

**ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION****SELF-IDENTIFICATION****Rationale:**

The learning aspirations and potentials of Aboriginal students can be realized through a responsive, transparent and accountable policy that focuses on improved programs and services and builds on strong partnerships with Aboriginal parents and their communities. Student achievement data needs to be collected and aggregated related to the performance of Aboriginal students. This is to determine whether programs currently delivered offer similar opportunities for success as for other students. Continued data collection and analysis will provide information for future decision-making surrounding Aboriginal student success.

Through voluntary self-identification policies, all boards in Ontario are now collecting data related to Aboriginal students attending our schools. Through the support of EQAO and other educational related organizations, achievement and other data can be collected and reviewed. If necessary, programs can be put in place to address student needs.

The Ministry of Education's Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Education Policy Framework, 2007 emphasizes the importance of having accurate and reliable data in order to assess progress towards the goal of improving Aboriginal student achievement.

**Framework Goals:**

The Superior North Catholic District School Board has established the following goals for Aboriginal education within its jurisdiction:

- To provide high quality learning opportunities that are responsive, flexible, and accessible to the learner.
- To continue to set high expectations for learner achievement in supported learning environments.
- To improve EQAO test scores for Aboriginal students.
- To increase the retention rate of Aboriginal students.
- To increase the graduation rates of Aboriginal students.
- To ensure that learners are well prepared for participation in post-secondary studies and the world of work.
- To promote effective, respectful working relationships and partnerships with Aboriginal parents and the general Aboriginal community.

**Guiding Principles:**

This policy will evolve as the Board seeks to improve achievement and program delivery for Aboriginal students. For implementation and future refinement of the policy, the following principles will continue to guide us:

- Transparency
- Inclusiveness
- Innovation
- Learner-Centered
- Equitable
- Responsive
- Collaborative
- Respect Individual Privacy And Dignity
- Results Oriented
- Acknowledge And Reflect Cultural Diversity
- Contribute To The Knowledge Base Through Research

**Security Protocol:**

All data will be securely stored to respect privacy and used only as a means to enhance Aboriginal education programs within the Superior North Catholic District School Board and the province of Ontario.

Data will be treated in the same manner as Ontario Student Records and protected and governed by the Freedom of Information Act.

Individual data will only be communicated to education related organizations after individual authorization has been obtained for that purpose. The information gathered by these organizations are used in aggregate only and for the purpose of developing and implementing supportive programs.

**Self-Identification Process:**

Families of Aboriginal ancestry who are prepared to share this information, can indicate the proper Aboriginal ID checkbox (e.g. First Nation, Inuit or Métis) on our student registration forms. First Nation now covers both First Nation students living on reserve, as well as off reserve.

Even though a child may be recognized as an Aboriginal student living on reserve covered by a tuition agreement, if a student has not voluntarily self-identified, the student's Aboriginal status data will not be shared with these educational related organizations.

Students who previously identified themselves as First Nation students living on reserve covered by a tuition agreement, will now be identified as First Nation, as the single First Nation cohort, covering voluntary self-identified First Nation students living both on and off reserve.

**Evaluation & Communication:**

The data collected as a result of this policy, will be evaluated on an annual basis and the results reported to the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee and the Superior North Catholic District School Board.

Individual data of students who have voluntarily self-identified themselves as Aboriginal, will only be communicated to educational related organizations, who in turn, only use this information in an aggregated basis for the purpose of developing and implementing supportive programs. Existing organizations that wish to obtain aggregate Aboriginal student data and who follow the above principle are: EQAO, Aboriginal Education Office of the Ministry of Education, and OnSIS. Data collected by these organizations will be shared with the Ministry. However, identifiable student information is de-personalized and aggregated prior to any public reporting. Unless required by law, the Ministry does not disclose 'aggregate data' when publicly reporting information if there are five or fewer people involved. It is important to note that the Ministry and these organizations are subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) and the Board are all required to protect the privacy of the personal information associated with the voluntary self-identification in accordance with this act.

All Aboriginal communities have indicated they are interested in knowing about the achievement of their children. Certain aggregated achievement data will be publicly available to these groups. As well, publicly available aggregated achievement data will be communicated with our Board's Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee, and interested First Nations with a tuition agreement in place with our Board.

**Guiding Principles:**

Attached is the Self-Identification Policy produced by NOEL and the Northern Aboriginal Education Circle. The brochure explains the purpose and implications of a self-identification policy.

●  
*Some Guiding  
Principles in Policy  
Development*

- ★ Collaborative
- ★ Inclusive
- ★ Results oriented
- ★ Learner-centered
- ★ Respect the privacy and dignity of our students and their families.



## *Policy Implications*

It is our hope that the self-identification process would provide data that would lead to increased funding for Aboriginal education. This money would be used to bring specific programs to schools to increase the success of Aboriginal students.

All data would be securely stored to respect privacy and used only as a means to enhance Aboriginal education programs. Data will be treated in the same manner as Ontario Student Records and protected and governed by the Freedom of Information Act. Individual data will not be communicated. The information gathered will be used in the aggregate only.

**Northern Ontario Educational Leaders**  
[www.noelonline.ca](http://www.noelonline.ca)  
and  
**Northern Aboriginal Education Circle**  
<http://naec.7generations.org>

**Northern Ontario Educational Leaders  
and  
Northern Aboriginal Education Circle**

● LET'S TALK ABOUT  
A SELF-  
IDENTIFICATION  
POLICY



A way to increase Aboriginal students' success by providing support and accountability.

## *Purpose*

This brochure provides information to assist in the discussion on the development of a self-identification policy with Aboriginal educators, parents and political representatives.

## *Some Background*

A self-identification policy was first introduced to the NOEL\*/NAEC\* Joint Aboriginal Steering Committee at the October, 2003 Forum on Aboriginal Education. A policy is used in British Columbia as a mechanism to gather data, flow funding (\$950.00 for every self-identified student) and negotiate agreements between Aboriginals and school boards.

Consequently, the NOEL/NAEC Joint Aboriginal Steering Committee re-

quested funding from the Ministry of Education to proceed in developing such a policy. When funding was confirmed the task of self-identification policy development was assigned as a shared responsibility of the Kenora Catholic District School Board and the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board, led in each case by the respective Director of Education.

## *Why the Policy?*

1. To obtain resources from the Ministry of Education in order to develop and implement programs that respond to the particular needs of Aboriginal students.
2. To direct resources to Aboriginal educational projects that:
  - ★ Provide high quality learning opportunities that directly address the needs



of Aboriginal students experiencing gaps in their education.

- ★ Improve EQAO test scores for Aboriginal students.
  - ★ Improve the retention rate of Aboriginal students in schools.
  - ★ Increase graduation rates for Aboriginal students and help ensure entrance into post secondary studies and the world of work.
3. To promote effective working relationships with the Aboriginal community and the Boards of Education through parent involvement.



**Northern Ontario Educational Leaders**  
[www.noelonline.ca](http://www.noelonline.ca)  
and  
**Northern Aboriginal Education Circle**  
<http://naec.7generations.org>