



Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAN WELCOMES INQUEST INTO FIRST NATION STUDENT DEATH

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler together with Poplar Hill First Nation members Berenson and Rhoda King welcomed today's announcement of a coroner's inquest into the October 2007 death of 15-year-old First Nation student Reggie Bushie.

"We welcome the inquest into the tragic death of Reggie Bushie but it shouldn't stop there, as the deaths of four other First Nation youth who died under similar circumstances in recent years should also be included," said NAN Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler. "We have to ensure that everything possible is done to understand how these tragedies are occurring and what can be done to prevent them."

In February 2008 Berenson and Rhoda King requested the Office of the Chief Coroner conduct an inquest into the death of their son Reggie Bushie who died last fall while attending school at Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School (DFC) in Thunder Bay. NAN launched a campaign calling for an inquest into First Nation student deaths in March 6, 2008.

A total of five youth from NAN territory attending Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School have died in Thunder Bay since 2000.

"Many youth from NAN territory are forced to move to Thunder Bay to attend high school hundreds of miles away from their homes, their friends and their families," said Fiddler. "Tragically, many of these students lack an adequate network of social support and simply cannot cope with what can be a challenging and sometimes hostile environment."

Nishnawbe Aski Nation is a political territorial organization representing 49 First Nation communities within James Bay Treaty 9 and Treaty 5 territory – an area covering two-thirds of the province of Ontario.

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