

POLICY: VOLUNTARY INDIGENOUS STUDENT SELF-IDENTIFICATION		#	722
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## A: POLICY

1. 1.1 It is the policy of the Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board to provide programs and supports for Indigenous students who face specific learning challenges or who have gaps in their education
- 1.2 All Indigenous students and their parents have the right to voluntarily self-identify so that they may receive supportive programming. The Board has established a Voluntary Indigenous Student Self-Identification procedure to identify students as Indigenous and subsequently, to collect and aggregate student achievement data for Indigenous students.
- 1.3 The Board provides supportive programming for Indigenous students that is based on the image of the learner found in the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations. The Board sees each student as a child of God and is committed to helping each-student become the person that God has called him or her to be.

## B: GUIDELINES

### 2. Rationale

- 2.1 The learning aspirations and potential of Indigenous students are best-addressed responsive and appropriate programs and services, supported by strong partnerships with Indigenous parents and their communities.
- 2.2 To measure the impact of programs and services for Indigenous students and to track student success, achievement data for Indigenous students is collected and aggregated. It is reviewed and used to inform decisions related to ongoing programming and supports for Indigenous students.

### 3. Definitions

- 3.1 Indigenous as used in this policy comes from the definition from Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, and is defined, as 'Indigenous peoples' is a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. Often, 'Aboriginal peoples' is also used, which follows the definition of the Constitution Act, 1982, Section 35(2): "Aboriginal peoples include First Nation Peoples, Inuit and Métis".
- 3.2 **First Nation** peoples include both status and non-status Indians.
  - **Status Indian** refers to an Indigenous person registered under the Indian Act of Indian and Northern Affairs of Canada holding band membership rights.
  - **Non-status Indian** refers to a person with Indigenous descent but does not meet the requirements of the Indian Act of Indigenous and Northern Affairs of Canada; thus, is not entitled to band membership rights.
  - **Métis** is one who has a unique mix of First Nation and European ancestry/culture; self-identifies as Métis; belongs to an historic Métis community or has ancestral ties to one.

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- **Inuit** is a distinct group of Indigenous people who have ancestral ties to Northern Canada (Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Northern Québec and Northern Labrador).

#### 4. Guiding Principles

4.1 This policy will evolve as the Board seeks to improve achievement and program delivery for Indigenous 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
- Respectful of individual privacy and dignity
- Results-oriented
- Reflective of cultural diversity
- Contributing to the knowledge base through research

#### **C: GOALS FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS**

5. The Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board has established the following goals for Indigenous education within its jurisdiction:

- 5.1 To provide high quality learning experiences that are responsive to student needs.
- 5.2 To provide learning environments that is inclusive, welcoming and supportive.
- 5.3 To set high expectations for student achievement.
- 5.4 To improve EQAO test scores for Aboriginal students.
- 5.5 To increase the retention rate of Indigenous students.
- 5.6 To increase the graduation rate of Indigenous students.
- 5.7 To ensure that Indigenous students are well prepared for post-secondary studies and the world of work.
- 5.8 To support staff in their understanding of and teaching of Indigenous students.
- 5.9 To promote effective, respectful working relationships and partnerships with Indigenous parents and the general Indigenous community.

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**E: SECURE HANDLING AND USE OF DATA**

6. 6.1 All data related to Indigenous self-identification and Indigenous education will kept secure and confidential according to Ministry requirements set out in the **Ontario Student Record (OSR) Guideline (2000)**, and protected and governed by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- 6.2 Indigenous student data will be used only as a means to enhance Indigenous education programs within the Board. It will be shared with the Ontario Ministry of Education as required.
- 6.3 *Individual* student data will not be communicated. Data will be used in the aggregate only and for the purpose of developing and implementing supportive programs.
- 6.4 The data collected as a result of this policy will be evaluated on an annual basis and the results reported to the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee and the Board of Trustees.