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The Keewatin Patricia District School Board thanks the Ontario Human Rights Commission for its Right to Read Inquiry report. We are grateful to have had the opportunity to reflect on our reading instruction and supports in the board and in the province, as well as take this time to examine structures, resources and practices to begin engaging in system reform,

At the KPDSB, 47% of our students self-identify as First Nations, Metis or Inuit. The KPDSB appreciates that the final report explores the historical and current challenges that exist, such as colonialism, racism and assimilationist policies, ongoing oppression, racism, and how these things impact the experience and effect of trauma and the associated Impact on the ability to learn to read. We agree with the recommendations made in this area, highlighting:

- The Ministry of Education should encourage all school boards and schools to adopt trauma-informed and culturally safe approaches including by providing guidance, resources and supports.
- All school boards and schools should create trauma-informed and culturally safe school environments and provide comprehensive, sustained and job-embedded training to educators on trauma-informed and culturally safe practices.
- School boards and schools should recognize First Nations, Métis and Inuit Elders as knowledge keepers and educators, and recognize their role in transmitting cultural knowledge to the younger generation and building stronger, healthier and more resilient young people, families and communities. School boards and schools should increase access to Elders and guest speakers in schools and make sure Elders/guest speakers are representative of all First Nations, Métis and Inuit students represented in the board
- The Ontario Ministry of Education and all school boards should provide evidence-based curriculum and classroom instruction in foundational reading skills in a way that is inclusive to all students, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit students. They should find ways to also incorporate Indigenous experiences, culture and values throughout classroom content.

The KPDSB has acted over the past year to begin implementing evidence-based approaches that emphasize direct, explicit and systematic instruction and an understanding that reading comprehension is the product of word recognition and language comprehension. We have focused on structured, explicit, multi-modal literacy practices, including phonemic and phonological awareness, decoding skills and matching articulation of speech sounds/phonemes to the letters/graphemes that represent those sounds.

As well, we have examined practices that historically have negatively impacted marginalized students. Through our work with destreaming, providing teachers with increased opportunities to learn about differentiated instruction and universal designs for learning, we are more carefully examining and changing processes that have impacted academic outcomes.

We are pleased with the response of the Ministry of Education, who have taken immediate action to support the acquisition of foundational reading skills by actions such as supporting boards with evidence-based resources, targeted reading interventions, through tutoring supports and by making revisions of the Ontario

Language Curriculum with scientific, evidence-based approaches that emphasize direct, explicit and systematic instruction.

The KPDSB is committed to implementing the recommendations of the OHRC Right to Read Report. We are committed to providing teachers and support staff with adequate training for screening, assessments, instructional strategies and interventions. We will ensure that students are provided with barrier-free interventions that are supported by scientific evidence. We have set clear standards for accommodations and modifications and greater access to professional development for teachers to be able to support students in the classroom.

The KPDSB thanks the OHRC for allowing the board to represent students of northwestern Ontario during this inquiry. We are committed to working with the Ministry of Education, local First Nation and Metis leaders, families and students to ensure positive outcomes in the areas of literacy as well as other areas of academics, well-being, equity and human rights as we move forward.