

# King's Christian Collegiate Model

## United Nations

Canadian Federal Cabinet



Delegate Guide

Arianna Mastrolonardo  
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Dear Distinguished Delegates,

It is my honour to welcome you to the eighth annual King'sMUN Conference: Voices of the Voiceless. Since the debut of the King'sMUN conference in 2013, we have striven to create a conference that enables students to push past their comfort zones, connect with their peers, and learn more about the world around them.

Model United Nations (MUN) is a youth simulation of the United Nations where students have the chance to debate the world's greatest issues, problem-solve, and produce creative resolutions with their peers. Throughout my MUN journey I have developed my critical thinking, teamwork, leadership, and communication skills, which have transferred into many different avenues of my life and which I attribute to many of my successes in high school.

We are living in a time where certain people groups are marginalized and discriminated against based on prejudice and unjust systems. At King'sMUN we strive to lift the songs of those who are oppressed and listen to the stories and experiences of those whose mouths have been sealed for far too long. This year, the theme of the King'sMUN conference is Voices of the Voiceless. I hope you take this to heart both during the conference and as you move forward into your future.

These past few years have, without a doubt, been ones of hardship and challenge. The COVID-19 Pandemic has built many barriers not only between countries, but within countries, communities and families. At King'sMUN we acknowledge the past to live actively in the present, but look to the future with hope. One thing the COVID-19 Pandemic has not taken away is our creativity and will to connect to one another. With a range of committees branching from tutorial to advanced, and real to fictional, delegates with all levels of experience have an opportunity to collaborate with peers and grow as young leaders and changemakers at King'sMUN, despite the current predicaments.

Once again, I am extremely excited to greet each and every one of you at the eighth annual King'sMUN conference. Myself and the King'sMUN Secretariat look forward to seeing you on Friday, February 25th and Saturday, February 26th, 2022.

Sincerely,

Arianna Mastrotonardo

Secretary-General, 2022

King'sMUN

## Topic 1: Addressing Educational Concerns for Indigenous Peoples

### *Introduction*

To start, it is important to describe what the “Cabinet” is. The Cabinet is formally referred to as the Canadian Ministry and is a group of ministerial advisors in charge of setting the policy and priorities of Canada at the federal level. The Cabinet includes positions such as the Prime Minister, Minister of Health, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Youth, and Minister of Indigenous Services (Government of Canada, 2021).



Figure 1: An image of the new federal cabinet in 2021 (Wyld, 2021).

### *Background Information*

For years Indigenous communities have been given empty promises from the Canadian government, whether it is related to infrastructure, healthcare, or education, to name a few. In this specific committee the topic of educational concerns in the Indigenous population will be discussed.

Education concerns for Indigenous students is not in any way a new topic to be discussed, and yet it is one that requires urgent action. For decades there has been research done on the challenges that Indigenous students face in Canadian education systems, and the negative

consequences of isolation, mental health struggle, substance abuse, and the contemplation of suicide that follows. In 2015, Prime Minister Trudeau committed \$2.6 billion for Indigenous education (kindergarten to grade 12) along with \$500 million to support the infrastructure for Indigenous schools, but still Indigenous communities are unsure about his motives and if he is willing to take action to ensure better living conditions for Indigenous students all the time and not just when it is considered a “crisis” (Zinga, 2017).



Figure 2: Indigenous youth struggle to receive an education equal to non-Indigenous youth due to a lack of funding (Stamogiannos, n.d.).

It has been found that Indigenous students aged 12-18 often leave school before the completion of high school and have a drop-out rate of 40%, compared to 13% in their non-Indigenous counterparts. These shocking statistics show major systemic problems in Canada’s education system such as racism, devaluing of Indigenous culture, and othering (i.e., a dehumanizing process of seeing another person as different than oneself in a negative way). In many instances, Canada’s education system is not considered culturally neutral or fair and is said to promote the beliefs of those considered mainstream in society, while subjugating the values of those who do not fit the standard model. The colonial history imbedded in the structure of primary, secondary, and post-secondary education is a huge factor and a root cause of the education system (Zinga, 2017).

Discrimination and racism towards Indigenous students is described as rampant in high school and is a major factor in the drop-out rate of Indigenous students. There is much concern into how Indigenous students are valued and cared for at schools and whether provincial schools are safe spaces. “Mainstream” students must be made aware of Indigenous culture and have their preconceived notions of Indigenous students challenged in order to reduce discrimination. Alongside this, Indigenous students have found that when their teachers have an understanding of their culture, there is a greater experience at school (Zinga, 2017).

In recent years there have been discussions between the Canadian government and Indigenous peoples regarding education, and there were many important points stated to move forward with. First, it was decided that it is essential that Indigenous peoples are in control of their education system and are provided with sufficient funding from the government to promote success within their population. Next, it is critical that language and culture are incorporated within this system to support the development and wellbeing of students. Third, it is vital to support Indigenous leaders as they incorporate additional programs and services to children and youth within educational institutions. Finally, the same level of support available to students attending school on reserve to those attending off-reserve must be given (Government of Canada, 2021).

As of April 1, 2019, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) formed a new method to fund Indigenous communities to meet the needs and improve the outcomes of Indigenous students on reserves. It ensured that a base funding aligned with provincial standards would be provided, and that \$1,500 per student would be given to schools to ensure their students were receiving an adequate education and support their culture. The ISC also planned on co-developing educational programs with respective Indigenous communities to ensure these programs were covering the specific needs of primary and secondary schools on reserves and receiving ample funding (Government of Canada, 2019).

### *Related Sustainable Development Goals*

In 2015, the United Nations created a series of 17 goals for the global community to achieve by 2030: the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There are many SDGs tied to the topic that will be discussed in committee session, however the most prevalent SDG, is SDG 4:

Quality Education. The mandate of this SDG is to, “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” Within this SDG there are numerous targets, that delve into the specifics of the SDG. For example, Target 4.5 states, “By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations” (United Nations, n.d.). The SDGs may seem daunting, but if countries start taking action, change will be made little by little. But to do so, the conversation must take place, and it is up to you as a representative in the Federal Cabinet to be a voice of change and push for a better future for education in Indigenous populations.



Figure 3: The logo for SDG 4: Quality Education (United Nations, n.d.).

*Questions to Consider:*

1. What is your assigned role’s view on addressing education concerns in Indigenous populations?
2. What has your assigned role done to improve the educational circumstances of Indigenous students?
3. What does your assigned role suggest is done to ensure Indigenous children have the education they need without stripping away their culture?
4. Are there any additional underlying factors that must be considered when discussing the access and quality of education in Indigenous populations?

## References

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