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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 21, 2019, Thunder Bay ON

Lawyers for the families of six of the seven youth who were the subject of the First Nations Youth Inquest in Thunder Bay from October 2015 to June 2016 today issued a report card on the progress made in Year Three in meeting the inquest jury's 145 recommendations.

Jonathan Rudin and Caitlyn Kasper of Aboriginal Legal Services and counsel for the families of Jethro Anderson, Reggie Bushie, Robyn Harper, Kyle Morrisseau, Paul Panacheese and Jordan Wabasse gave an overall grade of A- for the efforts made in the third year to implement the jury's recommendations. This grade is up from B+ in Year Two and C+ in Year One.

In addition to providing an overall grade, each of the parties were graded as well. All of the grades for the parties either improved or stayed the same. The grades for the non-Indigenous government parties are: Canada B+; Ontario B+; City of Thunder Bay A. For the Indigenous parties: Nishnawbe Aski Nation A-, Matawa Learning Centre A-; Northern Nishnawbe Education Council and Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School A+; and Keewaytinook Okimakanak A+.

As with the Year Two Report Card, the Thunder Bay Police Service (TBPS) was not given a final grade. When the TBPS has addressed the concerns raised by the Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD) as set out in its report- Broken Trust released in December 2018, and regained the confidence of the Indigenous community in Thunder Bay, then they will once again receive a grade.

All grades were based on reports filed by the parties with the Office of Chief Coroner with regard to their progress on meeting the recommendations. A mathematical formula was created to determine the grades. All the material used to compile the grades and the grade calculations, including those for the TBPS, can be found at Aboriginal Legal Services' website - [aboriginallegal.ca/fnyyear3.html](http://aboriginallegal.ca/fnyyear3.html).

Of the grades Jonathan Rudin said: "It is very gratifying to see that the parties to the inquest have clearly taken the recommendations of the jury to heart and are making a real effort to change the way educational and other services are

provided to First Nations Youth from remote communities. It should not have taken the deaths of seven young people in order to see this type of progress but we know that the hard work that took place over the many months of the inquest were not in vain.”

Caitlyn Kasper, who has been in contact with the families, said: “While the grief of losing a child remains unchanged as years pass, the families of the youth recognize the continued efforts of the parties to implement the recommendations of the Inquiry. As each report card is released, and further progress is made, it is a reminder to our clients that their children have not been forgotten and that by continuing to work together, there exists a future where First Nations students from remote communities can access education feeling safe, with the support of their community around them.”

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