

LITTLE TRAVERSE BAY BANDS OF ODAWA INDIANS

7500 ODAWA CIRCLE
HARBOR SPRINGS, MI 49740

DECLARATION # 030322-02

Statement of Support for Michigan Senate Bill S. 876, *The revised school code for the inclusion of learning objectives concerning Indian boarding schools*

A Declaration is a formal written public statement in support or opposition of an issue or matter. Declarations shall be approved by Tribal Council motion.

The Waganakising Odawak is a nation of Tribal Citizens with inherent sovereignty and right to self-governance; and

The Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians is a federally recognized Indian Tribe under Public Law 103-324, and is a party to numerous Treaties with the United States the most recent of which being the Treaty of Washington of March 28, 1836 (7 Stat. 491) and the Treaty of Detroit of 1855 (11 Stat. 621); and

In accordance with the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Constitution:

“ IN THE WAYS OF OUR ANCESTORS, to perpetuate our way of life for future generations, we the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, called in our own language the WAGANAKISING ODAWAK, a sovereign, self-governing people who follow the Anishinaabe Traditions, Heritage, and Cultural Values, set forth within this Constitution the foundation of our governance.

We will work together in a constructive, cooperative spirit to preserve and protect our lands resources and Treaty Rights, ... In keeping faith with our Ancestors, we shall preserve our Heritage while adapting to the present world around us... ” and

The United States Federal Government enactment of the Act of March 3, 1819 (3 Stat. 516, chapter 85) the *Civilization Fund Act* encouraged activities of benevolent societies in providing education for American Indian children and authorized an annuity to stimulate the "civilization process".

The enactment of the Peace Policy of 1869, was the start of the Indian Boarding School Policy that was expressly intended to implement cultural genocide through the removal and reprogramming of American Indian children to accomplish the systematic destruction of indigenous cultures and communities, where children were voluntarily or forcibly removed from their homes, families, and communities and were taken to schools far away where they were punished through physical, sexual, psychological, industrial, and spiritual abuse and neglect, for speaking their native language, banned from acting in any way that might be seen to represent traditional or cultural practices, stripped of traditional clothing, hair and personal belongings and behaviors

reflective of their native culture, and taught their culture was inferior.

The State of Michigan was home to several Indian boarding schools with students attending from the Great Lakes region. These students have recounted brutal and dark histories of their treatment while attending these schools subject to international acknowledgment.

The last boarding school to remained in operation was located on the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians reservation, Holy Childhood of Jesus Indian Board School, which closed June 10 1988. Indian children at Holy Childhood were not permitted to speak their native language or to participate in cultural activities. Breaking the rules resulted in harsh punishments that were mental, emotional and physical. The longstanding ramifications of the inhumane treatment of the children continues to impact our Tribal families and our Tribal community through intergenerational trauma, cycles of violence and abuse, disappearance, health disparities, substance abuse, premature deaths, and additional undocumented psychological trauma.

The general public has been largely unaware of the experiences faced by American Indian students while in the custody of the boarding schools. On February 17, 2022, bipartisan legislation, Senate Bill 876, has been introduced by Senator Wayne Schmidt and co-sponsored by Senator Jeff Irwin to raise awareness of Indian Boarding schools in Michigan after countless boarding school survivors across many tribal nations came together to share their experiences.

This bill would strongly encourage the State Board of Education to ensure that the standards for history in the grades 8-12 include learning objectives concerning Indian boarding schools.

The Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Tribe support enactment of legislation by the State of Michigan, Senate Bill 876, that strongly encourage the State Board of Education to ensure that the standards for history in the grades 8-12 include learning objectives concerning Indian boarding schools.

A copy of this Declaration is on file at the Tribal Council Legislative Office.

Motion approved by Tribal Council on March 3, 2022 by:

Emily Proctor, Legislative Leader
Leroy Shomin, Treasurer
Tamara Kiogima, Tribal Councilor
William Ortiz, Tribal Councilor
Marty Van De Car, Tribal Councilor

Marcella Reyes, Secretary
Fred Kiogima, Tribal Councilor
Aaron Otto, Tribal Councilor
Melissa Pamp, Tribal Councilor
Regina Gasco Bentley, Tribal Chair

