

Ministry of Education
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MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities

FROM: Alayne Bigwin
Director
Aboriginal Education Office

Taddesse Haile
Director
Education Statistics and Analysis Branch

DATE: July 14, 2011

SUBJECT: **First Nation Students and Voluntary, Confidential Aboriginal
Student Self-Identification**

As you are aware, in April 2007, the ministry released *Building Bridges to Success for First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students*, a guide for school boards in developing Aboriginal student self-identification policies and practices.

The guide indicated that self-identification policies should recognize and address the following four cohorts:

First Nation - First Nation students who live off reserve and attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools (not under a tuition agreement)

First Nation Tuition - First Nation students who live on reserve and attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools under a tuition agreement

Métis - Métis students who attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools

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

The ministry continues to promote communication with stakeholders that involves open discussions aimed at building awareness, clear understanding, support, and addressing concerns.

As a result of stakeholder and community feedback, in October 2011 the ministry will collect voluntary, Aboriginal student self-identification for the following three cohorts:

First Nation – First Nation students that live in the jurisdiction of and attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools; and First Nation students who live in First Nation communities and attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools under a tuition agreement.

Métis - Métis students who attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools

Inuit - Inuit students who attend provincially funded elementary or secondary school.

In the interim, schools and boards are encouraged to articulate the singular First Nation cohort in their policies, communications, consultations, and data collection and reporting activities.

In order to allow schools, boards, software providers and the ministry to make policy and technical changes, the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS) will continue to accept both First Nation and First Nation Tuition self-identifications for June 2011 data submissions.

Furthermore, the ministry will report student achievement performance measures, as outlined in the *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework 2007*, for students that have previously voluntarily self-identified as First Nation and First Nation Tuition as a single First Nation cohort.

The attached Q and A will assist you in addressing questions in respect to policy and data collection and reporting activities.

Should you have any additional questions, please contact your Regional Education Officer with the Aboriginal Education Office.

We look forward to working with you in the continuing implementation of Aboriginal student self-identification policies, and the establishment of reliable baseline data, to build a foundation for the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs that support the needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students.

Sincerely,

Alayne Bigwin
Director
Aboriginal Education Office

Taddesse Haile
Director
Education Statistics and Analysis Branch

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