

Ministry of Education

Continuing the Journey:
Preliminary Report on the Implementation of the
Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education
Policy Framework

Fall
2012

Contents

- INTRODUCTION..... 1
 - Purpose of the Preliminary Report 1
 - Submission of Feedback..... 1
 - 2013 Progress Report..... 1
- HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES AND KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS..... 2
 - Using Data to Support Student Achievement..... 2
 - Supporting Students 2
 - Supporting Educators..... 3
 - Engagement and Awareness Building..... 3
- VOLUNTARY ABORIGINAL STUDENT SELF-IDENTIFICATION 4
 - Proposed Design of Baseline Data on Aboriginal Student Achievement..... 4
 - Cohorts..... 5
 - Baseline Year..... 5
- Critical Questions to Guide Framework Implementation (2013–16) 6
 - Questions for Consideration 7

INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Education is committed to achieving excellence in education for all students, including First Nation, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) students. In January 2007, the ministry launched its Aboriginal Education Strategy, which outlines the government's plan for supporting the learning and achievement of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students and for raising the awareness and knowledge of all students about First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples' cultures, histories and perspectives in provincially funded schools throughout Ontario.

Harmonized with the ministry's three education goals, the [Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework](#) provides the strategic policy context within which the ministry, school boards and schools are working to improve the learning outcomes of Aboriginal students attending provincially funded elementary and secondary schools in Ontario.

Purpose of the Preliminary Report

Six years after the launch of the Aboriginal Education Strategy, Aboriginal education continues to be a key priority for the Ministry of Education. Tremendous work has been accomplished through the first six years of implementation and as we enter the next phase, we acknowledge that there is much more work to do.

Within the framework, the ministry committed to reporting on implementation progress every three years. The first progress report was released in 2009; the second will be released in Spring 2013.

In advance of the Spring 2013 progress report, the Ministry is releasing this preliminary report. The preliminary report serves as a tool for dialogue. It provides an overview of the work undertaken by the ministry, school boards, schools and community partners and outlines the ministry's proposed approach to reporting Aboriginal student self-identification data. The intended purpose is to invite feedback to help guide implementation of the framework through to 2016 and beyond.

Submission of Feedback

Responses are welcome through written submissions. Critical questions for your consideration are included on page 7. Written responses may be submitted to the Aboriginal Education Office no later than January 31, 2013:

Aboriginal Education Office
900 Bay St, 12th Floor, Mowat Block
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

T: 416.326.3561
F: 416.212.3140
E: jennifer.feasby@ontario.ca

2013 Progress Report

The Spring 2013 progress report will include: highlights of the work undertaken to date; Ontario's first baseline data on Aboriginal student achievement based on voluntary, confidential Aboriginal student self-identification; and an Implementation Plan outline identifying key components necessary for advancing the critical goals of the strategy.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES AND KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework, 2007* includes ten performance measures (see page 6 of the present document) that are used to assess the progress made in the implementation of the framework. In the first progress report, *Sound Foundations for the Road Ahead, 2009*, these performance measures were grouped under the following four key priority areas:

- Using Data to Support Student Achievement
- Supporting Students
- Supporting Educators
- Engagement and Awareness Building

These four categories have been the focus of the implementation of the framework as we moved from readying the system to deepening implementation. Over the past three years, relationships have been strengthened, targeted supports for students and educators have been implemented, and understanding and awareness about First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples, histories and perspectives has increased throughout the provincial education system. Through additional supports, including the development of new classroom resources and related professional development opportunities, teachers are better equipped to integrate Aboriginal perspectives into the classroom.

Some of our activities and accomplishments in the four key priority areas are as follows.

Using Data to Support Student Achievement (Performance Measures 1–4)

- As of November 2012, **74 of 76 school boards and school authorities** have approved voluntary, confidential Aboriginal student self-identification policies (fewer than 10 boards had policies prior to 2007).
- In October 2009, the ministry implemented the collection of **self-identified Aboriginal student** data through the ministry's provincial data collection system.
- As of October 2011, over **23,000 First Nation, Métis and Inuit students** have self-identified (up from just over 8,500 in 2009).

Supporting Students (Performance Measures 5–6)

- **First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Supplement** (part of Grants for Student Needs (GSN)) – The 2012–13 supplement is projected to be **\$40.2M** (up from \$10.5M in 2007 when it was first introduced). This increase is due, in part, to the significant increases in enrolment in Native Studies and Native Languages courses:
 - **Native Language courses:** In 2010–11, **5,943 students** were enrolled, up from 4,522 in 2005–06
 - **Native Studies courses:** In 2010–11, **10,598 students** were enrolled, up from 1,016 in 2005–06
- **Alternative Secondary School Programs within Native Friendship Centres Program (ASSP)** – Delivered in partnership with the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC) since 1991, the ASSP program is currently being delivered by 11 friendship centres in collaboration with 11 boards to address

the needs of disengaged urban Aboriginal students and to help them complete their secondary school diploma.

- Since 2007, the ministry has funded over **1,000 board projects** that promote collaborative approaches with First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities on initiatives including student engagement, mentoring, self-identification policy development and awareness building. Board projects have supported implementation activities aligned with all 10 of the performance measures outlined in the framework.

Supporting Educators (Performance Measure 7)

- **Aboriginal Perspectives: A Teacher's Toolkit and User's Guide** – A collection of electronic resources (available on the ministry's [website](#)) developed by educators from across Ontario to help elementary and secondary teachers bring Aboriginal perspectives into their classrooms to improve the knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. As of 2012, over **80,000 copies have been distributed** and many more have been accessed electronically. In 2011–12 alone, **over 350 teachers received training** on the *Toolkit* (training is ongoing).
- **Curriculum Review** – Since 2003, representatives of First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities and organizations have participated in the ministry's curriculum review process, providing input towards making curriculum documents more inclusive of Aboriginal perspectives and responsive to Aboriginal learners.
- **Circle of Light Conferences** – Held in 2007 (500 participants), 2009 (750 participants), and 2011 (1,000 participants), the conferences were professional development events that provided opportunities to build relationships and share best practices between the provincial and First Nation/federal education systems.

Engagement and Awareness Building (Performance Measures 8–10)

- Approximately 50 of 72 boards have established **First Nation, Métis and Inuit Advisory Councils**. This is a significant improvement from 2009, when approximately 30 boards had such councils. First Nation, Métis and Inuit Advisory Councils have facilitated and supported the deepening of the implementation of the framework within their respective school boards by developing working relationships with the community, increasing communication through the sharing of information and success stories and working collaboratively to improve self-identification policies.
- In 2006, the **Minister's Partnership Table** was expanded to include the Ontario Regional Chief, and the president of the Métis Nation of Ontario.
- 96 per cent of boards that responded to the Spring 2012 board survey indicated that they have a **designated Aboriginal Education Lead**. The role of the Aboriginal Education Lead has proven invaluable in many boards for leading the implementation of programs and initiatives to support Aboriginal student achievement, raise awareness and understanding of First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures, histories and perspectives and champion the Aboriginal Education Strategy within boards, schools and classrooms.
- The ministry entered into the **Education Partnerships Program** (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada) tripartite discussions with the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) and the federal government in 2009 and tripartite discussions with Grand Council Treaty #3 and the federal government in 2010. Memorandums of understanding and action plans are being developed.

VOLUNTARY ABORIGINAL STUDENT SELF-IDENTIFICATION

The Ministry of Education has committed to providing progress reports on the implementation of the framework, based on the framework's ten performance measures. Of the ten performance measures, the following three involve reporting student achievement indicators for self-identified FNMI students:

- Significant increase in the percentage of FNMI students meeting provincial standards on province-wide assessments in reading, writing and mathematics;
- Significant increase in the graduation rates of FNMI students; and
- Significant improvement in FNMI student achievement.

The collection and use of Aboriginal student self-identification data will allow the ministry to report on progress made to date regarding these three performance measures as well as to report on Aboriginal student achievement moving forward.

The ministry recognizes the need for a reliable and accurate source of data on Aboriginal students attending provincially funded elementary and secondary schools. This data will be used to:

- enable schools and school boards to understand the demographics of the First Nation, Métis and Inuit learners in schools in their boards and to implement targeted strategies to build on the strengths and meet the specific needs of those students; and
- enable the ministry to use the data reported by school boards, at an aggregate provincial level, to develop policies and programs that better support student achievement across the province. Data will be used to report on results achieved and to identify areas for improvement.

Ultimately, self-identification data will enable the ministry to show the progress made through implementing the framework in improving the academic achievement of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students and closing the gap in student achievement between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners.

The ministry also recognizes that strong working relationships based on trust and the shared goal of improving the learning outcomes of Aboriginal students are essential to Aboriginal students' and families' decisions to self-identify. The ministry has supported school boards in developing their Voluntary, Confidential Aboriginal Student Self-Identification policies, enabling boards to tailor their policies to meet the needs and expectations of local Aboriginal communities and families. Through these policies, Aboriginal students have the option to voluntarily self-identify as First Nation, Métis or Inuit.

Proposed Design of Baseline Data on Aboriginal Student Achievement

Currently, the Ministry of Education and the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) report the indicators for all students in the province (provincial averages). The ministry is proposing to use these same data indicators to create provincial baseline data on Aboriginal student achievement as a means of assessing gaps in achievement between Aboriginal students and all students. For future years, the ministry is proposing to use these indicators to assess progress made in improving Aboriginal student achievement and in closing the gaps in achievement between Aboriginal students and all students.

Performance Measures	Indicator(s)
Significant increase in the percentage of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students meeting provincial standards on province-wide assessments in reading, writing and mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Grade 3 Reading, Writing, and Math EQAO assessment results ➤ Grade 6 Reading, Writing, and Math EQAO assessment results ➤ Grade 9 Math EQAO assessment results ➤ Grade 10 OSSLT EQAO assessment results
Significant improvement in First Nation, Métis and Inuit student achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Credit Accumulation
Significant increase in the graduation rates of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students	Not available at this time

Cohorts

Recognizing the diversity of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students, the ministry is proposing to report on each of these three cohorts separately, as opposed to a single Aboriginal group. This allows for a stronger understanding of the unique needs of each cohort and provides an opportunity to build on effective strategies to support the success of all Aboriginal students.

The public reporting of baseline data will include aggregate data at the provincial level only.

Baseline Year

The Aboriginal student achievement baseline data will include all students who self-identified by June 2012 and their EQAO results for the 2011–12 school year.

The number of students who choose to self-identify is expected to increase as more boards collect the information and report their data to the ministry. As such, the cohort of students is expected to increase over the next several years.

Preliminary analysis of data for the baseline year suggests that there are significant gaps between the achievement of self-identified First Nation, Métis and Inuit students and all students. Publicly reporting on these differences is part of the ministry's commitment to be accountable for increased levels of achievement, and for identifying areas for improvement.

Critical Questions to Guide Framework Implementation (2013–16)

The ministry has achieved many successes in implementing key commitments identified in the [Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework](#). The approach has been an incremental one, each year building on the successes and momentum of the last. Investments since the creation of the Aboriginal Education Office in 2006 have been used to build the capacity within the ministry and the sector to design and deliver on a successful agenda aimed at increasing Aboriginal student achievement, closing the achievement gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners, and increasing public confidence in this work, including the establishment of positive working relationships with First Nation, Métis and Inuit families, communities and organizations.

The next phase of implementation will sustain the critical activities established in the first six years to support system-wide integration of Aboriginal perspectives into the provincial education system. It will also strengthen the collaborative relationships with First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities, organizations and education partners necessary to ensure the cooperative approaches needed to close the achievement gap for Aboriginal learners.

The implementation of the framework within boards and schools varies in response to local needs and circumstances. This approach will be maintained as implementation continues.

As the ministry moves forward with the implementation of the Aboriginal Education Strategy, grounded in the strategies and initiatives articulated in the framework, the feedback received in response to this preliminary report will be valuable to guiding the ministry’s considerations in developing an implementation plan for 2013–16, the elements of which are outlined below.

The performance measures below guide the ministry’s work to improve education outcomes for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students and to increase the knowledge and awareness of all students about the histories, cultures and perspectives of Aboriginal peoples.

Goals	Performance Measures	Activities 2013–16	Indicators of Success	Expected Results/ Outcomes
Goal 1: High Level of Student Achievement	1. Significant increase in the percentage of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students meeting provincial standards on province-wide assessments in reading, writing and mathematics			
	2. Significant increase in the number of First Nation, Métis and Inuit teaching and non-teaching staff in school boards across Ontario			
Goal 2: Reduce Gaps in Student Achievement	3. Significant increase in the graduation rate of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students			
	4. Significant improvement in First Nation, Métis and Inuit student achievement			

Goals	Performance Measures	Activities 2013–16	Indicators of Success	Expected Results/ Outcomes
Goal 2: Reduce Gaps in Student Achievement <i>(continued)</i>	5. Significant improvement in First Nation, Métis and Inuit students' self-esteem			
	6. Increased collaboration between First Nation education authorities and school boards to ensure that First Nation students in First Nation communities receive the preparation they need to succeed when they make the transition to provincially funded schools			
	7. Increased satisfaction among educators in provincially funded schools with respect to targeted professional development and resources designed to help them serve First Nation, Métis and Inuit students more effectively			
Goal 3: High Levels of Public Confidence	8. Increased participation of First Nation, Métis and Inuit parents in the education of their children			
	9. Increased opportunities for knowledge sharing, collaboration, and issue resolution among Aboriginal communities, First Nation governments and education authorities, schools, school boards and the Ministry of Education			
	10. Integration of educational opportunities to significantly improve the knowledge of all students and educators in Ontario about the rich cultures and histories of First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples			

The performance measures and elements of the implementation plan have been listed here for your reference as you consider and reflect upon ways to continue our work together. We have also provided some critical questions to assist in your considerations of our work going forward with regard to improving student achievement and closing the achievement gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

Questions for Consideration

The ministry welcomes responses to the following questions through a written submission:

Q1. Building on the relationships already forged, how can we continue to work together at all levels – locally, regionally and provincially – to further strengthen our connections to address the needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students?

- Q2. What specific initiatives, programs and strategies have proven to be successful in creating a positive learning environment and improving the outcomes of First Nation, Métis and Inuit learners?**
- Q3. What new initiatives, programs, and areas merit further exploration?**
- Q4. What strategies should be considered to further encourage students and families to engage in the confidential, voluntary Aboriginal student self-identification initiative?**

Thank you for your time and careful consideration.

We look forward to our ongoing collaboration in support of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students.