

Ministry of Education

Minister

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Ministère de l'Éducation

Ministre

Édifice Mowat
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2



August 22, 2013

Dear Partners,

I am pleased to share with you a copy of 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*.

At the April meeting of the Minister's Advisory Council on First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education, I shared highlights of the report, including the first sample of a student achievement baseline data for self-identified First Nation, Métis and Inuit students who attend schools in the provincial education system.

While we have made much progress since the launch of Ontario's Aboriginal Education Strategy and the *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy (Framework)*, I also recognize that there is much more work to do. The 2012 report of the Auditor General of Ontario into the *Education of Aboriginal Students* also highlighted the persistent achievement gap between Aboriginal students and all students. We are committed to moving forward on the recommendations made by the Auditor General to demonstrate the ministry's progress in Framework implementation to date by working with our partners.

So with release of the second progress report, we renew our commitment to improving Aboriginal student achievement. Your advice and partnership will be critical to our collective success to close the achievement gap between Aboriginal students and all students.

Since the release of the first progress report, relationships with school boards, schools, parents and guardians, teachers, and First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities and organizations have become stronger. Activities have become more focused on meeting the specific needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students. Knowledge and awareness of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit histories, cultures and perspectives have increased throughout the provincial education system. All of this is possible due to having the data that tells us where the students are in the system, and in what areas we need to focus our efforts to help students reach their full potential in the academic setting.

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Today, my hope is that we continue to build partnerships and develop new relationships as we work to understand and target student achievement initiatives that will improve overall Aboriginal student achievement. It is critical that we continue to engage with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit partners to do this work.

I have had discussions with First Nation, Métis and Aboriginal leadership about the Progress Report and they have shared important issues particularly regarding the data in the report. I have assured our partners that we need their advice and input to ensure that the go-forward strategies that are developed address those issues in a meaningful way. To that end, I have asked the ministry to work with key partners to establish a working group under the umbrella of the Minister's Advisory Council on First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education, to provide input to the ministry's Framework implementation activities. I look forward to having this group convene its first meeting so we can continue those discussions by providing our partners with the opportunity to share their views on the Progress Report.

I acknowledge the great work that is taking place across the system in collaboration with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit partners, and I am confident that in continuing to work through these effective partnerships, that we will 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