



LETTER TO PARENTS & COMMUNITY

"Defending Our Truth" Research Project

Dear Parents, Grandparents, and Community Members,

Your students are starting an important research project that connects classroom learning directly to our community. We want you to understand what they're doing and how you can support them.



WHAT IS THIS PROJECT ABOUT?

Students are learning to **spot misinformation and defend the truth about Indigenous peoples and Sandy Lake First Nations.**

In the age of social media, false information spreads quickly—sometimes to warn others, sometimes intentionally. Students are developing skills to:

- Distinguish facts from opinions
 - Identify misinformation tricks
 - Research using credible sources
 - Become protectors of our community's narrative
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WHAT WILL THEY DO?

Students choose ONE of these investigations:

MYTH BUSTER: Find a false claim about Indigenous peoples (like "First Nations don't pay taxes" or "Indigenous knowledge isn't scientific") and research the REAL truth using credible sources.

SOCIAL MEDIA DETECTIVE: Track how ONE false claim spreads online, watching how it changes with each share, and understand why people believe it.

ELDER WISDOM PROJECT: Interview an elder about a traditional practice, then investigate how it's misrepresented online, and create educational material about the REAL story.

LOCAL FACT-CHECKER: Investigate a community event or issue and track how rumors changed the facts over time.

FINAL PRODUCT: They'll create a video, presentation, poster, written report, podcast, or social media series sharing what they learned.

WHY THIS MATTERS

- **It's relevant:** Students investigate REAL issues affecting THEIR community
 - **It builds skills:** Critical thinking, research, media literacy
 - **It empowers:** Students become the experts and protectors of truth
 - **It's community-centered:** We center Indigenous voices and perspectives
 - **It creates change:** Student work may be shared publicly to educate others
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HOW YOU CAN HELP

Ask your student:

- "What misinformation did you find?"
- "How did you know it was false?"
- "What was the real truth?"
- "Who did you ask to help verify?"

Share stories:

- Talk about times YOU'VE seen misinformation spread
- Share family stories or knowledge (if your student is researching this)
- Discuss how information was passed differently before social media

Provide perspective:

- If they're researching elder knowledge, help them understand cultural protocols about what can/can't be publicly shared
- Share community history
- Discuss why this project matters for protecting our narrative

Be a resource:

- Connect them with elders, community members, or experts (if appropriate)
- Help them find sources or official information
- Review their work and provide feedback

Support their learning:

- Make sure they have time and space to work
 - Help them access computers/library if needed
 - Encourage them when research gets frustrating
 - Celebrate their finished project
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WHAT THEY'RE LEARNING

Critical Thinking Skills:

- ✓ How to evaluate if information is true
- ✓ How to spot lies hiding as facts
- ✓ How to research using credible sources
- ✓ Why misinformation spreads

Media Literacy:

- ✓ How social media algorithms work
- ✓ How rumors change over time
- ✓ How to be a responsible digital citizen

Indigenous Knowledge:

- ✓ How our stories are sometimes misrepresented
- ✓ The difference between Western sources and Indigenous voices
- ✓ Why protecting our narrative matters

Research Skills:

- ✓ How to find credible sources
 - ✓ How to cite properly
 - ✓ How to conduct interviews ethically
 - ✓ How to organize complex information
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POTENTIAL INVOLVEMENT

We're looking for:

- **Elders/Knowledge Keepers:** To share stories and validate student research
- **Community Members:** To be interviewed about local events/issues
- **Experts:** To discuss their field and how they verify information
- **Parents:** To attend the student showcase and celebrate their work

If you're interested in supporting this project, please let the teacher know!



A NOTE ON SENSITIVE TOPICS

This project may surface difficult truths:

- Historical injustices

- Current discrimination
- Community challenges

This is intentional. Learning to speak truth, backed by evidence, is powerful. If your student finds this emotionally challenging, that's normal. We have school counselors available to support them.

? FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What if my student wants to research something controversial?

A: That's great! We help them research responsibly using credible sources. Controversial topics deserve thorough investigation.

Q: What if they find something that makes our community look bad?

A: Sometimes the truth is complicated. We help them understand context, acknowledge complexity, and find constructive solutions.

Q: Is this too advanced/not challenging enough for my child?

A: We differentiate based on each student's level. Talk to the teacher about modifications.

Q: Can they interview me/our family?

A: Yes! If your student is researching family history or community knowledge, you can help. Just make sure we have permission (we provide a form).

Q: What if we disagree with what they find?

A: That's OK! It's a chance to discuss how to evaluate different perspectives and sources.

Q: When will we see their work?

A: They'll present in class, and we're planning a community showcase. Details coming soon!



TIMELINE

- **Week 1:** Students choose their topic
- **Weeks 2-3:** Research and investigation
- **Week 4:** Creating their presentation/video/poster
- **Week 5:** Final edits
- **Week 6:** Presentations and community showcase

Project complete: [DATE]



QUESTIONS?

Contact the teacher with questions about:

- Your student's specific topic
 - How to help support their research
 - Concerns about content
 - Ways you can be involved
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WHY THIS MATTERS FOR OUR COMMUNITY

For generations, other people told OUR stories. They decided what was true about us. Now, your students are learning to:

- **Speak their own truth**
- **Back it up with evidence**
- **Protect their community's narrative**
- **Think critically about the world**

This is powerful. This creates leaders.

Together, we're building a generation that can defend truth.

In solidarity,

[School/Program Name]

Questions about the project? Contact your student's teacher

Want to get involved? Let us know!

Questions about how to talk to your student about misinformation? Ask the school counselor.