



FIRST NATION, MÉTIS AND INUIT VOLUNTARY SELF-IDENTIFICATION

<i>Legal References:</i>	<i>Education Act Constitution Act, 1982</i>
<i>Related References:</i>	<i>Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework, Ministry of Education, January 2007 Building Bridges to Success for First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students, Ministry of Education, 2007 Policy 1008-Equity and Inclusion Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada – Final Report</i>
<i>Effective Date:</i>	<i>September 2011</i>
<i>Revisions:</i>	<i>January 11, 2016, March 22, 2021</i>
<i>Reviewed:</i>	<i>March 6, 2017, November 19, 2018,</i>

1. Preamble

- 1.1 The learning aspirations and potential of all students can be realized through a responsive, transparent and accountable policy that focuses on improved programs and services and builds on strong partnerships with parents, guardians and their communities. It is essential to understand our student population and have accurate student achievement data within the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) to improve success for all students. In accordance with the Ministry of Education's First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework, accurate student achievement data needs to be collected to assess progress towards the goals of improving First Nation, Métis and Inuit* student achievement and closing the gap in academic achievement between First Nation, Métis and Inuit and non-First Nation, Métis and Inuit students. Continued data collection and analysis will provide information for improvement planning and decision-making surrounding First Nation, Métis and Inuit student success.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 First Nation: The Original Peoples of this land now called Canada whose history is interwoven with the creation of the 1876 Indian Act, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and subsequent Indian registration system. First Nation includes status and non-status Indians.
- 2.1.1 Status: people registered under the Indian Act who identify with a First Nation community/ancestral land.
- 2.1.2 Non-Status: people who identify with a First Nation community/ancestral land but are not registered with the INAC registry system.
- 2.1.3 Métis: those who trace their descent to mixed European and First Nations parentage. The Métis National Council defines Métis as a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Indigenous peoples, is of historic Métis Nation ancestry, and is accepted by the Métis Nation. In 2003, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled the term "Métis", as referred to in Section 35 of the Constitution, does not encompass all individuals with mixed First Nation and European heritage. Rather, it refers to distinctive peoples who, in addition to their mixed ancestry, developed their own customs, way of life, and recognizable group identity separate from that of their First Nation or Inuit and European forbearers.

2.1.4 Inuit: means 'the people' in Inuktitut and generally refers to the Original Peoples of this land now called Canada whose homeland is the Canadian Arctic, which includes portions of the three Territories: Nunavut, Yukon and Northwest Territories in addition to Northern Quebec and Northern Labrador.

*First Nation, Métis and Inuit identification refers to the definition in the Constitution Act, 1982, Section 35(2), in that "First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples" include "Indian, Inuit and Métis".

3. Policy

- 3.1 It is the policy of the WRDSB to provide the opportunity for all First Nation, Métis and Inuit students and their families to voluntarily self-identify. Collection of voluntary First Nation, Métis and Inuit self-identification data will assist the WRDSB in achieving the ultimate goal of ensuring the success of all First Nation, Métis and Inuit students within the board.
- 3.2 The collection of voluntary First Nation, Métis and Inuit self-identification data will:
 - 3.2.1 increase the capacity of the WRDSB to respond to the learning and cultural needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students;
 - 3.2.2 provide quality programs, services, and resources to help create learning opportunities for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students that support improved academic achievement and identity building;
 - 3.2.2.1 information will be analysed and shared explicitly for the purpose of developing supportive programming and interventions for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students
 - 3.2.2.2 individual First Nation, Métis and Inuit students may be identified by designated WRDSB staff for the purpose of information-sharing about upcoming opportunities and programs that may be of interest and/or benefit to the identified student(s); and
 - 3.2.3 help to develop and implement strategies that facilitate increased participation by First Nation, Métis and Inuit parents, students, communities, and organizations in working to support success within an existing colonial system.
- 3.3 The data collected as a result of this policy will be assessed by school board staff on an annual basis to support both board and school improvement planning, and to develop or enhance programming that addresses the needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students.
- 3.4 All data will be securely stored to respect privacy and used only as a means to enhance First Nation, Métis and Inuit education programs. Data is protected and governed by the Municipal Freedom of Information and Privacy of Students Act for School Boards.