



Voluntary Aboriginal Self-Identification

Board Received: October 26, 2015

Review Date: November 2019

Policy Statement

The Grand Erie District School Board believes in establishing strong partnerships with Aboriginal families, organizations and community both on and off-reserve, First Nation governments, and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada with a goal to improving academic achievement for all First Nation, Metis and Inuit (FNMI) students. The Grand Erie District School Board recognizes that the learning aspirations and learning potential of FNMI students in the Board can be best attained through a transparent, responsive, accountable and pro-active policy that focuses on improved services and programs for FNMI youth attending schools in the Board.

Rationale

The Board is required, by the Ministry of Education, to collect data on FNMI student achievement to determine if programs currently delivered are successful and to provide information for the development of future programs and courses to better meet the needs of FNMI students. In order to collect this data, the Board needs to ensure that all parents/guardians for FNMI students under the age of 18 and students over the age of 18 have the right to voluntarily self-identify as Aboriginal. The data collected will be shared with the schools, Board, and the Ministry of Education in order to assess the progress in improving First Nation, Metis and Inuit student achievement.

Definitions

Under this policy, “Aboriginal” identification refers to the definition in the Constitution Act, 1982, Section 35(2), in that “Aboriginal peoples” include “Indian, Inuit, and Métis.”

These groups include the following categories:

First Nation, Métis and Inuit students who live in the jurisdiction of and attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools; and First Nation students who live in First Nation communities and attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools under a tuition agreement.

Accountability

1. Accountability: Annual
2. Criteria for Success:
 - Increase number of self-identified students through implementation of the Self-Identification Policy
 - Students, parents and First Nation Communities are aware of Policy
 - Student Achievement measurements are included in the annual Board Improvement Plan

Procedures

1. Outcomes of the Voluntary Self-Identification Process

The Grand Erie District School Board has two primary outcomes for Aboriginal Education. To attain higher levels of student achievement and close the gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal

students in the areas of literacy, retention of students in school, graduation rates and advancement to post-secondary studies. The Grand Erie District School Board has established the following outcome statements of the Voluntary Self-Identification Process:

- a) to provide high-quality, learner-oriented, culturally and historically-relevant teaching and learning experiences for all students
- b) to provide learning opportunities that are responsive, flexible and accessible for FNMI students
- c) to set high expectations for student achievement in supported learning environments
- d) to improve the success of FNMI students in elementary and secondary school courses and programs
- e) to improve retention rates for FNMI students
- f) to improve literacy and mathematics EQAO (Education Quality and Accountability Office) scores for FNMI students
- g) to increase the graduation rates for FNMI students
- h) to ensure that FNMI students are well-prepared for post-secondary education or the world of work when they complete their secondary education
- i) to promote effective, respectful working relationships between FNMI students and all staff members
- j) to promote effective, respectful working relationships and partnerships between FNMI parents, communities and schools

2. Implementation

Parents/guardians for FNMI students under the age of 18 and students over the age of 18 will be given the opportunity to self-identify as FNMI. Schools will include an annual newsletter insert and self-id cards available for parents and visitors and ensure information about voluntary self-identification is provided during Kindergarten registration process. School Principals will be responsible for ensuring that all students, and their parents, who wish will have the opportunity to self-identify in one of the following two categories:

- a) First Nation, Métis and Inuit students who live in the jurisdiction of and attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools;
- b) First Nation students who live in First Nation communities and attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools under a tuition agreement.

3. Data Collection, Storage, Use and Protection

The Grand Erie District School Board is responsible and respectful in all matters relating to collection, storage, use and protection of students' information. All data collected under this Self-Identification process will be securely stored. Electronic data in Board's student data system will be used as a means to achieve the Board's outcomes. The data collected will be shared with the schools, Board, and the Ministry of Education in order to assess the progress in improving First Nation, Metis and Inuit student achievement.

All student information in the Board's data system is confidential within the Board and is protected under the Education Act R.S.O. 1990, the Ontario Student Record Guideline, Provincial Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O., 1990.