

VOLUNTARY FIRST NATION, MÉTIS AND INUIT STUDENT SELF-IDENTIFICATION

**AS 36.0
2016 06 27**

POLICY:

It is the policy of the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board to provide programs to support First Nation, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) students who experience gaps in their education by putting into place measures that respond to particular needs. All Aboriginal students and their parents have the right to voluntarily self-identify so that they may receive supportive programming. The first such measure in recognizing this right is to establish a self-identification procedure to identify, collect and aggregate student achievement data for Aboriginal students. By doing so we thereby recognize the uniqueness and potential of all human persons, further serving to enrich the entire Catholic school community.

RATIONALE

The learning aspirations and potential of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students can be realized through a responsive, transparent and accountable policy that focuses on improved programs and services and builds on strong partnerships with First Nation, Métis and Inuit parents and their communities. Student achievement data needs to be collected and aggregated related to the performance of FNMI students. Voluntary self-identification allows the Board to monitor the performance of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students and will provide information for future decision-making surrounding Aboriginal student success. The Voluntary First Nation, Métis and Inuit student self-identification process supports the goals outlined in the Ministry of Education First Nation, Métis and Inuit Framework (2007).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

For implementation and future refinement of the policy, the following principles will be used as a guide:

- transparency
- inclusiveness
- innovation
- learner-centered
- equitable
- responsive
- collaborative
- respect for individual privacy and dignity
- results-oriented
- acknowledgment and reflection of cultural diversity
- contribution to the knowledge base through research

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DEFINITIONS

Aboriginal Peoples: as descendants of the original inhabitants of North America, as stated in the Constitution Act, 1982, Section 35(2): "Aboriginal peoples of Canada include the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada." Each separate group have unique histories, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs. All groups share their indigenous ancestry.

First Nations: is a term used to describe the original peoples of North America and their descendants.

Métis: a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation."
(Métis National Council, 2002)

Inuit: refers to a distinct group of Aboriginal peoples in northern Canada whose homeland is the Canadian Arctic.

FRAMEWORK GOALS

The Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board has established the following goals for First Nation, Métis and Inuit education within its jurisdiction:

- 1) Provide high quality learning opportunities that are responsive, flexible and accessible to First Nation, Métis and Inuit students that will nurture a sense of belonging and appreciation of First Nation, Métis and Inuit perspectives, values and cultures.
- 2) Increase the retention of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students.
- 3) Increase in percentage of First Nation, Métis and Inuit student achievement (Level 3 and 4)
- 4) Increase the graduation rate of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students.
- 5) Ensure First Nation, Métis and Inuit students are well prepared for participation in post-secondary studies and the world of work.
- 6) Promote effective, respectful working relationships and partnership with First Nation, Métis and Inuit parents and the general community.
- 7) Increase opportunities to build capacity and increase opportunities for knowledge sharing for all stakeholders.

This policy will evolve as the Board seeks to improve achievement and program delivery for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students.

IMPLEMENTATION

First Nation, Métis and Inuit students and their families who are currently enrolled will be invited on an annual basis to self-identify on a voluntary and confidential basis.

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CONFIDENTIALITY

All data will be securely stored to respect privacy and used only as a means to enhance First Nation, Métis and Inuit education programs within the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board.

Data will be treated in the same manner as Ontario Student Records and protected and governed by the Freedom of Information Act.

Individual data will not be communicated. The information gathered will be used in aggregate only and for the purpose of developing and implementing supportive programs.

Survey data will be shared with OnSIS (Ontario Student Information System) as a means to enhance First Nation, Métis and Inuit education programs within the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board.

The information gathered will be utilized in aggregated form for the purpose of planning, developing and implementing programs to meet the needs of our First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students. Aggregate data will be shared with stakeholders.

EVALUATION

The policy will be reviewed every three years for its effectiveness and need for continuation, in collaboration with the stakeholders.

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

- Sudbury Catholic District School Board: Voluntary Self-Identification for Aboriginal Students <http://aboriginal.sudburycatholicschools.ca/selfid.php>
- Ottawa Catholic District School Board
- <http://aadnc-aandc.gc.ca>
- Ministry of Education of Ontario <http://www.edu.gov.ca/eng/aboriginal>