

Ministry of Education

Minister

Mowat Block
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

Ministère de l'Éducation

Ministre

Édifice Mowat
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2



August 22, 2013

Dear Chairs,

Today I shared with all Directors and the members of the Minister's Advisory Council on First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education, the Ministry of Education's *A Solid Foundation – Second Progress Report on the Implementation of the Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework*.

As we know, there has been much progress since the launch of Ontario's Aboriginal Education Strategy and the Framework. Relationships with First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities are stronger. Activities to support First Nation, Métis and Inuit students are more focused. Knowledge and awareness of First Nation, Métis and Inuit histories, cultures and perspectives have increased. This is a result of our collective work and, in part, due to having the data that tells us where the students are in our education system, and in what areas we need to focus to help students reach their full potential.

It is commendable that all 76 school boards and school authorities have voluntary, confidential Aboriginal student self-identification policies in place, and that approximately 44% of the estimated Aboriginal student population has self-identified. This represents much good work through positive relationship-building with parents, families and community representatives.

Although the data tells us that many First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students are excelling academically, the data shows that some students are not achieving at their full potential, and that overall, there is a gap in the achievement levels of Aboriginal students and the achievement levels of all students, as a whole. We must ensure that this information is handled with great sensitivity so that there is no negative impact on any student. Our schools must remain safe and accepting of all students.

I urge you to continue the good work in creating a common understanding within our boards, schools, and with our partners that the data is necessary to help us to focus on the specific supports that will enable students to be successful. The data helps us to know how we can reach out to parents, families and communities to engage with them in building those bridges of greater understanding and awareness about First Nation, Métis and Inuit histories, cultures and perspectives to better understand the needs of our students. It is about shared goals and mutual respect.

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The ministry will continue to work with all partners at the provincial level to continue to build those bridges and develop the types of supports that will advance this work across the province.

I look to your leadership in continuing to build the awareness and understanding within your boards and schools, and to work through your positive relationships at the local level that will be key in helping us to achieve the goals we have set in supporting the success of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students in Ontario.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Liz Sandals". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and "S".

Liz Sandals
Minister