

**POLICY**

|          |  |          |                |
|----------|--|----------|----------------|
| SECTION: | SCHOOL OPERATIONS  | POLICY:  | <b>G-31</b>    |
| TOPIC:   | <b>ABORIGINAL - VOLUNTARY, CONFIDENTIAL ABORIGINAL STUDENT SELF-IDENTIFICATION</b> | PAGE:    | Page 1 of 2    |
|          |  | DATE:    | September 2011 |
| REVIEW   | September 2012   | REVISED: |                |

It is the policy of the District School Board of Niagara to provide programs to support First Nation, Métis and Inuit students who may be experiencing gaps in their education by putting into place measures that respond to particular needs. All First Nation, Métis and Inuit students have the right to voluntarily self-identify so that they may receive supportive programming and instructional practices that better serve their learning needs. The first such measure in recognizing this right is to establish self-identification procedures to identify, collect and aggregate student achievement data for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students.

**1. DEFINITION**

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 Nations students who attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools;
- Métis students who attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools;
- Inuit students who attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools.

The District School Board of Niagara recognizes diversity within cultures, however, families will need to choose one self-identification that is most reflective of how each student identifies.

**2. RATIONALE**

The learning, aspirations and potentials of Aboriginal students can be realized through a responsive, transparent and accountable process that focuses on improved services and supports that builds on strong partnerships with Aboriginal parents and their communities. Collecting student achievement data of Aboriginal students allows for analysis to determine programming to meet learning needs. Continued data collection and analysis will provide information for future decision-making surrounding Aboriginal student success.

**3. IMPLEMENTATION**

Voluntary Self-Identification data will be collected on currently enrolled students using the District School Board of Niagara Student Verification Forms (located in the student information database) beginning in the 2011-2012 school year.

Voluntary Self-Identification data will be collected on the District School Board of Niagara Registration Form (located in the student information database) for all new students enrolled with the Board beginning in the 2011-2012 school year.

**4. FRAMEWORK GOALS**

The District School Board of Niagara believes that all students can learn. Our mission is to enable each and every student to learn effectively, to reduce achievement gaps and to improve learning outcomes for all, regardless of race, class, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and other forms of historical marginalization. The Voluntary, Confidential Aboriginal Student Self-Identification Policy is designed to support this mission by establishing the following goals for Aboriginal education within the Board’s jurisdiction:

- To provide high-quality learning opportunities that are responsive, flexible, and accessible to the learners.
- To continue to set high expectations for learner achievement in supported learning environments
- To improve the retention rate of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students
- To ensure that learners are well-prepared for participation in post-secondary studies and the world of work
- To use achievement data from a variety of sources to determine possible gaps and areas for focused intervention.
- To promote effective, respectful working relationships and partnerships with First Nation, Métis and Inuit parents and the general First Nation, Métis and Inuit community.

**POLICY**

|          |  |          |                |
|----------|--|----------|----------------|
| SECTION: | SCHOOL OPERATIONS  | POLICY:  | <b>G-31</b>    |
| TOPIC:   | <b>ABORIGINAL - VOLUNTARY, CONFIDENTIAL ABORIGINAL STUDENT SELF-IDENTIFICATION</b> | PAGE:    | Page 2 of 2    |
|          |  | DATE:    | September 2011 |
| REVIEW   | September 2012   | REVISED: |                |

**5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The Voluntary, Confidential Aboriginal Student Self-Identification policy will evolve as the Board seeks to improve achievement and program delivery for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students. For implementation and for future refinement of this policy, the following principles will continue to guide us:

- Transparency
- Inclusivity
- Innovation
- Learner-centered
- Equity
- Responsiveness
- Collaboration
- Respect for individual privacy and dignity
- Results-oriented
- Acknowledging and reflecting on cultural diversity
- Contributing to the knowledge base through research

**6. SECURITY PROTOCOL**

- All data will be securely stored in the confidential student information database to respect privacy and used only as a means to enhance First Nation, Métis and Inuit education programs within the District School Board of Niagara.
- Data will be treated in the same manner as Ontario Student Records and protected and governed by the Freedom of Information Legislation governing School Boards and Ministry of Education.
- The information gathered will be used in the aggregate and for the purpose of developing and implementing supportive programs.
- Information will be communicated to EQAO and the Ministry of Education for reporting purposes by the province. Information given for this purpose will be protected by the protocols as outlined in the Education Act for EQAO and the Ministry of Education.

**References**

Policy D-7: Third Party Provision of Student Support Services  
 Policy E-9: Human Rights

Administrative Procedure 4-8: Third Party Provision of Student Support Services  
 Administrative Procedure 5-10: Human Rights  
 Administrative Procedure 2-15: Voluntary, Confidential Aboriginal Student Self-Identification