

Charter of Commitment First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education

This document has been drafted for consideration for adoption by the Ontario Public School Boards' Association and for recommendation to the Canadian School Boards' Association as a National Charter of Commitment.

The development of this Charter is guided by:

- The *Canadian Constitution Act*, 1982
- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), September, 2007
- Ontario's First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework (2007)
- *It's Our Vision, It's Our Time – First Nations Control of First Nations Education*, Assembly of First Nations, July 2010
- *The Accord on Indigenous Education*, Association of Canadian Deans of Education, 2010

(Key provisions of these documents are set out in the Appendix)

Intent

The intent of the Charter is to articulate the support by school boards for

- First Nation, Métis and Inuit knowledge systems and learning models;
- The central value of culture, language and knowledge of history in contributing to the well-being of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students, families and communities;
- A holistic approach that addresses spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual development in relation to oneself, family, community and environment
- Ensure that there is a mechanism for school boards to periodically report on their progress towards achieving the goals of the Charter.

Vision

First Nation, Métis and Inuit identities, cultures, languages, values, ways of knowing, and knowledge systems will flourish in all Ontario schools.

Principles

This Charter of Commitment:

- Supports a socially just society for First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples
- Reflects a respectful, collaborative, and consultative process among First Nation, Métis and Inuit knowledge holders and knowledge holders in the general education community
- Promotes partnerships among schools, school boards and First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities

- Values the diversity of First Nation, Métis and Inuit knowledges and ways of knowing and learning.

Goals

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association on behalf of member school boards will collaborate with education partners in Ontario to support, endorse and foster the following goals:

Respectful and Welcoming Learning Environments

- Support all school and board staff in creating learning environments that instill a sense of belonging for all learners in Ontario and that are more accepting, respectful, welcoming and supportive of First Nation, Métis and Inuit learners.
- Promote strategies that encourage First Nation, Métis and Inuit students to participate in the full range of school activities including recreation and leadership roles.
- Foster initiatives that provide students with positive transition experiences in moving from First Nation communities to provincially funded schools.
- Promote respectful and welcoming environments so that all schools are positioned to encourage involvement of families of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students and of community members.

Respectful and Inclusive Curriculum and Classroom Programs

- Actively identify opportunities to integrate First Nation, Métis and Inuit histories, cultures and perspectives in delivery of curriculum in the classroom across the full spectrum of subjects and from K-12.
- Consult with Elders and other First Nation, Métis and Inuit experts in traditional knowledge, cultures, and histories to bring relevant local perspectives to instruction planning.
- Promote shared planning with First Nation, Métis and Inuit families in student transitions, student supports and curriculum resources and include these measures in Education Services Agreements between First Nation communities and school boards.
- Share successful initiatives of integration of First Nation, Métis and Inuit histories, cultures and perspectives among school boards and with the Ministry to support continuous improvement in curriculum and program planning that incorporates First Nation, Métis and Inuit content.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

- Advocate for teacher education programs that include courses on First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures, histories and perspectives and that prepare teachers to incorporate these areas of knowledge across their teaching practice.
- Provide professional development within school boards that offers teachers opportunities to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to

First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures, histories, perspectives, learning models and learning styles.

- Involve Elders and others with expertise in local First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities in supporting teachers to incorporate First Nation, Métis and Inuit content in their program delivery in accurate, culturally sensitive and appropriate ways

Valuing First Nation, Métis and Inuit expertise

- Partner with First Nation, Métis and Inuit organizations and learning institutions to engage their expertise in appropriate ways to incorporate First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures, histories and perspectives in school programs.
- Consult with First Nation, Métis and Inuit organizations and learning institutions

Culturally responsive assessment

- Promote assessment practices that actively support achievement of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students through acknowledgement of a range of learning models and learning styles.
- Promote the elimination of cultural and other forms of bias in student assessment.

Affirming, revitalizing the languages of Canada's First Peoples

- Recognize the central role of language in supporting identity and culture and in validating First Nation, Métis and Inuit world views.
- Be proactive in promoting indigenous languages in schools, including consideration of language immersion programs.
- Promote the development of resources in First Nation, Métis and Inuit languages.

First Nation, Métis and Inuit representation in staff and leadership

- Promote voluntary confidential self-identification of First Nation, Métis and Inuit staff in school boards.
- Encourage increased representation of First Nation, Métis and Inuit staff in boards through hiring and promotion practices.
- Collaborate with universities and colleges, and with First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities, to improve access, transitional support and retention strategies to increase the numbers of First Nation, Métis and Inuit people enrolling in and completing secondary, post-secondary, teacher education and early childhood education programs.

Non-Aboriginal learners – foster commitment to First Nation, Métis and Inuit education

- Promote curriculum that ensures grade-appropriate instruction across the curriculum related to First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures, histories, perspectives and contributions to both historical and contemporary Canada.
- Encourage opportunities for all students to experience First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures and the components of an inclusive and welcoming school environment.

Research

- Create awareness of education research by First Nation, Métis and Inuit educators and researchers.
- Partner with First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities at all levels in ethically based and respectful research processes.

August, 2013