

MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities

FROM: Don Young
Director
Education Statistics and Analysis Branch

Alayne Bigwin
Director
Aboriginal Education Office

DATE: April 15, 2010

SUBJECT: MISA Memo
Managing Information for Student Achievement (MISA)
▪ Voluntary, Confidential Aboriginal Student Self-Identification

Voluntary, Confidential Aboriginal Student Self-Identification:

The availability of data on Aboriginal student achievement in Ontario's provincially funded school system is a critical foundation for the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs to support the needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students. The development of effective self-identification policies by Ontario school boards is a significant step toward ensuring that First Nation, Métis and Inuit students receive the highest possible quality of education, and that all Ontario students benefit from an appreciation of the richness of Aboriginal cultures and the important contributions of First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities to Ontario's cultural, economic and social future.

The availability of Aboriginal student self-identification data will allow the ministry to establish a baseline for tracking student achievement performance measures. In preparation for province-wide inclusion of this data in the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS), the ministry launched a pilot project in four district school boards- Rainy River, Kenora Catholic, Algoma and Kawartha Pine Ridge - to document effective practices in the collection of this data and to resolve any issues prior to province-wide implementation. This information has been shared with all boards to facilitate data collection province-wide.

As you are aware, in April 2007, the ministry released *Building Bridges to Success for First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students*, a guide to developing Aboriginal student self-identification policies and practices and data collection methodologies. The Ministry is pleased with the progress that has been made to date and has provided funding and advice to boards as they develop local self-identification policies.

As of February 2010, 43 boards and/or school authorities have approved policies in place and an additional 29 are in the process of developing their policies.

OnSIS Aboriginal Student Self-Identification Data Collection

In October 2009, the ministry implemented the collection of Aboriginal student self-identification information from all provincially funded boards with self-identification policies in place.

Using lessons learned through the 2008-09 pilot projects, revisions were made to the manner in which OnSIS collects Aboriginal student self-identification. Beginning with the 2009-10 collection, the Aboriginal self-identification will be captured as a flag, separate from the students' status in Canada. Details of this enhancement were communicated to school boards in July of 2009.

The following Q and A's were developed based on feedback from schools and boards during recent FNMI policy development and implementation regional meetings and as schools and boards prepared to submit Aboriginal self-identification data to the Ministry of Education through OnSIS.

We look forward to working with you as we move towards full implementation of this initiative.

Original signed by

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