/2021/07/12/six-things-the-media-got-wrong-the-graves-found-near-residential-schools/>

Posted in [r/onguardforthee](#) by [u/anonymousia](#)



cbc.ca

Poilievre delivers speech to a group criticized for residential school '...  
Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre faced criticism from his political opponents Friday for delivering a speech to the Frontier Centre for ...



# Fomenting hate sets stage for heinous criminals' devastating acts

By: Niigaan Sinclair

Posted: 12:42 PM CST Wednesday, Dec. 7, 2022

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## How to Identify and Confront Residential School Denialism

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