

To Whom It May Concern,

The Renaissance Society of St. Theresa Catholic Secondary School, a student history club, is initiating a campaign to petition the Ontario government to change the high school graduation requirements to include a mandatory Canadian history course at the grade 12 level. This student initiative is in response to the dismal results of a Dominion Institute study.

In the fall of 2007, 82% of Canadians aged 18 to 24 failed a basic quiz on Canadian history. Fewer than half could name the first Prime Minister of Canada. There is an underlying reason for this lack of knowledge and understanding of Canadian history. Very little Canadian history is taught in high school. This is especially true in Ontario. The only mandatory course in Canadian history is in grade 10 and that course only begins in 1914. This means that the vast majority of students graduate without having studied Canadian history in any real depth.

This is a dangerous situation for a country as diverse as Canada. How can we expect high school graduates to understand their own country and to participate as active, informed citizens if they lack even a rudimentary knowledge of their own history? How can Canadians have a collective identity if they lack a collective memory?

Our petition campaign has received official support from both the Ontario Historical Society and Canada's National History Society. With their support we intend to circulate the petition among as many citizens of Ontario as possible. With your support we can make a real difference.

Please return the completed petition forms to our school by the end of March 2010. We plan to deliver all of the forms to the Ministry of Education.

Sincerely,

Joe Stafford

St. Theresa CSS

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