FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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RE: Learning Through the Voices of Elders and Knowledge Keepers

(EDMONTON) – In celebration of National Indigenous Peoples Day, June 21, 2020, the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) is pleased to honour and amplify the voice of Elders and Knowledge Keepers with the recent release of its, Guide to Relationships and Learning with the Indigenous Peoples of Alberta.

Developed through an Indigenous lens led by the voices and teachings of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Elders and Knowledge Keepers from Alberta, the online interactive guide is centred on the theme of relationships and explores eight essential Indigenous teachings aimed at building the foundational knowledge to establish mutually respectful relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Peoples of Canada.

“The more one learns, the more entry points uncovered in walking together with Indigenous Peoples on the path to reconciliation,” said Project Lead and CASS’ Director of Leadership Elizabeth Gouthro, referred to as ‘Saa’koiy kakatoosi’ by Elders involved in the project. “It was a privilege to lead this project. I hope the Guide will become a valuable tool for educators in deepening their understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. This online resource will support the opportunity to do so.”

Echoing Gouthro’s sentiments, Senator Murray Sinclair who served as Canada’s Chief Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission said, “It was education that got us into this mess and education will get us out.”

Sponsored by a grant from Alberta Education, Gouthro explained the Guide is intended to further build the capacity of superintendent and system leaders to lead Indigenous education within their education communities. Each of the eight themes begins with teachings from Elders and Knowledge Keepers, followed by an introduction to the theme, reflective questions and an extensive list of resources to deepen and personalize your knowledge and understanding. The experience and practices of superintendents, students and educators, too, are featured throughout the Guide.

“CASS extends its gratitude to Alberta Education, members of our First Nations Métis and Inuit Education Action Committee and the Elders and Knowledge Keepers from across Alberta for their significant role in the development of this Guide,” said CASS President Bevan Daverne. “It is because of the many voices that generously contributed to this Guide that we are able to recognize, celebrate and learning from the unique heritage and diverse cultures of Indigenous Peoples.”

Since 1996, Canadians have recognized and celebrated the unique heritage, diverse cultures and tremendous contributions of Indigenous Peoples on June 21, the summer solstice. For generations, many Indigenous Peoples and communities have celebrated their culture and heritage on or near this day due to the significance of the summer solstice as the longest day of the year.

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