

Ministry of Education

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MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
Supervisory Officers of School Authorities

FROM: Ben Levin
Deputy Minister

DATE: January 23, 2007

SUBJECT: First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework

One of the Ministry's three key goals in its strategic direction is to close the gaps in student achievement. To this end, we are taking concrete steps to increase our collective focus on supporting improvement for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students.

I am pleased to provide you with the *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework*, which was officially released by the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Education, today. The Framework is intended to provide the strategic policy context within which the Ministry of Education, school boards and schools will work together to improve the academic achievement of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students in Ontario's provincially funded schools.

The *First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework* includes a vision, policy statement and four guiding principles, and outlines Ministry, school board and school level strategies that are directly aligned with the Ministry's strategic direction and its three key goals, as well as ten performance measures which will be measured for progress every three years.

Consultations on the draft Framework took place between May and October of 2006, involving nearly 500 people through regional sessions with school boards and school authorities, with First Nation and Métis communities and organizations, Friendship Centres and other education stakeholders. Feedback we received on the draft Framework was positive and encouraging, with some excellent suggestions for improvement.

In addition to the release of the Framework, the Minister also announced an initial investment of \$4.4 million to the Council of Directors of Education to support the implementation. The purpose of the funding is to support regional capacity building within school boards by enhancing and building partnerships with local First Nation, Métis and Inuit families, communities and organizations and friendship centres to develop strategies to support Aboriginal student achievement. A further \$600,000 is being made available to a selected number of school boards to support the development of policies for voluntary, confidential Aboriginal student self-identification in order to support improvement planning and accountability.

In addition, the Ministry has committed \$1 million to provide the following supports to school boards:

- A resource for school boards to assist them in developing policies for voluntary, confidential Aboriginal student self-identification.
- A resource that summarizes the expectations in the revised Ontario Curriculum that incorporate perspectives of First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples. This resource for teachers will allow students to learn that the developments and contributions of First Nation, Métis and Inuit societies are central to an understanding of the social fabric of this country.
- Joint capacity building workshops with school boards, First Nations and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada on tuition agreements and education funding.

We look forward to working with all of you to reach the government's goal of creating a better future for First Nation, Métis and Inuit children and youth in Ontario.

For more information about the Framework and its implementation, please do not hesitate to contact Alayne Bigwin, Director of the Aboriginal Education Office, at alayne.bigwin@ontario.ca, or 416-325-8561.



Ben Levin

Attachment

c: Frank Kelly, Executive Director , Council of Ontario Directors of Education
Dominic Giroux, Assistant Deputy Minister
Regional Managers
Alayne Bigwin, Director, Aboriginal Education Office
Student Achievement Officers, Literacy Numeracy Secretariat