

First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Procedure: Voluntary, Confidential Self-Identification

RATIONALE:

The Policy Procedure for Voluntary, Confidential First Nation, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) Self-Identification will support the implementation process of Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's (HWDSB) First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy. The intent of the Voluntary, Confidential First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Self-Identification Policy Procedure is to establish accurate and reliable student-specific data on the achievement and success of First Nation (Status and Non-Status), Métis, and Inuit students enrolled in HWDSB. The data is critical to support school and system improvement planning and accountability, and to inform policy and funding decisions, measurement and reporting. The data will support approaches to 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. HWDSB school board staff and the Ontario Ministry of Education will make use of the self-identification data to plan culturally relevant programming, services, and resources that supports First Nation, Métis, and Inuit student achievement and success.

Through HWDSB's strategic directions of Achievement matters, Engagement matters and Equity matters, the Voluntary, Confidential First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Self-Identification Policy Procedure would inform the following indicators of performance under *HWDSB's FNMI Education Policy*:

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

TERMINOLOGY:

Aboriginal: The term 'Aboriginal' includes First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples as noted under the *Canadian Constitution Act, 1982*, sections 25 and 35.

First Nation, Métis, and Inuit: For the purpose of this Policy Procedure, 'First Nation, Métis, and Inuit' are the options for self-identification and data collection within the policy for voluntary, confidential FNMI self-identification.

Community: 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.

First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Procedure: Voluntary, Confidential Self-Identification

Strength-based learning: The terms '*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.

PROCEDURES:

- 1.0 The following methods required for implementation are aligned with the recommendations put forward by the Aboriginal Education Office of the Ministry of Education in the 2007 *Building Bridges to Success for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Students* document, in addition to information collected from community consultations and best practices:
 - 1.1 Consultations with legal counsel to ensure legal obligations are understood and met (i.e. Ontario Human Rights Codes, the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and the Education Act). For example, the Aboriginal Education Office of the Ministry of Education (2007) states the following recommendations:
 - "...under the self-identification policy, a school board must understand its legal obligation with respect to the disclosing the personal information to the Ministry of Education and EQAO" (p. 12).
 - "Section 8.1 of the Education Act gives the Minister authority to collect personal information indirectly and to require a school board to disclose personal information that is reasonable and necessary for the purposes set out in section 8.1(1), including administering the Education Act and its regulations, implementing policies and guidelines made under the act, planning services, allocating resources to the services, and evaluating or monitoring the services" (p. 12).
 - Clause 4(1)(b) of the Education Quality and Accountability Act gives the EQAO the authority to require a school board to provide personal information to it to allow to carry out its obligations" (p. 12).
- 2.0 Work collaboratively to strategically assess the implementation process for the Voluntary, Confidential First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Self-Identification Policy Procedure with various school, family, and community groups to support the ways in which school boards, the EQAO, and the Ministry of Education intend to use the data.
 - 2.1 Develop an HWDSB Aboriginal Advisory Committee.
 - 2.1.1 Consultation will involve representation from HWDSB school board staff, including but not limited to, board/school administration, the Office Clerical and Technical Unit (OCTU) staff, and trustees.

First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Procedure: Voluntary, Confidential Self-Identification

- 2.1.2 Aboriginal families and communities, as well as local service delivery organizations (i.e. Hamilton Regional Indian Centre, Niwasa Aboriginal Education Programs, etc.) that are committed to supporting Aboriginal educational programs or may be affected by the policy procedure will be invited to participate.
- 3.0 Develop a culturally appropriate implementation plan to include processes for articulating the uses of the data, providing information about disclosure, and giving notice of collection, defining staff roles and responsibilities, as well as monitoring, securing, and evaluating FNMI student self-identification data and progress measures.
 - 3.1 Make considerations for involving school board staff (i.e. Office Clerical and Technical Unit (OCTU) staff, Management Information for Student Achievement (MISA) leaders, information technology staff, and the EQAO).
 - 3.2 Define roles and responsibilities.
 - 3.3 Recognize and address the four cohorts of Aboriginal students attending provincially funded schools in Ontario:
 - 3.3.1 "First Nation students who live in First Nation communities but attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools under tuition agreements.
 - 3.3.2 First Nation Students who live in the jurisdictions of school boards and attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools.
 - 3.3.3 Métis students who attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools.
 - 3.3.4 Inuit students who attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools" (Aboriginal Education Office, 2007, p. 9).
 - 3.4 Make revisions to the student registrations forms. In accordance with section, 29(2) of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ensure notice of collection states the uses of the personal information.
 - 3.5 Update eSIS in order to correspond to Management Information for Student Achievement (MISA) data collection and OnSIS for FNMI self-identification.
 - 3.6 Determine how data will be securely stored. Information should be stored in the same manner as the Ontario Student Records and protected and governed by the Freedom of Information Act.

First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Procedure: Voluntary, Confidential Self-Identification

- 3.7 Determine how data will be reported to enhance Aboriginal education programs. It should be noted that individual data will not be reported. Information will be used in the aggregate only and for the purpose of developing relevant support programs, services, and resources.
- 3.8 Provide guidelines and components for an annual report. Data collected will be evaluated on an annual basis and the results reported to the trustees and HWDSB Aboriginal Advisory Committee.
- 3.9 Policy will be reviewed annually for its overall effectiveness.
- 4.0 A public information sharing campaign will involve the creation and distribution of communication tools for educators, parents, caregivers/guardian, students, and communities. The public information sharing campaign will highlight the following: highlights of the self-identification policy; intended uses of the information collected under the policy; intended disclosure of the information collected under the policy; benefits and implications of the policy; and, clearly defined statement that self-identification is voluntary and confidential.
 - 4.1 School board staff, including frontline staff (i.e. school administrators and Office Clerical and Technical Unit (OCTU) staff) will be provided with training experiences that are supported by supplementary information materials and supports for implementation. Frontline staff will be prepared to adequately field questions from parents with regards to the information included on the registration forms.
 - 4.2 Information sessions, community-based socials, and other community outreach activities for educators, Aboriginal parents/students, and communities will be hosted by HWDSB school board staff. The information will be further shared through Aboriginal community service agency displays and newsletters.
- 5.0 Continue to develop respectful working relationships and promote partnerships with educators, parents, caregivers/guardians, students, and the Aboriginal communities.