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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lawyers for the families of six of the seven youth who were the subject of the First Nations Youth Inquest in Thunder Bay from October 2015 to June 2016 today issued a report card on the progress made in Year Two of meeting the inquest jury's 145 recommendations.

Jonathan Rudin and Caitlyn Kasper of Aboriginal Legal Services and counsel for the families of Jethro Anderson, Reggie Bushie, Robyn Harper, Kyle Morrisseau, Paul Panacheese and Jordan Wabasse gave an overall grade of B+, up from C+ from Year One, for the efforts made in the second year to implement the jury's recommendations.

In addition to providing an overall grade, each of the parties were graded as well. The government of Canada's grade went up from D to C+, Ontario's grade went from C+ to B and the City of Thunder Bay from C+ to B+. For the Indigenous parties Nishnawbe Aski Nation's grade increased from C+ to B-, Matawa Learning Centre had the only downgrade, from A- to B, Northern Nishnawbe Education Council and Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School went from A- to A+ and Keewaytinook Okimakanak from A to A+.

The recent report of the Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD) - Broken Trust released in December 2018 - found that the investigations into the deaths of four of the seven youth by the Thunder Bay Police Service were inadequate. The report also found that one of the explanations for these inadequacies was racist attitudes and racial stereotyping. For these reasons the Thunder Bay Police Service was not given a grade.

All grades were based on reports filed by the parties with the Office of Chief Coroner with regard to their progress on meeting the recommendations. A mathematical formula was created to determine the grades. All the material used to compile the grades and the grade calculations can be found at Aboriginal Legal Services' website - aboriginallegal.ca/fnyyear2.html.

Of the grades Jonathan Rudin said: "It is heartening to see a real improvement on a year to year basis in terms of implementing the jury's recommendations. The work will get harder in the coming years because parties will be coming to

grips with recommendations that address some of the more systemic issues facing First Nations youth in the north.”

Caitlyn Kasper, who has been in contact with the families, said: “The families are very invested in seeing all the recommendations adopted. Obviously the findings of the OIPRD into the problems with the Thunder Bay Police Service are very disturbing. Families are looking for answers with regard to whether these flawed investigations will be reopened.”

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