Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NEWS RELEASE

Tuesday March 27, 2007 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN URGES FORMAL APOLOGY FOR RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy says regardless of whether or not a formal apology was part of the Residential School Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Assembly of First Nations, the formal recognition of wrong-doing by Canada should warrant more than compensation packages for First Nation people impacted by the residential school system.

"What better way to reach closure than to issue a formal apology?," said NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy who represents 49 First Nation communities across Ontario.

"Regardless of whether or not a formal apology is in the text of the agreement or was understood to take place following the agreement, it's vital to the healing process for not only NAN members affected by the residential school system, but First Nations across the province and country.

Beardy's comments come after yesterday's statement by Indian and Northern Affairs Minister Jim Prentice that the deal worth at least $1.9 billion in compensation packages will not include an apology from the Prime Minister of Canada, despite the Minister's comments that the door needs to close on various parts of Canadian history.

Assembly of First Nations has been negotiating with the Government of Canada since December 2004 to reach a deal that will compensate more than 12,000 Aboriginals currently participating in law suits seeking compensation for the effects of the residential school system that uprooted Aboriginals children across Canada from their home communities.

An Agreement-in-Principle was reached with the former Liberal government November 2005 and subsequently a final agreement with the Conservative Harper Government April 2006.

Since 2005, NAN has publicly urged for a formal apology by the Prime Minister of Canada and continuation of programs focused on individual and community healing for approximately 90 per cent of NAN members impacted by the residential school system.

Approximately 5,000 NAN members attended residential schools.

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