





# A Solid Foundation

Second Progress Report on the  
Implementation of the Ontario  
First Nation, Métis, and Inuit  
Education Policy Framework



2013

Aboriginal perspectives bring the curriculum to life!



support every child  
reach every student

 Ontario

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Une publication équivalente est disponible en français sous le titre suivant: *De solides bases : Deuxième rapport d'étape sur la mise en oeuvre du Cadre d'élaboration des politiques de l'Ontario en éducation des Premières Nations, des Métis et des Inuits, 2013.*

This publication is available on the Ministry of Education's website, at [www.ontario.ca/edu](http://www.ontario.ca/edu).



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# 1

## Introduction



### 1.1 Background

The Ministry of Education is committed to improving Aboriginal education in Ontario and closing the achievement gap between Aboriginal students and all students. In 2007, the ministry launched its Aboriginal Education Strategy with the release of the *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (the Framework). The Framework provides the strategic policy context within which the Ministry of Education, school boards and schools are working to improve the academic achievement and learning outcomes of the Aboriginal students who attend Ontario's provincially funded elementary and secondary schools and to raise the awareness and knowledge of all students about First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples' cultures, histories and perspectives.

Aboriginal education remains a key priority for the ministry. In this regard, the ministry continues to be focused on reaching two primary objectives by the year 2016 – to improve achievement among First Nation, Métis and Inuit students and to close the achievement gap between Aboriginal students and all students.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.2 The purpose of this report

In the Framework, the ministry made a commitment to publicly report on progress in implementation. To this end, the ministry has published:

- *Sound Foundations for the Road Ahead*, a progress report released in fall 2009; and

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<sup>1</sup> In this document “all students” is used to refer to all students in English-language and French-language schools in Ontario, including students who have self-identified and the rest of the student population, which includes those who are Aboriginal and have not self-identified. The terms “all English-language students” and “all English students” are abbreviated forms referring to “all students in provincially funded English-language schools in Ontario”. The terms “all French-language students” and “all French students” are abbreviations of “all students in provincially funded French-language schools in Ontario”.



- *Continuing the Journey: Preliminary Report on the Implementation of the Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework*, released in fall 2012. The report served as a tool for dialogue and invited feedback and input into this second progress report as well as the development of an implementation plan through to 2016 and beyond.

In addition, in advance of the release of this report, the Minister reconvened the Minister's Advisory Council on First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education to share progress made to date on the implementation of the Framework. The Council is a working forum for continued engagement with key First Nation, Métis and Inuit partners and other education stakeholders.

While the six years since the launch of the Aboriginal Education Strategy (the Strategy) and the Framework have seen many accomplishments, the ministry acknowledges that there is much more work to be done in the next phase of implementation.

The focus between 2007 and 2013 has been to support:

- **improvement planning and accountability, policy and funding decisions, measurement, and reporting** – supporting boards to develop and implement voluntary, confidential Aboriginal student self-identification policies;
- **board capacity building** – continuing the development of curriculum resources on Aboriginal perspectives and related training; supporting educators' and school leaders' professional development; and
- **relationship-building with Aboriginal communities** – establishing and maintaining effective partnerships with Aboriginal education partners and the federal government.

This second progress report aligns with the *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* guiding principles and includes:

- highlights of the Framework implementation successes to date;
- Ontario's first baseline data on Aboriginal student achievement based on voluntary, confidential Aboriginal student self-identification;
- priorities for continued Framework implementation; and
- next steps for advancing the critical goals of the Strategy.

Supporting Aboriginal students is a shared responsibility. The accomplishments outlined in this report would not have been possible without successful partnership building with district school boards; schools; parents; teachers; First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities and organizations; and many other committed education partners.

### 1.3 Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework

The Framework is guided by the following principles:

#### 1. Excellence and accountability

The Government of Ontario believes quality education is essential for the continuing development of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. The academic achievement of every First Nation, Métis and Inuit student is supported through the delivery of quality education. The Ministry of Education provides support and resources adapted to the specific needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students.

#### 2. Equity and respect for diversity

The Government of Ontario creates and nurtures an academic environment for every First Nation, Métis and Inuit student that promotes the development of a positive personal and cultural identity, as well as a sense of belonging to both Aboriginal and wider communities.

The Government of Ontario creates and supports an academic environment that fosters First Nation, Métis and Inuit languages and cultures. It acknowledges the diversity found in First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities, and endorses learning about First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures, histories, and perspectives in the provincial education system.

#### 3. Inclusiveness, cooperation and shared responsibility

Cooperation among governments, ministries, educational institutions (including the Ontario College of Teachers and faculties of education), and First Nation, Métis and Inuit families, communities, and organizations is essential for the implementation of education programs and services designed to meet the specific needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students, regardless of where they live.

#### 4. Respect for constitutional and treaty rights

The Government of Ontario respects Aboriginal and treaty rights protected by Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.



# 2

## Summary of Activities and Key Accomplishments

### 2.1 Overall goals and objectives between 2006 and 2012

Phase I goals of Framework implementation (2006 to 2008) focused on “readying the system”. Key milestones achieved during this timeframe included:

- establishment of the Aboriginal Education Office;
- launch of the *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework*;
- introduction of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Supplement, a component of the Grants for Student Needs (GSN);
- introduction of funding to school boards for projects supporting Framework implementation;
- development of a policy resource for voluntary, confidential Aboriginal student self-identification; and
- board engagement and community outreach.

Phase 2 goals of Framework implementation (2009 to 2012) focused on deepening implementation. Key milestones achieved during this timeframe included:

- formalization of external partnerships/collaborations at provincial, regional and local levels;
- implementation of policies for voluntary, confidential Aboriginal student self-identification; and
- Aboriginal student self-identification data collection and analysis.

Over the past three years, relationships with school boards; schools; parents; teachers; and First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities and organizations have become stronger. Activities have enhanced targeted supports for students and educators. Knowledge and awareness of First Nation, Métis and Inuit histories, cultures and perspectives have increased throughout the provincial education system.



Through additional supports, including classroom resources and professional development opportunities, teachers are also better equipped to embed Aboriginal perspectives into the classroom.

## 2.2 Performance assessment measures

The *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* includes ten performance measures to assess progress in implementing the Framework. The first progress report, *Sound Foundations for the Road Ahead* (2009), grouped these performance measures into four key priority areas that became the focus of the Strategy implementation. Figure 1 provides a summary of the performance measures in both documents.



**Figure 1: Performance Measures**

Ten performance measures in <i>The Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework, 2007</i>	Key priority areas in <i>Sound Foundations for the Road Ahead, 2009</i>
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	<b>1. Using data to support student achievement</b>
2. Significant increase in the number of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit teaching and non-teaching staff in school boards across Ontario	
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	
5. Significant improvement in First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students' self-esteem	<b>2. Supporting students</b>
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	<b>3. Supporting educators</b>
8. Increased participation of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit parents in the education of their children	<b>4. Engagement and awareness building</b>
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	

# 3

## Using Data to Support Student Achievement



### 3.1 Establishing Ontario's first baseline data on Aboriginal student achievement

Ontario recognizes the need for accurate and reliable sources of data about Aboriginal students attending provincially funded elementary and secondary schools. This data is necessary to:

- assess Ontario's progress in supporting all Aboriginal students in reaching their full potential;
- assess progress towards student achievement performance measures;
- identify and close the achievement gap between Aboriginal students and all students;
- understand the needs and challenges facing Aboriginal learners;
- assess progress achieved as a result of implementing targeted strategies and initiatives designed to improve and advance the academic achievement of Aboriginal students;
- assist school boards in improving programs and supports for Aboriginal students; and
- enable boards to focus their efforts on effective student achievement strategies.

Ontario also recognizes that strong working relationships and partnerships based on trust and the shared goal of improving learning outcomes of Aboriginal students are essential to Aboriginal students' and families' decisions to self-identify.

#### 3.1.1 Voluntary, confidential Aboriginal student self-identification

The ministry provided funding for district school board projects to support the ongoing development and implementation of policies that provide Aboriginal students with the option to voluntarily and confidentially self-identify as First Nation, Métis or Inuit. Ministry funding supported

initiatives for community engagement around self-identification and related professional learning opportunities for school board staff.

The ministry's Aboriginal Education Office field staff were pivotal in providing direct support to boards to help them develop and implement policies for voluntary, confidential Aboriginal student self-identification.

Supports provided to boards continue to enable boards to tailor their policies to meet the needs and expectations of local First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities and families.

As a result, since 2007, school boards have made significant progress in developing and implementing Aboriginal student self-identification policies and collecting related data.

- **In October 2009, when the ministry implemented the provincial collection of self-identification data** through the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS), 34 school boards submitted data to OnSIS, providing a total of 8,684 self-identified First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students.
- **Preliminary October 2012 data** shows that 70 school boards had reported to the ministry and 28,079 students (22,322 First Nation; 5,331 Métis; and 426 Inuit) had self-identified.

While self-identification data does not yet include all Aboriginal students, it does provide a baseline against which to assess progress in Aboriginal student self-identification, achievement levels and closing the achievement gap.

### **Establishing baseline data on Aboriginal student achievement**

The ministry established baseline data on Aboriginal student achievement through individual district school boards' policies on voluntary, confidential Aboriginal student self-identification and provincially through the ministry's provincial data collection system, the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS).

**As of April 2013, all 76 school boards and school authorities have established voluntary, confidential Aboriginal student self-identification policies (fewer than 10 boards had policies prior to 2007).**



### 3.1.2 Data collected through voluntary, confidential Aboriginal student self-identification

Prior to the collection of data through policies for voluntary, confidential Aboriginal student self-identification, the only source of information about the Aboriginal population in Ontario was from Statistics Canada. Data from the Census of Population did not tell us how many school-aged Aboriginal learners were attending provincially funded elementary and secondary schools. Statistics Canada data does, however, provide an estimate of the school-aged Aboriginal population, against which we can measure progress in Aboriginal student self-identification.

According to the 2006 census, Ontario's school-aged Aboriginal population (ages 5–19) was 66,850. Preliminary information from the *Statistics Canada 2011 National Household Survey* tells us that Ontario's school-aged Aboriginal population (ages 5–19) has grown significantly, to approximately 78,000, including:

- 55,185 First Nation;
- 19,045 Métis;
- 1,055 Inuit; and
- 2,710 multiple or other identities.

According to nominal roll data for 2011–12 from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), approximately 14,000 First Nation students are living on reserve and attending First Nation–operated schools. Therefore, it is estimated that 64,000 of the approximately 78,000 Aboriginal students may be attending provincially funded elementary and secondary schools.

Preliminary October 2012 data from OnSIS indicates that approximately 44% of the estimated 64,000 Aboriginal students attending provincially funded schools have self-identified.

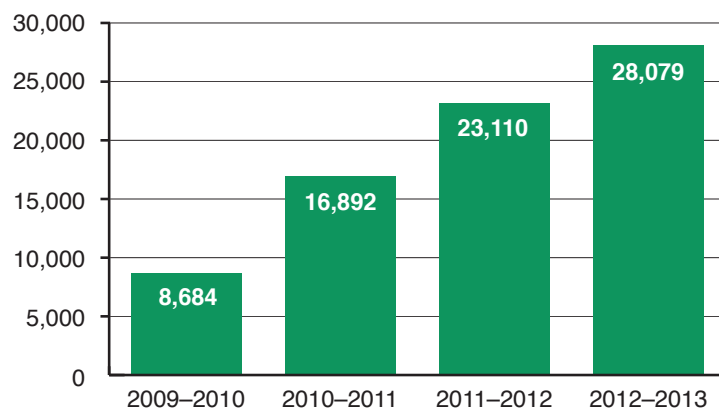
Accurate and reliable student-level data is critical for assessing progress in First Nation, Métis and Inuit student achievement; supporting improvement planning and accountability across all school boards and school authorities; informing policy and funding decisions; and informing ongoing measurement and reporting.

Figures 2 through 5 provide details of the data collected by the ministry related to the self-identified Aboriginal student population.



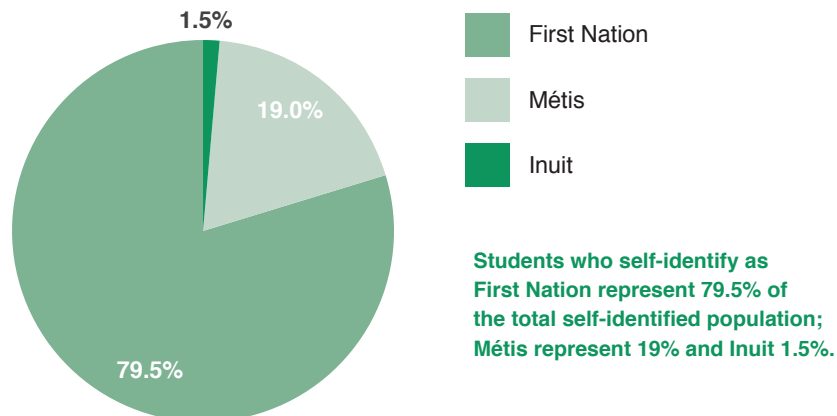


**Figure 2: Year-over-Year Progress in Aboriginal Student Self-identification, 2009 to 2012**



Source: Ontario School Information System (OnSIS). Enrolment as of October 31 for each year. October 2012 data is preliminary and subject to change.

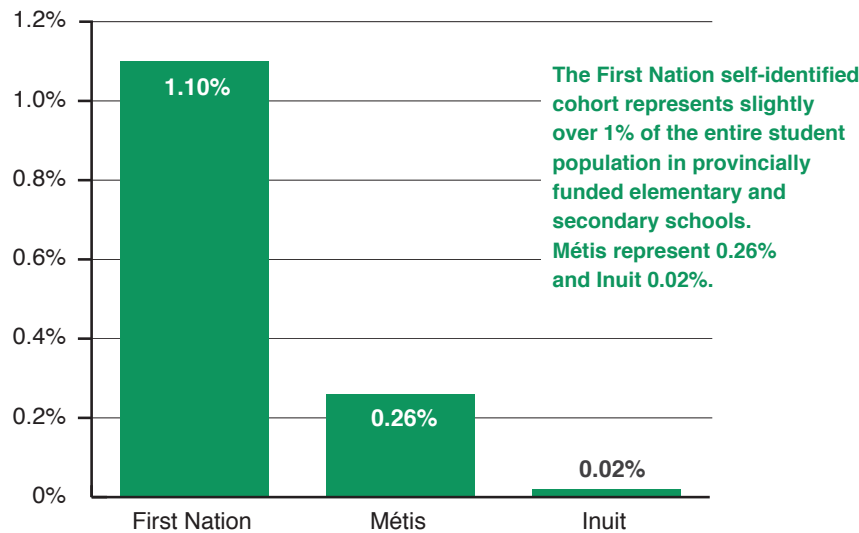
**Figure 3: Distribution of First Nation, Métis and Inuit Self-identified Students**



Source: Ontario School Information System (OnSIS). October 2012 data is preliminary and subject to change.



**Figure 4: First Nation, Métis and Inuit Self-identified Students as Percentage of Total Student Population, October 2012**



Source: Ontario School Information System (OnSIS). October 2012 data is preliminary and subject to change.

### 3.2 Protection and use of data

It is important that the ministry equip Aboriginal families and communities with the information they need to understand how the data from the self-identification process will be used. This process helps schools and school boards better understand the demographics of their First Nation, Métis and Inuit learners. With this self-identification data, schools and school boards are able to implement targeted strategies to meet the specific needs of those students. This includes the provision of programming and increased infusion of culturally relevant content or curriculum to support and enhance the learning environment.

At the provincial level, the ministry is reporting and sharing this data in order to:

- encourage First Nation, Métis and Inuit students and families to self-identify;
- increase the number of school boards collecting and reporting data;
- enhance community engagement through common understanding of the importance of self-identification data analysis and reporting;
- assess and monitor achievement among self-identified students to identify opportunities and challenges; and
- increase the use and analysis of data to develop student success initiatives or other targeted funding support.



The ministry collects and reports on self-identification data through its authority to collect personal information, directly or indirectly, under section 8.1(1) of the Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter E.2. To protect those providing the data:

- the ministry collects this data indirectly from schools and school boards; that is, students self-identify at the school level and do not self-identify at the ministry level;
- the ministry is bound by privacy protection rules under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. F.31, and takes all necessary steps to safeguard personal information collected;
- personal information collected by schools and school boards is protected in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), R.S.O. 1990;
- the Notice of Indirect Collection of Personal Information and the accompanying fact sheet provide details about the protection of privacy and are available at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/access.html>;
- personal and identifying characteristics are removed from individual student information and the numbers are aggregated prior to public reporting so as to protect confidentiality;
- as an extra privacy precaution, figures are suppressed in this report where there are fewer than 15 students for a particular indicator.

# 4

## Underlying Assumptions for Self-Identified Aboriginal Student Achievement Data



In developing Ontario's first baseline data on Aboriginal student achievement, the ministry carefully considered how to analyse self-identification data meaningfully in order to identify trends and inform planning. The ministry will continue to build on its existing successful models developed through the implementation of many student achievement strategies that build on relationships and develop capacity within the sector, and will continue to analyse and implement evidence-driven approaches to support improved student achievement.

### 4.1 Data indicators

Performance measures 1, 3 and 4 (see page 8) relate to specific, measurable indicators of Aboriginal 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
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

Since the Ministry of Education currently uses similar indicators for measuring the academic success of all students, it uses these same data indicators as the provincial baseline for performance measures related to Aboriginal student achievement. Figure 5 shows the provincial performance measures and indicators for self-identified First Nation, Métis and Inuit students.

**Figure 5: Framework Performance Measures and Indicators for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students**

Performance Measures	Indicator(s)
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade 3 Reading, Writing, and Mathematics EQAO* assessment results</li> <li>• Grade 6 Reading, Writing, and Mathematics EQAO assessment results</li> <li>• Grade 9 Mathematics EQAO assessment results</li> <li>• Grade 10 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) – EQAO assessment results</li> </ul>
3. Significant increase in the graduation rate of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not available for 2011–12 baseline year</li> </ul>
4. Significant improvement in First Nation, Métis, and Inuit student achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade 9 credit accumulation</li> </ul>

\* Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO)

## 4.2 Cohorts

In recognition of the diversity of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students, the ministry is reporting on each cohort separately, rather than as a single “Aboriginal” cohort. This allows for a better understanding of the unique needs of each cohort and provides an opportunity to build on areas of strength to support the success of all Aboriginal students.

Baseline data includes aggregate data at the provincial level only. One should use caution in interpreting results that represent very small cohorts, such as data on Inuit student populations. The ministry expects that the cohort of students will increase over the next several years as more students/families choose to self-identify and more school boards collect data and report to the ministry. Significant increases in the size of the cohorts of students who self-identify may, in turn, result in some variability in indicator results in future reporting.

## 4.3 Baseline year

The Aboriginal student achievement baseline data includes results for the 2011–12 school year for Aboriginal students who self-identified as First Nation, Métis or Inuit during the 2011–12 school year. It represents 68 school boards, broadly distributed geographically and including rural and urban boards. Data is presented for a single baseline year, that is, the year in which students within each cohort self-identified.



# 5

## Key Student Achievement Results (Performance Measures 1, 3, and 4)



As indicated above, performance measures 1, 3, and 4 relate to specific, measurable indicators of Aboriginal 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**

Figures 6 through 13 and Figure 15 show the 2011–12 EQAO results for those students reported to the EQAO as self-identified as First Nation, Métis or Inuit during the 2011–12 school year. These results are presented alongside results for all English-language and French-language students, including students who have self-identified *and* the rest of the student population, which includes those who are Aboriginal and have not self-identified.

- 3. Significant increase in the graduation rate of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students**

Data is not yet available for this performance measure, as the ministry calculates a provincial five-year graduation rate and currently does not calculate a rate for sub-populations. Moving forward, the ministry will establish a provincial methodology for calculating a graduation rate for sub-populations, including self-identified Aboriginal students.

In keeping with the principles of voluntary self-identification, and to ensure data quality and coverage, the ministry will establish a cohort of Grade 9 First Nation, Métis and Inuit self-identified students,

using 2011–12 data, in order to calculate a provincial five-year graduation rate in 2016–17. (This approach also aligns with setting 2011–12 as the baseline year.)

4. Significant improvement in First Nation, Métis, and Inuit student achievement

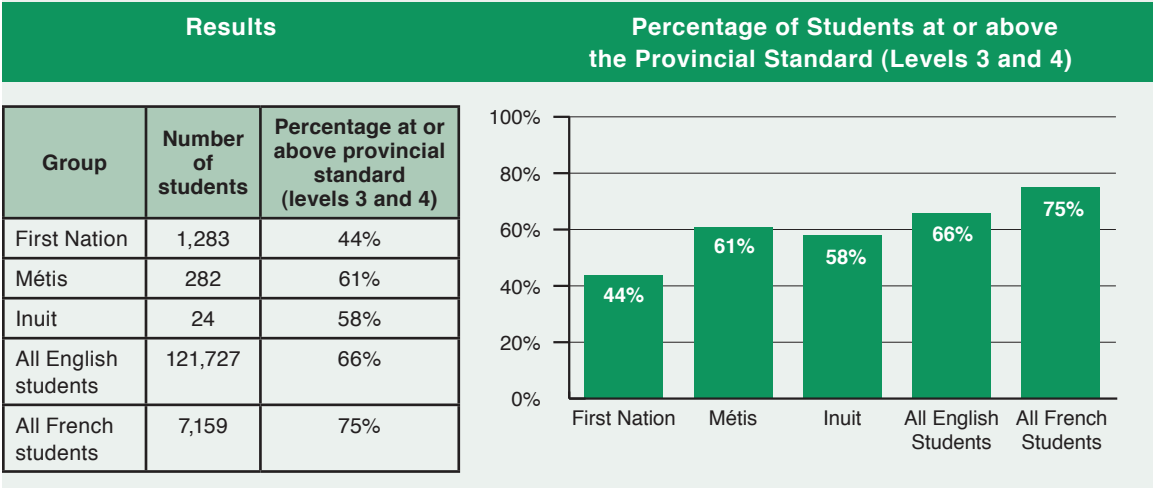
Figure 14 shows the numbers of First Nation, Métis and Inuit Grade 9 students and the total number of Grade 9 students included in the credit accumulation cohort, and the number and percentage of these students who earned eight or more credits in 2011–12. Earning eight or more credits by the end of Grade 9 is considered an indicator of a student being on track to graduate.

5.1 Grade 3 and 6 Reading

Figures 6 and 7 show the number of students who were included in the assessment and the percentage of students who achieved the provincial standard (levels 3 and 4) in the EQAO Grade 3 and 6 Reading assessments during the 2011–12 school year.

Figure 6: EQAO Grade 3 Reading 2011–12

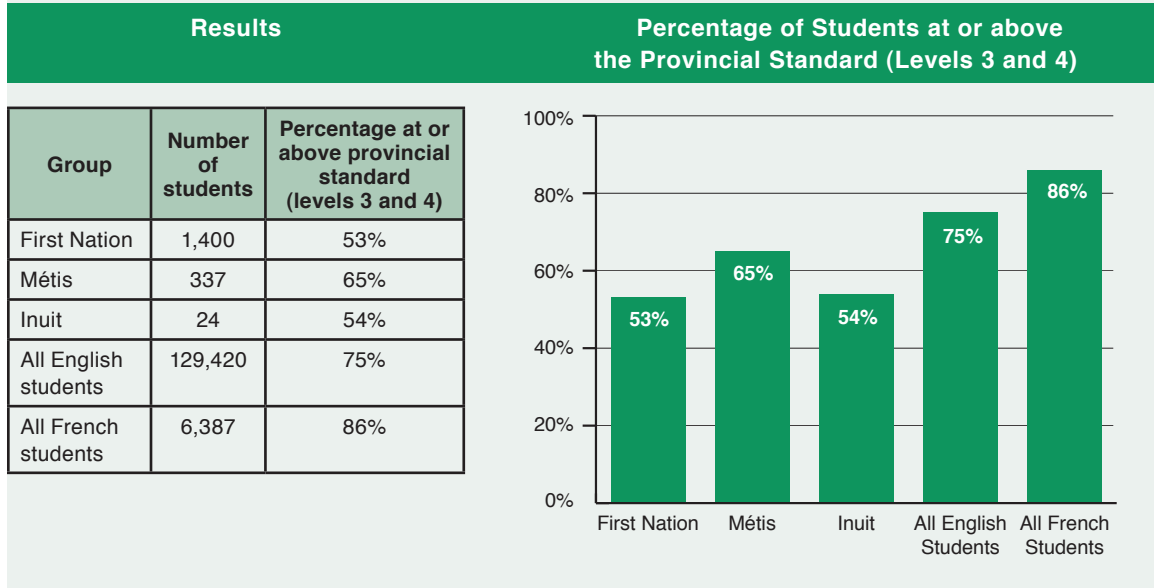
During the 2011–12 school year, a total of 1,589 First Nation, Métis and Inuit students were included in the EQAO Grade 3 Reading assessment, compared to 121,727 English students and 7,159 French students.





**Figure 7: EQAO Grade 6 Reading, 2011–12**

This figure shows that a total of 1,761 First Nation, Métis and Inuit students were included in the EQAO Grade 6 Reading assessment, compared to 129,420 English students and 6,387 French students.



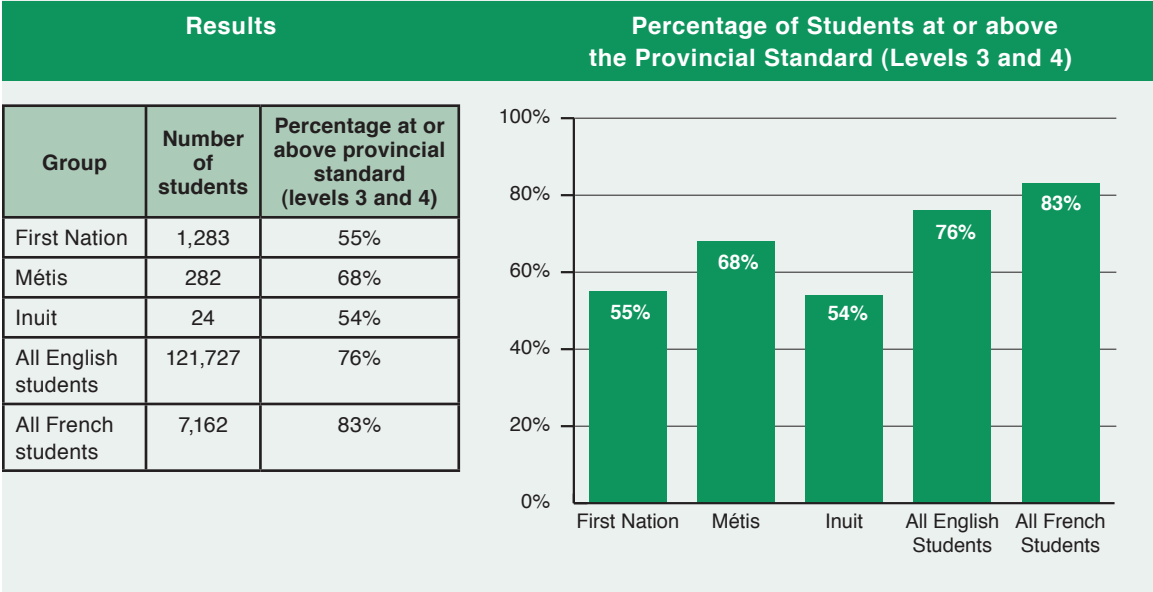


5.2 Grade 3 and 6 Writing

Figures 8 and 9 show the number of students included in the assessment and the percentage of students who achieved the provincial standard (levels 3 and 4) in the EQAO Grade 3 and 6 Writing assessments during the 2011–12 school year.

Figure 8: EQAO Grade 3 Writing, 2011–12

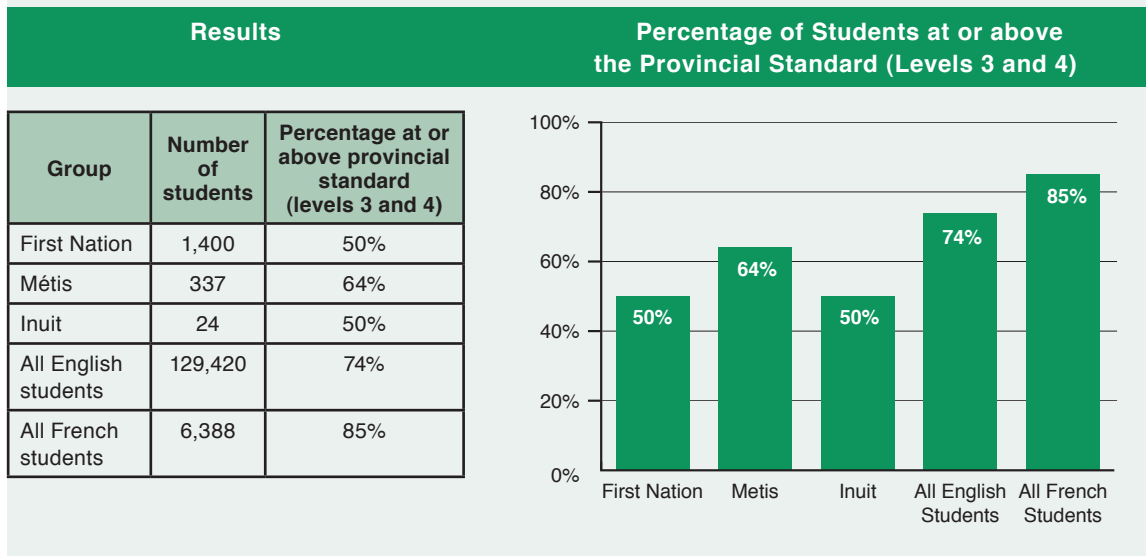
The total number of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students included in the EQAO Grade 3 Writing assessment is 1,589, compared to 121,727 English students and 7,162 French students.





**Figure 9: EQAO Grade 6 Writing, 2011–12**

This figure shows that a total of 1,761 First Nation, Métis and Inuit students were included in the EQAO Grade 6 Writing assessment, compared to 129,420 English students and 6,388 French students.



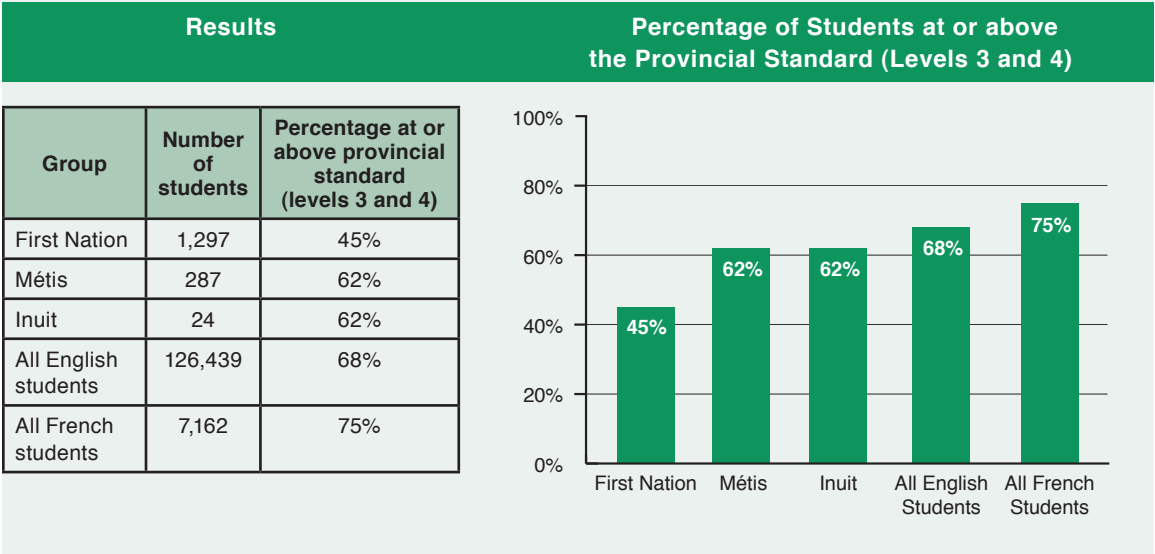


### 5.3 Grade 3 and 6 Mathematics

Figures 10 and 11 show the number of students who were included in the assessment and the percentage of students who achieved the provincial standard (levels 3 and 4) in the EQAO Grade 3 and 6 Mathematics assessments during the 2011–12 school year.

**Figure 10: EQAO Grade 3 Mathematics, 2011–12**

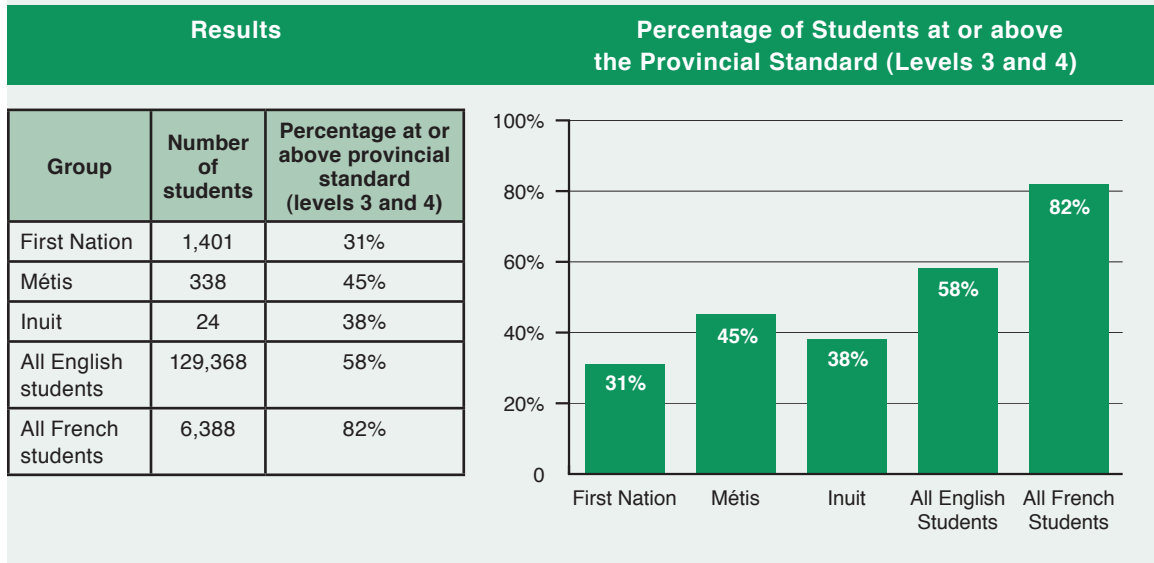
During the 2011–12 school year, a total of 1,608 First Nation, Métis and Inuit students were included in the EQAO Grade 3 Mathematics assessment, compared to 126,439 English students and 7,162 French students.





**Figure 11: EQAO Grade 6 Mathematics, 2011–12**

During the 2011–12 school year, a total of 1,763 First Nation, Métis and Inuit students were included in the EQAO Grade 6 Mathematics assessment, compared to 129,368 English students and 6,388 French students.



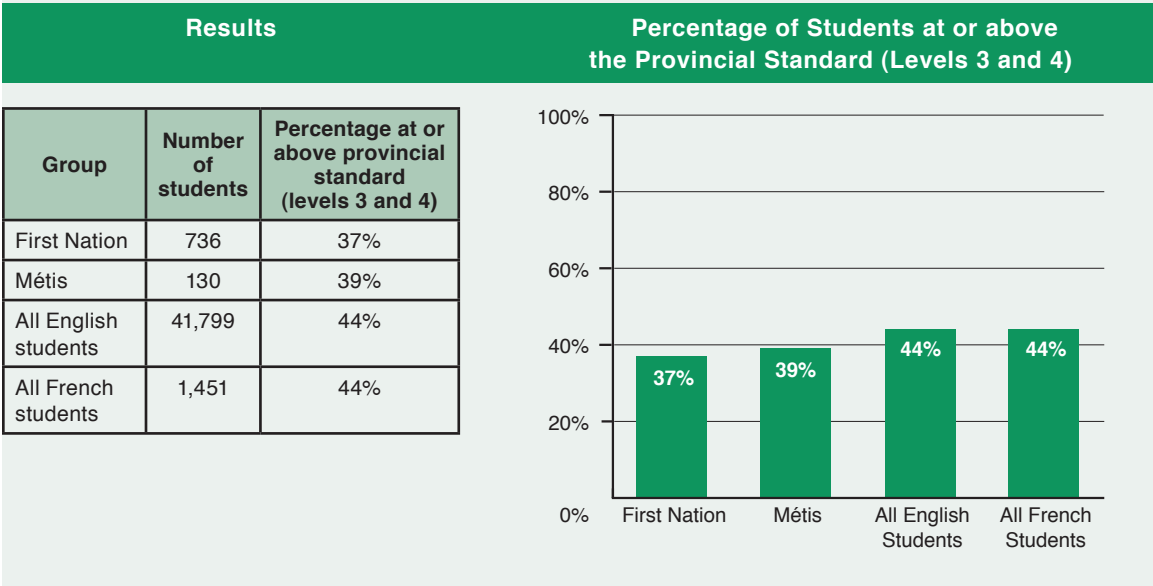


### 5.4 Grade 9 Applied and Academic Mathematics

Figures 12 and 13 show the number of students who were included in the assessment and the percentage who achieved the provincial standard (levels 3 and 4) in the EQAO Grade 9 Applied and Academic Mathematics assessments during the 2011–12 school year. They do not include results for Inuit students, as EQAO data sets representative of 15 or fewer students are suppressed to protect the privacy of individual students.

**Figure 12: EQAO Grade 9 Applied Mathematics, 2011–12**

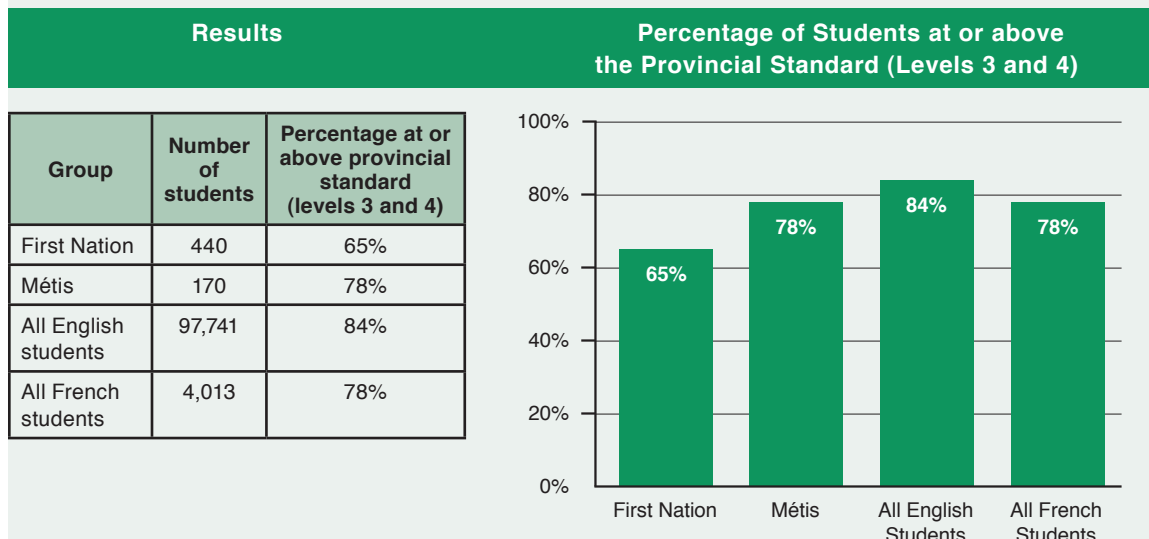
During the 2011–12 school year, a total of 866 First Nation and Métis students were included in the EQAO Grade 9 Applied Mathematics assessment, compared to 41,799 English students and 1,451 French students.





**Figure 13: EQAO Grade 9 Academic Mathematics, 2011–12**

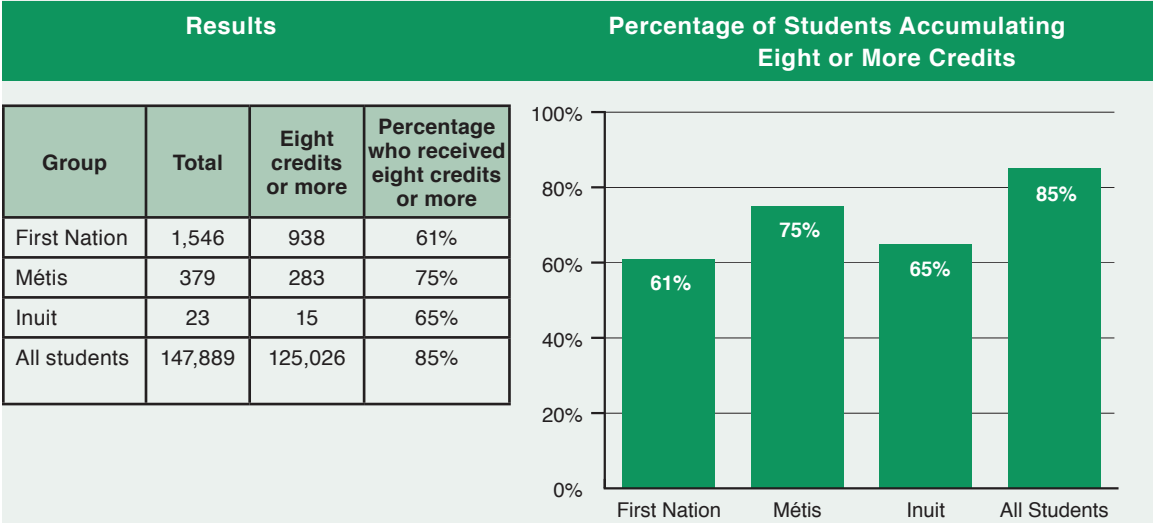
During the 2011–12 school year, a total of 610 First Nation and Métis students were included in the EQAO Grade 9 Academic Mathematics assessment, compared to 97,741 English students and 4,013 French students.



5.5 Grade 9 credit accumulation

Figure 14 shows the total number of Grade 9 students included in the credit accumulation cohort, and the number and percentage of these students who earned eight or more credits in 2011–12. Earning eight or more credits by the end of Grade 9 is considered an indicator that a student is on track to graduate.

Figure 14: Grade 9 Credit Accumulation,\* 2011–12



\*Grade 9 credit accumulation is an indicator prepared by the ministry, using data submitted by school boards. The ministry includes all students in the cohort, English and French, when reporting province-wide Grade 9 credit accumulation.

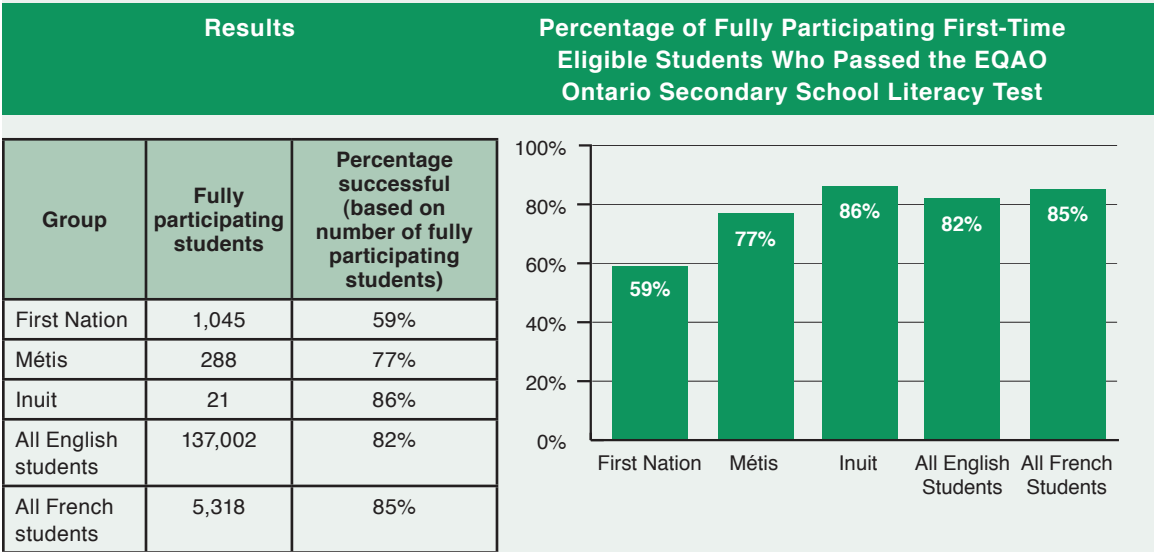


## 5.6 EQAO Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (first-time eligible)

Figure 15 shows results for the number of fully participating “first-time eligible” students – that is, students eligible to take the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) for the first time – and the percentage who passed the test.



**Figure 15: Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) – First-Time Eligible,\* 2011–12**



\* Members of the cohort described here typically entered Grade 9 in the 2010–11 school year, and were required to write the OSSLT (along with any others who were placed in this cohort) for the first time in March 2012. “First-time eligible” includes all students in the first-time eligible cohort who are working towards an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

## 5.7 Analysing the results

It is important to note that many First Nation, Métis and Inuit students are excelling academically. It is also important to acknowledge that self-identification data to date does not represent all Aboriginal students. However, preliminary analysis of this data demonstrates that there is a persistent gap in achievement levels between Aboriginal students and all students.

The data shows that First Nation, Métis and Inuit students are not achieving at the same level as all Ontario students. Specifically:

- EQAO Grade 3 and 6 reading scores show gaps ranging from 5 to 33 percentage points between the numbers of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students and the numbers of English- and French-language students achieving at or above the provincial standard;
- EQAO Grade 3 and 6 writing scores show gaps ranging from 8 to 35 percentage points with respect to the percentage of students achieving at or above the provincial standard;
- EQAO Grade 3 and 6 mathematics scores show First Nation, Métis and Inuit student results ranging from 6 to 51 percentage points below all English- and French-language student results;
- EQAO Grade 9 mathematics results indicate a gap of up to 19 percentage points;
- OSSLT results show a large range in the percentage of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students who were successful, from 26 points below the percentage of French-language students to 4 points above that of English-language students;
- The percentage of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students accumulating eight or more credits in their Grade 9 year ranges from 10 to 24 percentage points below the provincial average.

With the establishment of baseline data for achievement results among self-identified Aboriginal students, the ministry and school boards can continue to refine strategies and develop new initiatives to close the academic achievement gaps.

Publicly reporting on these differences is part of the ministry's commitment to reducing the gap in achievement, identifying areas for improvement, and increasing accountability.

# 6

## Gathering Evidence



To gain a greater understanding of progress made in Aboriginal education in Ontario to date, the ministry collected data from a variety of sources, including the following: over 1,000 district school board First Nation, Métis and Inuit projects; various board surveys; final reports on a great number of initiatives completed by school boards; and reports from the Alternative Secondary School Programs within Native Friendship Centres Program.

The Ministry of Education also conducted two surveys:

- The *Promising Practices* survey, conducted by two independent consultants in fall 2012, invited feedback on promising practices related to student achievement strategies that school boards were then using to support First Nation, Métis and Inuit students. Board and provincial Aboriginal organization reports were reviewed, and information on student, educator and parent perspectives was collected through focus groups and online surveys.
- The *Progress Report* survey, conducted in spring 2013 and administered by the ministry's Aboriginal Education Office, invited feedback on Framework implementation from district school boards, educators, students, parents and Aboriginal community organizations.

Overall, the *Promising Practices* and *Progress Report* surveys found that the implementation of the Framework has had a positive impact on Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. However, respondents identified the need for continued efforts in the following areas:

- continuing need to build meaningful relationships at both the provincial and local levels, with a focus on collaboration and partnerships to develop, implement and assess Aboriginal education initiatives leading to improvements in academic achievement levels;
- data sharing at the provincial and local levels that respects the First Nation-developed OCAP principles – ownership, control, access and possession – which relate to research concerning First Nation peoples;

- greater alignment between the Framework and other key ministry/inter-ministerial initiatives;
- meaningful engagement of First Nation, Métis and Inuit partners in Framework-related initiatives related to increasing Aboriginal students' achievement levels as well as their self-esteem.

## 6.1 Results of the Promising Practices school board surveys

The goal of these surveys was to assist the ministry and school boards in identifying promising practices – that is, current successful student achievement initiatives – launched by boards to improve achievement for First Nation, Métis and Inuit learners. According to an analysis of the survey results, the range and number of professional development opportunities and resources offered to teaching and non-teaching staff are significantly increasing. Schools are embedding First Nation, Métis and Inuit histories, cultures and perspectives in their school environments and in classroom teaching and learning opportunities. A greater awareness and a deeper understanding of First Nation, Métis and Inuit student needs are being developed. Sections 7, 8 and 9 of the report provide detailed information on several of these initiatives.

### Significant achievements

Halton District School Board has created academic achievement profiles for all self-identified First Nation, Métis and Inuit students in the board. The board can now track standardized test scores and credit accumulation to identify achievement patterns.

## 6.2 Results of the 2013 Progress Report survey

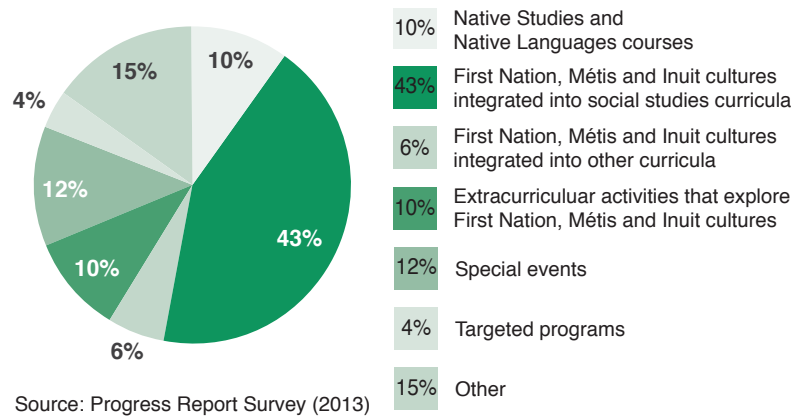
The goal of this survey was to invite feedback on Framework implementation related to each of the 10 performance measures. Parents who responded to the survey said that many schools across the province were able to include First Nation, Métis and Inuit perspectives in the curriculum. Figures 16–19 represent examples of feedback received from students, parents and guardians, teaching and non-teaching staff, and community organizations.

The surveys allowed parents and guardians to comment on their perceptions related to how well First Nation, Métis and Inuit perspectives are being integrated into the curriculum and what school boards are doing to

support knowledge and awareness building. This allowed the ministry to gain greater insight into the progress achieved in relation to performance measures 8 and 10 (increased participation of First Nation, Métis and Inuit parents in the education of their children, and 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).

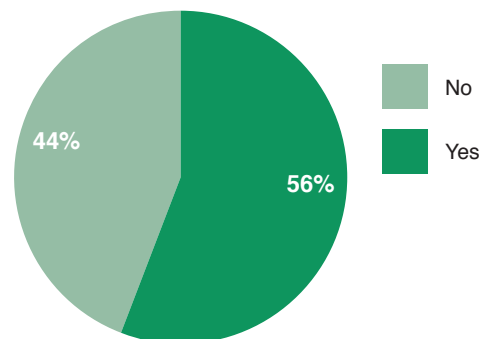


**Figure 16: Parent/Guardian Perceptions of How First Nation, Métis and Inuit Perspectives Are Integrated in the Curriculum**



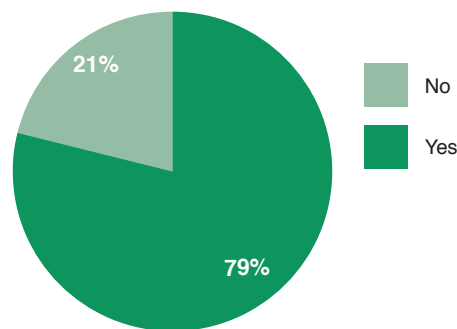
The *Progress Report* survey also focused on collecting data with respect to providing educators with targeted professional development and developing resources to help serve First Nation, Métis and Inuit students more effectively (performance measure 7).

**Figure 17: Participation of Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff in Targeted Professional Development**



Fifty-six per cent of teaching and non-teaching staff who responded indicated that they had participated in professional development activities geared specifically towards supporting First Nation, Métis and Inuit students.

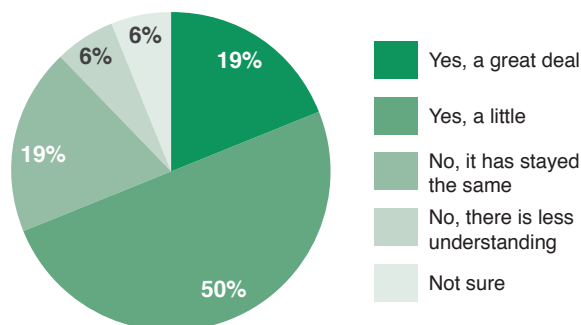
**Figure 18: Incorporation of Professional Development Training/Resources into Practice by Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff**



Source: Progress Report Survey (2013)

A large majority of teaching and non-teaching staff who participated in First Nation, Métis and Inuit-focused professional development activities, such as knowledge and awareness building related to First Nation, Métis and Inuit histories, cultures and perspectives, were able to use what they learned and translate it into their classroom practices.

**Figure 19: First Nation, Métis and Inuit Community Organizations' Perceptions of Capacity Building to Support Aboriginal Identity**



Source: Progress Report Survey (2013)

Survey responses from First Nation, Métis and Inuit community organizations indicated a strong focus on building capacity to help support Aboriginal identity building, including the appreciation of Aboriginal histories, cultures and perspectives by all students and staff. Respondents felt that initiatives aimed at fostering supportive and engaged families and communities have increased with Framework implementation since 2007 (performance measure 9).

# 7

## Supporting Students (Performance Measures 5 and 6)



Many initiatives and projects were implemented over the past three years in collaborative partnerships between school boards and First Nation, Métis and Inuit organizations, to support students in increasing self-esteem, often through the building of culturally safe and respectful environments and through efforts to enhance the voice of Aboriginal students.

Framework performance measures 5 and 6 are:

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.

The Ministry of Education demonstrates its ongoing commitment to furthering progress relative to performance measures 5 and 6 through the following activities:

- **First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Supplement** (component of Grants for Student Needs). The 2012–13 supplement is projected to be \$42.8M, an increase from \$10.5M in 2007 when it was first introduced. This increase is due, in part, to steady growth in enrolment in Native Studies and Native Languages courses, as follows:
  - In 2011–12, 5,970 students were enrolled in Native Language courses, up from 4,248 in 2006–07.
  - In 2011–12, 13,375 students were enrolled in Native Studies courses, up from 1,097 in 2006–07.



- **Alternative Secondary School Programs (ASSP) within Native Friendship Centres Program.** Established in 1990 to address the needs of disengaged urban Aboriginal students, the ASSP helps Aboriginal students complete the requirements for obtaining a secondary school diploma. Administered in partnership with the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC), the program is currently delivered at eleven Friendship Centres across Ontario, in partnership with local district school boards. Each program is assigned a host secondary school for the purpose of granting credits. In the 2011–12 school year, more than 1,000 students were enrolled in the ASSP.
- **SpeakUp projects.** *SpeakUp* projects are helping Aboriginal students engage both academically and socially at the school level by using the Students as Researchers Tool Kit to conduct collaborative inquiry on topics that matter to students, such as leadership development. The ministry has funded all First Nation, Métis and Inuit student project proposals since the inception of the program, for a total of 81 Aboriginal projects to date.

### Significant achievements

At Charles H. Best Middle School in Toronto, a group of students in the Grade 7 CyberARTS class created a collection of short videos with the school's Aboriginal Community Advisory Committee to address contemporary Aboriginal issues as they relate to identity. The videos address questions such as the role of bloodline and culture in determining identity, providing a meaningful, social justice–focused project that will be shared with the broader community through the board's Aboriginal Education Centre.

Students at Timmins High School used the Students as Researchers Toolkit to create a seven-member Aboriginal Youth Advisory Council to voice their opinions about issues that matter to them, as part of the *SpeakUp* initiative. This group is discussing the experiences Aboriginal youth face as they transition to provincial schools.



### Significant achievements

Grade 7 and 8 students attending schools of the Conseil scolaire du district Grand-Nord de l'Ontario participated in a mixed-media visual arts project that encouraged them to express their identity through the use of Aboriginal totem animals. A visual testimony book – *Sawsékikshu ... Mes racines autochtones* – was published, featuring reproductions of 240 student artworks. The publication of the book enhanced students' self-confidence as well as their awareness of the richness and diversity of First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures and histories.

- **Ministry-supported partnerships between Aboriginal organizations and school boards in the implementation of Full-Day Kindergarten.** Since 2011, the ministry has supported 16 Full-Day Kindergarten case study evaluations. The partnership between Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre and the Ottawa Carleton District School Board is a good example of this partnership in action. The economic benefits of investments in the early years are well documented.
- **The Ontario Education Research Symposium.** In 2012, Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board presented *Making Good Tracks: An Indigenous Model in Support of First Nation, Métis and Inuit Student Achievement with Benefits for All*. The board received a Gold Medallion Award for innovation and excellence in education from the National School Public Relations Association for this work. The project is aimed at improving learning environments and outcomes for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students. It also raised awareness about Aboriginal cultures, languages, histories and perspectives in Catholic schools throughout Simcoe County and the District of Muskoka.
- **Parent resources.** The revised pamphlet *Bullying: We Can All Help Stop It* and the *School Climate Survey for Parents* were developed in 2013, in English and French, and translated into more than 20 languages, including Cree, Ojibway and Ojicree. The pamphlet serves as an anti-bullying guide for parents or guardians of elementary and secondary school students.
- **Écho d'un peuple fier et métissé. Un Spectacle qui ouvre les yeux!** Creators collaborate with local French-language school boards across the province to present this production, which conveys the power of French-Canadian and Franco-Ontarian history through a recounting of the meeting between First Nations and the French who came to Canada, as well as of the birth of the Métis Nation in Ontario.



- **Summit to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women.** The fifth summit in a series, supported by a partnership between the Ontario Native Women's Association and the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education is working in partnership to support many recommendations coming out of the Summit, including a focus on bullying prevention, positive school climate and cultural competency training.
- **Open Minds, Healthy Minds: Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy.** Under this multi-ministry strategy, the government has committed \$6.25 million in annualized funding to selected Aboriginal agencies to hire more than 80 Aboriginal mental health and addiction workers across the province. These workers will provide culturally appropriate direct services to 4,000 more Aboriginal children and youth each year. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services is also developing and implementing training supports for Aboriginal mental health and addiction workers.

# 8

## Supporting Educators (Performance Measures 2 and 7)



In the last three years, many teachers and non-teaching staff across the province have participated in a wide range of professional development activities focused specifically on First Nation, Métis and Inuit students, and on increasing knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures and perspectives for Aboriginal students and all students. In addition, various new resources have been developed to support the same goal.

Framework performance measures 2 and 7 are:

2. Significant increase in the number of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit teaching and non-teaching staff in school boards across Ontario.
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.

### 8.1 Teacher self-identification

The ministry is committed to working with education partners, including those individuals representing teaching and non-teaching staff, and our First Nation, Métis and Inuit partners, to discuss the development of self-identification policy guidelines for voluntary, confidential staff self-identification.

Staff who self-identify can act as mentors and role models for students, and help foster an environment in which Aboriginal students can reach a high level of achievement.

## 8.2 Professional development and resource development in school boards and through partnerships

Between 2011 and 2013, there has been a significant increase in the professional development activities and resources available to teaching and non-teaching staff (performance measure 7). In addition, there has been an increase in ministry, school board and community partnerships and related projects to support these initiatives. Examples include:

- **Aboriginal Perspectives: The Teacher's Toolkit and accompanying guide.** This collection of electronic resources was developed to help elementary and secondary teachers across Ontario bring Aboriginal perspectives into their classroom practice and increase knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal cultures, histories and perspectives among both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. Over 80,000 copies of the toolkit have been distributed and more than 350 teachers received training on the toolkit in the 2011–12 school year. 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 more responsive to Aboriginal learners. For example, expectations and examples relating to residential schools can now be found in the elementary social studies, history and geography curriculum and the secondary Canadian and world studies and social sciences and humanities curricula.

### Significant achievements

Ottawa-Carleton District School Board teacher Sylvia Smith has received the **Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Teaching** for "Project of Heart", which educates youth about the **inequalities of the residential school system**. It is now being taught in classrooms across the country.

The Conseil scolaire catholique Franco-Nord appointed a francophone Métis Elder – a member of the Métis Nation of Ontario – as a consultant for Aboriginal education in the board's elementary schools. Workshops delivered by the Elder have enabled students and teaching staff to discover Métis cultural heritage and have provided new direction for the integration of Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum. The workshops have addressed the spirituality, customs and traditions of particular Aboriginal communities in Canada.



- **Through board project funding, the ministry funded locally developed resources that help integrate First Nation, Métis and Inuit knowledge and perspectives into the curriculum.** Examples include:
  - *Sharing the Way: Aboriginal Cultures and Traditions* (2010), produced by the Eastern Ontario Catholic Curriculum Cooperative
  - *The Birthplace of the Peacemaker: A Booklet of Activities to Support Grade 6 Literacy and Social Studies Curriculum* (2010), produced by the Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board
  - *Getting to Know Turtle Island: Incorporating First Nation, Métis and Inuit Perspectives K–8* (with review by First Nation, Métis and Inuit Community Members) (2010), produced by the Limestone District School Board.
  - *Seven Grandfather Teachings: Incorporating Locally Developed Lessons into All Elementary Grade Levels* (2009–13), produced by the Rainy River District School Board
- **Two Native Studies textbooks and teachers' guides** were published in 2011–12. These are the first Native Studies textbooks to be included on the Trillium list of texts approved for use in Ontario schools.
- **Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) Professional Development project.** As a result of OTF-developed summer institutes focused on incorporating Aboriginal perspectives into the classroom, teachers in 90 classrooms across the province worked with their students to create *Books of Life* – personal stories about their lives. Students exchanged stories with partner classes, and learned more about peers with diverse backgrounds and experiences.
- **Ongoing ministry support to the Ontario Native Education Counselling Association (ONECA)** for delivery of the Native Counsellor Training Program. Counsellors graduating from the program provide counselling and other support services to Aboriginal students attending elementary and secondary schools both on- and off-reserve. ONECA also develops resources for schools, based on input from education counsellors across Ontario, that are translated into several First Nation languages.
- **Circle of Light 2011 – A First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Conference.** The Ministry of Education, in partnership with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, and key Aboriginal partners, hosted this third conference on November 14–16, 2011. The theme, Learning Together for Student Success, reflects the ministry's shared commitment to working in partnership to support the academic achievement of Aboriginal students, and to raise all students' knowledge and awareness of Aboriginal cultures, histories and perspectives.

- **“What Works” research monographs.** This series includes professional learning materials designed to support teachers as they develop learning opportunities for Aboriginal students. Examples include: *Teaching for Ecological Sustainability: Incorporating Indigenous Philosophies and Practices*, and *Integrating Aboriginal Teaching and Values into the Classroom*.

### Significant achievements

“Our Aboriginal Education Lead has been essential in providing access to resources (e.g., books, films, music, websites, Teacher’s Toolkit), teaching strategies (e.g., talking circles), and authentic voices from the local Aboriginal community.”

– Durham District School Board (2013) survey respondent

## 8.3 Professional development for educators working in First Nation/federal schools

Between 2009 and 2013, there has been much progress in providing targeted professional development and resources designed to help teaching and non-teaching staff serve First Nation students more effectively, including:

- **Professional learning opportunities – the Growing Success workshop.** Designed to help teachers and principals advance instructional practices and support the transition of First Nation students moving into provincially funded schools. Participants gained knowledge of: the principles and policies that apply to assessment, evaluation and reporting practices in programs such as Specialist High Skills Major, cooperative education, and dual credit programs, as well as of specific policy areas such as prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) and the secondary school literacy graduation requirement.
- **The First Nations/OERB Access Pilot** was launched in September 2012, by the ministry in collaboration with the Chiefs of Ontario (COO), to provide selected First Nation communities and organizations that deliver or coordinate Kindergarten to Grade 12 programming with access, in First Nation schools, to the Ontario Educational Resource Bank (OERB), a password-protected learning object repository with over 31,000 digital learning resources to support teachers and learners. These resources are linked to the Ontario curriculum and include lesson plans, videos, activities, maps and interactive multimedia in a variety of formats. This pilot project was intended as a first step to enabling access to the OERB by all First Nation schools in Ontario.



# 9

## Engagement and Awareness Building in School Boards (Performance Measures 8, 9, and 10)



The involvement of school boards in projects with First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples, communities and organizations has increased at a steady pace. The majority of the collaborations focus on cultural awareness and knowledge building.

Framework performance measures 8 to 10 are:

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.

### **Significant achievements**

Peel District School Board created a First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Advisory Circle. This circle has become a transparent and open forum in which First Nation, Métis and Inuit community-based organizations and board staff can dialogue about mutually important concerns as they relate to First Nation, Métis and Inuit student engagement, achievement and ongoing success.



### Significant achievements

The Conseil scolaire de district catholique du Nouvel-Ontario (CSCNO) collaborates with its students and their families as well as Aboriginal educational partners through its Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee. The committee's mandate is to examine priorities, strategies and issues in Aboriginal education within CSCNO schools and to provide recommendations to the school board related to Aboriginal educational planning and implementation so as to better meet the needs of students who identify as First Nation, Métis and Inuit.

## 9.1 Board initiatives

A majority of First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities and organizations that responded to the 2013 *Progress Report* survey agreed that there has been an increase in understanding of First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures among students in local schools and boards.

The involvement by school boards in projects with First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities and organizations has continued to increase. As a result of ongoing orientation and support that boards have provided to all school employees, teaching and non-teaching staff have become increasingly involved and engaged with school board cultural awareness initiatives to support First Nation, Métis and Inuit students.

Performance measure 8 has been a focus of many initiatives intended to support the involvement of First Nation, Métis and Inuit parents in the education of their children by providing culturally relevant and welcoming environments. These activities have also increased attention on performance measure 10 by integrating educational opportunities not just for Aboriginal students but for all students. As indicated below, initiatives include parent meetings, joint projects and working groups, and many First Nation, Métis and Inuit awareness activities.

- **More than 1,000 school board projects supporting First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework implementation** have been funded by the ministry since 2007 to promote collaborative approaches with First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities on student engagement, mentoring, self-esteem building, self-identification policy development, and awareness building.



### Significant achievements

The Kenora Catholic District School Board's First Nation, Métis and Inuit Advisory Committee has supported schools of the board by:

- maintaining contact with parents of Aboriginal students;
- involving local Elders in prayer services; and
- helping schools integrate Aboriginal content throughout the curriculum, sharing information about current cultural events and taking the time to share ideas.

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At the École secondaire publique De La Salle, in the Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario, students participated in a project lead by Christian Pilon, a Franco-Ontarian Métis voyageur, that enabled them to experience the stages of building a birch bark canoe using the same methods and resources as their ancestors did. On June 4, 2013, students and staff members launched the canoe on the Ottawa River during the Aventure Champlain à l'Île Petrie event. Christian Pilon spoke in tribute to his ancestors: "The canoe ... symbolizes living in harmony with nature ...".

- **First Nation, Métis and Inuit Advisory Councils.** In 2012, 50 school boards reported that they had established First Nation, Métis and Inuit Advisory Councils (compared with 30 boards in 2009). The councils have facilitated and supported deepening Framework implementation within their boards by developing working relationships with the community, sharing information, identifying promising practices and working collaboratively on improving self-identification policies.
- **In 2012, 64 school boards reported having designated an Aboriginal Education Lead.** Providing leadership in Aboriginal education within boards, schools and classrooms, these individuals play an invaluable role in leading the implementation of programs and initiatives to support Aboriginal student achievement and raise awareness and understanding of First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures, histories and perspectives.
- **As a result of Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, all school boards are developing and implementing an equity and inclusive education policy,** which supports the principles and goals of the Framework. School boards' equity and inclusive education policies promote the identification and removal of discriminatory biases and systemic barriers in order to support achievement and well-being

among all students. Recent amendments to the Education Act (Accepting Schools Act, 2012) require boards and schools to embed the principles of equity and inclusive education in all operations and learning environments.

- **Parents Reaching Out (PRO) initiatives** are providing enhanced parent engagement at the local, regional and provincial levels. Through these grants the ministry funded 171 projects with a focus on Aboriginal parent communities for school councils, regional/provincial non-profit groups and First Nation and Métis communities/organizations.
- **Minister's Student Advisory Committee.** This committee provides government with input on issues that matter to students and includes First Nation, Métis and Inuit student representation from across Ontario.
- **Establishment of the Francophone EDU/TCU Working Table in 2011.** The committee provides a provincial forum for French-language school boards and colleges, bilingual universities, and First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities to share resources, information, initiatives, research and programs to support Aboriginal students. Last year, the committee focused on supports for Aboriginal students' transitions from secondary to postsecondary education.
- **Urban Aboriginal Education Pilot Project (UAEPP).** In November 2007, the ministry invested approximately \$3 million, administered by the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE), in a pilot to develop three Aboriginal education models for urban settings with varying geographical and demographic features. As an example of the results of this work, Simcoe County District School Board noted that the increase over a four-year period in achievement for self-identified Aboriginal students on all Grade 3 and Grade 6 assessments outpaced increases in achievements for the overall student population in Simcoe County as well as for the province-wide English student population.

## 9.2 Building partnerships

Much progress has been made with respect to performance measure 9 through continuing efforts to deepen relationships and build effective working partnerships. Some successful examples include:

- **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Métis Nation of Ontario.** Since signing the MOU in 2009, the ministry and the Métis Nation of Ontario have been working together closely on a number of initiatives, including the Métis Education Kit (available in both French and English). The Métis Education Kit is now in use in schools across the province. Partnerships among local Métis communities and school

boards have resulted in positive working relationships. Infinite Reach outreach sessions and a March break camp support Métis secondary school students in considering postsecondary education options.

- **Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's (AANDC), Education Partnerships Program (EPP)** supports First Nation student achievement in First Nation schools and provincially funded schools by developing partnership arrangements, sharing expertise and services, and coordinating learning initiatives to assist First Nation students. Ontario is engaged in three separate EPP tables with AANDC and the following First Nation organizations: Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Grand Council Treaty #3, and the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians (AIAI) in partnership with the Indigenous Education Coalition (IEC).
- **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Nishnawbe Aski Nation and Canada.** On April 9, 2013, the federal government, the province of Ontario and the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) signed an MOU on First Nation education, committing the parties to work together to improve educational outcomes for First Nation students in First Nation–operated and provincially funded schools. The MOU identifies five priority areas for collaboration:
  1. improving student support services including safety and well-being measures, and transition, retention and support mechanisms for students living away from home;
  2. enhancing curriculum to include and integrate First Nation cultures, histories, perspectives and languages;
  3. exploring ways to improve governance and administration including appropriate involvement of First Nations in provincial schools and advisory bodies, and new organizational options for delivering second-level services to First Nation schools;
  4. enhancing human resources by increasing the participation of First Nation staff and Elders in provincial schools while examining mechanisms for joint professional development and exchange between First Nations and provincial school systems; and
  5. boosting participation of parents whose children attend schools away from their communities.
- **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Anishinabek Nation on First Nation Elementary and Secondary Education.** In November 2009, the Ontario government and the Anishinabek Nation (Union of Ontario Indians–UOI) signed an MOU confirming bilateral collaboration on educational issues relating to the development of a First Nation elementary/secondary education system in the



Anishinabek Territory. The MOU established a framework for working together to fulfil common objectives with respect to an Education Agreement between UOI and Canada.

- **Continuing ministry support for joint initiatives of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) and the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group (AAWG).** One of the current initiatives is for provinces and territories to work collaboratively with Statistics Canada through CMEC on developing a harmonized approach to pan-Canadian self-identified Aboriginal student data collection and indicator development. This work is a key activity of the Learn Canada 2020 Framework, which aims to eliminate the gap in academic achievement and graduation rates between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

# 10

## Advancing the Goals of the Aboriginal Education Strategy: Next Steps



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 incremental, each year building on the successes and momentum of the previous year.

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.

Addressing the education attainment gap is a top priority for the Government of Ontario. The Ministry of Education and school boards, working with First Nation, Métis and Inuit partners, share the view that significant progress can be achieved, and that conditions for future success have been established through progressive collaboration and specific supports.

Targeted funding to support the implementation of the Framework is ongoing through both the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) First Nations, Métis and Inuit Supplement and annual board projects through the Aboriginal Education Office. The 2013 Provincial Budget also committed an additional \$5 million per year in targeted funding to continue to invest in projects that help close the student achievement gap between Aboriginal students and all students, including support for the implementation of the *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework*.

The Ontario government wants to ensure that First Nation, Métis and Inuit students have every opportunity for success. The government believes

that all children should have the same opportunities and that the federal government has an obligation to make those opportunities available through adequate funding for on-reserve First Nation education.

The ministry will pursue a path that builds on demonstrated successes, in partnership with communities; school boards; First Nation, Métis and Inuit partners; the federal government; and other education stakeholders to support First Nation, Métis and Inuit students across the province.

## 10.1 Implementation planning for 2013–14 and beyond

In the fall of 2013, the ministry will release a provincial Implementation Plan for 2013–14 and beyond, to build on the current Aboriginal Education Strategy and Framework Implementation. Elements of this plan will include:

- adopting an aspirational and strength-based approach designed to create enabling conditions for Aboriginal student success;
- engaging in ongoing discussions with First Nation, Métis and Inuit partners to identify opportunities for collaboration and capacity building across the sector;
- increasing awareness of Aboriginal perspectives, histories, languages and cultures;
- increasing the analysis, use and sharing of self-identification data to track Aboriginal student success and identify strategies to reduce the gaps in achievement;
- increasing the number of students and families that choose to self-identify to increase understanding of the demographics, challenges and successes of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students;
- increasing the alignment and integration of ministry priorities and initiatives including:
  - increasing the participation of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students in proven student success/achievement programs;
  - increasing the participation of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students in student engagement activities;
  - developing a comprehensive and integrated approach to the health and well-being of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students;
  - increasing transition supports for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students;
- setting aspirational student achievement targets for self-identified Aboriginal students in order to close the gap in student achievement.

The ministry will engage in discussions with First Nation partners and key education stakeholders to explore opportunities to build capacity in First Nation–operated schools.



The depth of Framework implementation within boards and schools varies in response to local needs and circumstances. The ministry recognizes that the ability to monitor and close the achievement gap is dependent upon the continued and increased participation of students, parents and communities in the voluntary self-identification process. With this in mind, the ministry will continue to encourage schools and boards to engage with their local partners/communities, increase provincial-level engagement between the ministry and key Aboriginal partner organizations, and explore opportunities for data sharing.

A solid foundation has been built. The ministry, in collaboration with district school boards, First Nation, Métis, Inuit partners, and other education stakeholders, will continue to build on the successes to date in working to improve the academic achievement of Aboriginal students who attend Ontario's provincially funded elementary and secondary schools and to raise the awareness and knowledge of all students about First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples' cultures, histories and perspectives.





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