

## Tasha Buchanan

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**Subject:** Suicide Prevention Support for Indigenous Children  
**Attachments:** Principals call to the START Program in January.jpg; School Counsellors call to the SPEAC Program in Oct.pdf; Felicity Donovan.JPG; Odanak Letter of Support.jpg

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**From:** donovanfamily <[donovanfamily@gmail.com](mailto:donovanfamily@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 28, 2024 4:57 PM  
**To:** Inquiry <[inquiry@barriere.ca](mailto:inquiry@barriere.ca)>  
**Subject:** Suicide Prevention Support for Indigenous Children

Greetings,

My name is Laura Donovan, a member of the Odanak First Nation, living on the territories of the Coast Salish peoples. I want to thank you for your willingness to read this letter, as it may be triggering and difficult to read. I am fully aware of the significant impact suicide has had on every one of our communities.

I have been a Tattooer for 15 years, starting in Selkirk, Manitoba, and now in Surrey, BC. I have tattooed countless memorials for fellow Indigenous community members, using my craft to heal and provide good medicine. I never expected that I would end up tattooing memorials to honor my daughter.

I would like to share information about my 16-year-old daughter Felicity, an Indigenous student and a proud Abenaki member of the Odanak First Nation. Felicity died by suicide in December 2023.

In October 2023, she reached out for suicide prevention support at school, and a call was made to an external agency for help. I did not learn about the details of this call or the support the school had committed to provide until January 2024. At that time, I discovered that the school principal had contacted a different external support agency, informing them that Felicity had not presented as at risk and was not on their radar.

Additionally, I learned that the Surrey School District had a suicide prevention protocol that was not followed and did not have a suicide prevention program or plan to address students presenting with thoughts of suicide, nor support for staff providing this support to students.

On July 22nd, I met with the BC Minister of Education to share Felicity's experience and the experiences of many Indigenous families who have shared their stories with me over the years. In the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation, to honor the lives of all Indigenous children lost to suicide and to ensure Every Child Matters, I have requested the following from the Minister:

1. The Ministry of Education ensures all schools in British Columbia are funded and equipped to provide suicide prevention support and training to staff and students based on current evidence-based practices. I request this with the understanding that all children and staff will benefit from this honor.
2. The Ministry of Education performs an audit of the suicide prevention support provided to Felicity and our family.

I am reaching out to ask if you municipal leadership will add their voice to my call to provide improved suicide prevention support for children in your municipality. Please consider providing me with a letter addressed to the British Columbia Minister of Education, the Honourable Rachna Singh, in support of my request, with a CC to my email at [donovanfamily@gmail.com](mailto:donovanfamily@gmail.com). The Minister's email is [ECC.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:ECC.Minister@gov.bc.ca).

If you have any questions or would like more information that will enable you to provide a letter of support, please reach out to me, and I will respond promptly.

I have attached supporting information for your reference:

1. A picture of Felicity.
2. A record of the call the School Counsellor made to a suicide prevention program where Felicity asked for support.
3. A record of the call the Principal made to another suicide prevention program, informing them Felicity was not presenting as at risk or on their radar.
4. A letter of support from the Chief and Council of Odanak First Nation.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Laura Donovan (Felicity's Mom)



July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Honourable Rachna Singh  
British Columbia Minister of Education  
[EC.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:EC.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

**Object: letter of support for the Donovan family**

Kwai,

On December 21, 2023, the Abenaki of Odanak lost a member, Miss Felicity Donovan. She was only 16 years old. Her family has been waiting for answers on the support provided to their daughter to prevent her suicide. No parent should be in their position.

On behalf of the Abenaki Council of Odanak, we would like to support the Donovan family in their requests:

1. The Ministry of Education ensures all schools in British Columbia are funded and equipped to provide suicide prevention support and training to staff and students based on current evidence-based practices. I request this with the understanding that all children and staff will benefit from this honor.
2. The Ministry of Education performs an audit of the suicide prevention support provided to Felicity and our family.

Wirwzi,

  
Chief Rick O'Bomanwin  
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