

First Nations student deaths inquest adjourns until 2016

Testimony continues January 11

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 18, 2015 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Dec 18, 2015 7:00 AM ET

The inquest into deaths of seven First Nations students in Thunder Bay, Ont. wrapped up nearly three months of testimony this week, but at least one parent says he is still smarting from the way it began in October.

The [room assigned for the first day of the inquest was one of the smallest in Thunder Bay's recently built courthouse](#) with only 10 seats available for family members of the seven students, all of whom have waited years and travelled hundreds of kilometres for the launch of the long-awaited hearings.

Court officials made a much larger courtroom available the following day, but Christian Morriseau said the initial insult still hurts.

- [Death of Norval Morriseau's grandson loss to artistic community, inquest hears](#)
- [IN DEPTH: First Nations student deaths inquest](#)
- [What a missing and murdered indigenous women inquiry could learn from an inquest in Thunder Bay](#)

"It's painful, very painful to see that happen," Morriseau said after testifying this week about the death of his son Kyle.

The inquest has so far heard testimony about the deaths of six of seven of the students — Jethro Anderson, Paul Panacheese, Robyn Harper, Reggie Bushie, Curran Strang and Kyle Morriseau. All of the students who died are from remote First Nations and were attending high school in Thunder Bay.

Evidence about Kyle's death was supposed to conclude this week, but will continue into the new year after the final police witness was dismissed on Thursday.

There are concerns about the police response to Kyle's disappearance in October 2009.

The inquest heard that within days of the 17-year-old being reported missing, First Nations leaders identified the person who was last seen with Kyle and relayed the information to police.

Police did not interview that person until more than a week later, after Kyle's body had been found in the McIntyre River.

'Lack of fulsome investigation'

"There was a lack of a fulsome investigation," said Chantelle Bryson, lawyer for the provincial advocate for children and youth. "Therefore we'll never know how Kyle ended up in the water."

Lawyers representing several parties at the inquest attempted to determine which officer was in charge of various aspects of the investigation, but could not.

"Police witnesses are being asked again and again what happened, and the witness says, 'I don't know,

"I wasn't the one who followed up," said Karen Shea, counsel for the coroner.

After consulting with the lawyers for all parties, presiding coroner Dr. David Eden decided to adjourn the inquest while Thunder Bay police produce a document showing the "task list" for the Morriseau case.

Eden thanked the five jurors for their dedication, praising them for paying close attention and asking "insightful questions" during the first half of the inquest.

He also reminded them not to discuss the inquest with anyone except fellow jurors and not to read any media reports about it.

When the inquest resumes in the new year, jurors will hear evidence about the death of Jordan Wabasse. The 15-year-old from Webequie First Nation died in 2011.

Explore CBC

[CBC Home](#)

[TV](#)

[Radio](#)

[News](#)

[Sports](#)

[Music](#)

[Arts](#)

[Kids](#)

[Local](#)

[Documentaries](#)

[Comedy](#)

[Books](#)

[Parents](#)

[Aboriginal](#)

[Weather](#)

[CBC Connects](#)

[Digital Archives](#)

[Games](#)

[Contests](#)

[Site Map](#)

Stay Connected

[Mobile](#)

[RSS](#)

[Podcasts](#)

[Newsletters & Alerts](#)

Services and Information

[Corporate Info](#)

[Public Appearances](#)

[Commercial Services](#)

[Reuse & Permission](#)

[Terms of Use](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[CBC Shop](#)

[Help](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Jobs](#)

[Doing Business with Us](#)

[Renting Facilities](#)

CBC  **Radio-Canada**

©2015 CBC/Radio-Canada. All rights reserved

Visitez Radio-Canada.ca