



## **Common Threads V – Volunteers Wanted Aboriginal Perspectives in Education**

To: District/Bargaining Unit Presidents

From: Kenneth Coran, President

### **For Action**

As the original inhabitants of Canada, First Nation, Métis and Inuit people have a variety of inherent Aboriginal and treaty rights. Since the history of Canada begins with them, Aboriginal peoples are unique in Canada's mosaic. These rights however, have often been denied by governments or misunderstood by the majority in society or by the media. Our education system has also had difficulty in adapting to meet the needs of Aboriginal students.

For all of these reasons, the fifth Common Threads project will be a departure from the previous format of travelling overseas and researching a topic leading to a better understanding of how global citizens can tackle a common problem. We propose to produce a resource which will resonate with students and educators and address a number of challenges faced by Aboriginal communities in Canada. The material will explore the various issues in a cross curricular format providing background context and examples of successful strategies to overcome these challenges. Travel will include trips to various First Nations or Métis communities and schools in Southern and Northern Ontario.

The common threads team will work with members of our OSSTF/FEESO Aboriginal Education work group and will consult widely with respected organizations within the Aboriginal communities. The team will design original units but may wish to include existing teaching tools created by other First Nations, Inuit or Métis authors. A great deal of work is being done by the Ministry of Education in reviewing many Native Studies courses to ensure that Aboriginal perspectives are being woven into many aspects of the curriculum in general.

Our resource will be visually engaging and appropriate for such subject areas as Law; Media Studies; Politics; History; English and Civics--and of course, Native Studies. The goal is to produce a short video in addition to the written material.

### **Possible themes and questions to be examined:**

1. Aboriginal Peoples Rights in Canada.



An exploration of contemporary and historical situations in which rights have been denied, i.e. language rights; resources. Often these unresolved issues manifest themselves as land disputes and blockades—what causes them? Why is land so important for First Nations?

## 2. Understanding the residential schools legacy

Powerful testimonies by residential school survivors exist and resource materials can be developed appropriately for use in secondary schools. How does this legacy impact on our students and families today?

## 3. Sharing Aboriginal education success stories

An exploration of the factors needed to improve student outcomes. By highlighting promising practices in Aboriginal education, our unit could include first hand student narratives from those involved in successful teaching strategies.

## 4. Identity

With the recent release of *Avatar*, students see a cinematic portrayal of Indigenous People and their relationship to the land, resources, their families and response to an invading Army. Can we use these themes to produce an engaging visual story about current real life Aboriginal struggles and dispel any stereotypes which exist? The struggle for Identity could include a personal student journey or an examination of Aboriginal role models and choices they made.

Applicants to this project must be members in good standing and be prepared to commit to the *entire* project which involves team meetings, travel during the summer months and then considerable volunteer follow up work to complete the resource. The federation will cover all costs of travel and accommodation as well as time release.

We are looking for a **minimum of five** members and preference will be given to those applicants with a combination of the following:

- First Nations, Inuit or Métis members;
- Knowledge and awareness of Aboriginal issues;
- An understanding of current and creative teaching strategies;
- Demonstrated excellence in curriculum writing;
- Skills in photography, film making and editing;

Applications will be received until **Tuesday March 1, 2011**.

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Attachment  
Document2



## COMMON THREADS FIVE

Common Threads is OSSTF/FEESO's solidarity program which offers members the opportunity to travel and conduct research resulting in the creation of new progressive curriculum on critical issues.

### Aboriginal Perspectives in Education

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#### APPLICATION FORM

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- Skills in photography, film making and editing;

1. Applicant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ District/Bargaining Unit \_\_\_\_\_

2. Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Home Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail (home): \_\_\_\_\_

5. Workplace Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Workplace Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address (Work): \_\_\_\_\_

7. Federation Reference \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. No: \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach a current resume, together with a covering letter detailing why you are interested in the project. If you have any questions, please contact Domenic Bellissimo at [bellisd@osstf.on.ca](mailto:bellisd@osstf.on.ca).

Please submit your application by March 1, 2011, 5:00 p.m. to

Domenic Bellissimo

OSSTF/FEESO

60 Mobile Drive, Toronto, M4A 2P3

Application is also available online at [www.osstf.on.ca/commonthreads](http://www.osstf.on.ca/commonthreads)

