Greater Essex County District School Board

Policy: Voluntary Self-Identification: Ontario First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students

Reference No: P-AD-46

In keeping with the Ontario First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework (2007), the Board is committed to providing the opportunity for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) students and/or their parent(s)/guardian(s) to voluntarily self-identify so that learning opportunities can be put into place to support overall development and success.

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Rationale

The learning aspirations and potential of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) students can be realized through a responsive, transparent, and accountable policy that focuses on improved programs and services. Essential for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) students is to be engaged and feel welcome in the school and to see themselves and their culture reflected in the curriculum and in the school community. Responsive programs and services builds strong partnerships with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) parent(s)/guardian(s) and communities.

Personal data related to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) ancestry may be collected for the following purposes:

- assisting schools in better understanding the demographics of their school populations;
- assisting the school Board in assessing which schools require additional school programming, targeted initiatives, additional support, and the involvement of family and greater community life in the school;
- identifying promising practices supporting First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) student success;
- identifying First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) students who may benefit from additional support;
- communicate with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) families regarding upcoming events and available program supports; and,
- to measure the school Board's effectiveness in improving the achievement, retention rate and graduation rate of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) students.

Definitions

First Nations: A term used to describe the First Peoples native to what is now known as Canada, prior to colonization. The term First Nations came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word "Indian" in describing Indigenous Peoples who are not Metis or Inuit.

Métis: This term refers to the descendants of specific historic communities where Indigenous Peoples and European settlers joined to create their own culture and identity.

Inuit : A distinct group of Indigenous People who have ancestral ties to Northern Canada. There are four Inuit regions in Canada, collectively known as Inuit Nunangat. These Inuit communities are located across the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Northern Quebec and Northern Labrador.

Aggregate Data:. Aggregate data that is used and reported at an aggregate level consists of a data set that is comprised of a whole population. Aggregate data does not reveal student information.

Guidelines

1. Self-identification information shall be collected voluntarily from students /or parent(s)/guardian(s).

2. Self-identification of First Nations, Métis, or Inuit by parent(s)/guardian(s) of students and students 18 years of age and older shall be voluntary with no proof of ancestry required.

3. Parent(s)/guardian(s) of students and students 18 years of age and older shall be entitled to remove the identification at any time, upon written notification to the Principal.

4. The self-identification information shall be collected in a variety of ways (e.g. Registration Verification, GECDSB Self- Identification forms, and notification to the Principal

5. Support materials for parent(s)/guardian(s) will explain the purpose of self-identification, and the uses of information.

Confidentiality and Protection of Privacy

All data collected under this policy will be securely stored to respect student privacy. The data collected as a result of this policy will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and the aggregate data reported annually to the Board and to the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee, and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) communities.

1. Data collected under this policy will be in accordance with *The Education Act*, the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (MFIPPA), and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA).

2. Data collected will be stored securely and used by staff to determine programming, service and support needs for students who have identified as First Nation, Metis or Inuit ancestry. Registration, Verification and Self-Identification forms will be stored securely and destroyed after a two year period. Notifications to the Principal will be stored in the Ontario Student Record.

3. Individual data will be confidential to individuals in the school system who would require such information for the provision of resources, services, and experiences to benefit individual Indigenous students.

4. Aggregate data will be available to the school board, the Ministry of Education, and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.

5. Aggregate data will be reported publicly by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO).