



# POLICY

SO16

## Voluntary Indigenous Self-Identification

Board Received: February 24, 2020

Review Date: March 2024

### Policy Statement

The Grand Erie District School Board believes in establishing strong partnerships with Indigenous families, organizations and communities both on and off-reserve, First Nation governments, and Indigenous Services Canada with a goal to improving academic achievement for all First Nation, Six Nations, Métis 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 opportunity to voluntarily self-identify as Indigenous. 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, Métis and Inuit student achievement.

### Definitions

Under this policy, Grand Erie acknowledges the diversity of Nations across Turtle Island. Where possible, the specific Nation's name will be used; otherwise the term Indigenous, Métis or Inuit will be referenced in print or otherwise. 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 Reciprocal Education agreement.

### Accountability

1. Accountability: - Annual Report
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

### Procedures

#### 1. Outcomes of the Voluntary Self-Identification Process

The Grand Erie District School Board has two primary outcomes for Indigenous Education. To attain higher levels of student achievement and close the gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous 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 improve the success of FNMI students in elementary and secondary school courses and programs
- d) to improve literacy and mathematics EQAO (Education Quality and Accountability Office) scores for FNMI students
- e) to increase the graduation rates for FNMI students
- f) to provide access to services and supports for students.

## 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 verification process insert and self-id cards available for parents and visitors and ensure information about voluntary self-identification is provided during the Kindergarten registration and new student to board 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 Reciprocal Education 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 information 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, Six Nations, Métis and Inuit student achievement.

All student information in the Board's student information system is confidential within the Board and is protected under the Education Act, 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.