

**Purpose:**

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board respects the heritage and culture of First Nation (Status and Non-Status), Métis, and Inuit Peoples, and recognizes that meeting the needs of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students requires a deep understanding of their cultures and historic experiences.

The purpose of the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy is to demonstrate Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's commitment to:

- serve the needs of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students, and in particular to improve achievement levels among First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students.
- engage with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students, parents, caregivers/guardians, and community to strengthen their voice and involvement in education.
- ensure equity for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students.
- work in partnership with the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit community to design and provide programs and services that foster the success of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit learners.
- work in partnership with the First Nation, Métis and Inuit community members (e.g., Elders) to provide a culturally relevant education that considers the parameters of protected knowledge.
- work in partnership with the First Nation, Métis and Inuit community members to increase the knowledge and appreciation of contemporary and traditional First Nation, Métis, and Inuit traditions, cultures, and perspectives for all students, staff and trustees.

**Intended Outcomes:**

Through its strategic directions of Achievement matters, Engagement matters and Equity matters, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to meeting the Ministry's key challenges:

- to improve achievement among First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students
- to promote educational equity of access, opportunity and outcome for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students in the areas of:
  - strength-based learning to promote self-esteem
  - literacy and numeracy
  - retention of students in school
  - graduation rates
  - engagement
  - advancement to postsecondary studies reflect all pathways.

### **Responsibility:**

- ◆ Superintendent Responsible for Equity, Engagement and System Programs
- ◆ Executive Council

### **Definitions:**

- ◆ The term *Aboriginal* includes First Nation (Status and Non-status), Métis, and Inuit peoples. First Nation, Métis, or Inuit students are referred to specifically where appropriate to the context.
- ◆ The term *community* refers to the participation of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities and locals, Aboriginal families, as well as extended community support networks ranging from Aboriginal community service agencies to Elders/Senators.
- ◆ The term *protected knowledge* refers to respecting and honouring the collective knowledge of all Aboriginal groups and communities passed on by Elders/Traditional Teachers, storytellers, artists and musicians from generation to generation in the areas of wisdom, traditional teachings, and cultural practices. Information is typically shared by local Elders when the recipient is judged ready and willing.
- ◆ *Strength-based learning* seeks to nurture, acknowledge, and empower Aboriginal learners to develop their own talents based on their individual strengths through differentiated teaching, learning, and assessment practices.

### **Action Required:**

- ◆ An HWDSB Aboriginal Advisory Council
- ◆ A voluntary, confidential self-identification process including communication tools for parents, caregivers/guardians.
- ◆ A policy directive which outlines an implementation plan for the policy will be developed.
- ◆ HWDSB will allocate Ministry funding for Aboriginal programming.

### **Progress Indicators**

Through cooperation, partnerships and engagement with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit families, communities, and organizations, and the Ministry of Education's Aboriginal Education Office, HWDSB will:

- improve student achievement among First Nation, Métis and Inuit students
- increase the capacity of the school board and schools to equitably respond to the learning and cultural needs of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students
- increase quality programs, services, and resources to help improve academic achievement and support identity building for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students
- provide opportunities to engage First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students in a traditional way that respects their unique culture and heritage.
- enhance inclusive learning opportunities that facilitate learning about contemporary and traditional First Nation, Métis, and Inuit cultures, histories, and perspectives among all

students, and that also contribute to the education of school board staff, teachers, and trustees

- increase participation by First Nation, Métis, and Inuit parents, caregivers/guardians, students, communities, and organizations to support success for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students
- complete a voluntary, confidential First Nation, Métis, and Inuit student self-identification process in order to establish reliable student-specific data on the achievement of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students in HWDSB and to support School and System Improvement Plans, and in particular to improve student achievement among First Nation, Métis and Inuit students.

## **References:**

### **Government Documents**

Aboriginal Educational in Ontario: New Resources and Opportunities for Parents, Educators and Students

Aboriginal Perspectives: The Teacher's Toolkit

Building Bridges to Success for First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students. Developing Policies for Voluntary, Confidential Aboriginal Student Self-Identification: Successful Practices for Ontario School Boards, Aboriginal Education Office, Ministry of Education, 2007.

First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework, Aboriginal Education Office, Ministry of Education, 2007.

Ministry of Education, Education and Statistics and Analysis Branch: MISA (Managing Information for Student Achievement)

Native Studies and Native Languages Curriculum

Results from a pilot project in four Ontario School Boards: Algoma DSB, Rainy River DSB, Kenora Catholic DSB, and Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB.

### **HWDSB Strategic Directions**

Achievement Matters

Engagement Matters

Equity Matters

### **Related HWDSB Policies**

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

Diversity and Equity Pillar Policy

Equity Policy: Antiracism and Ethnocultural Supporting Guidelines

Human Resources Policies and Practices

Safe Schools Pillar Policy

Student Achievement Pillar Policy (Draft)

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 2005 the Ontario government released a report, *Ontario's New Approach to Aboriginal Affairs*, which committed the government to working with First Nation, Métis and Inuit leaders and educational institutions to improve the education outcomes among Aboriginal students by 2016.

In order to provide a strategic policy context within which the Ministry of Education, school boards, and schools will work together to achieve the goals outlined above, *The Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework 2007* and *Building Bridges to Success for First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students 2007* express the following vision:

*“First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students in Ontario will have the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to successfully complete their elementary and secondary education in order to pursue postsecondary education or training and/or to enter the workforce. They will have the traditional and contemporary knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to be socially contributive, politically active, and economically prosperous citizens of the world. All students in Ontario will have knowledge and appreciation of contemporary and traditional First Nation, Métis, and Inuit traditions, cultures, and perspectives” (Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework, page 7).*