ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
Lighting the Way ~ Rejoicing in Our Journey

REPORT TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES
May 24, 2011

Paul Wubben, Director of Education

SUBJECT: **Policy 3.24 - Voluntary and Confidential Aboriginal Self-Identification**

PREPARED BY: Deb Crawford, Superintendent of Education

BACKGROUND:

The Ministry of Education has identified Aboriginal education as one of its key priorities, with a focus on meeting two primary challenges by the year 2016 – to improve achievement among First Nation, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) students, and to close the gap between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal students in the areas of:

- Literacy and numeracy
- Retention of students in school
- Graduation rates
- Advancement to post-secondary studies

Currently, the majority of school boards in Ontario have developed and put into place Voluntary Aboriginal Self-Identification policies. The policies are designed to offer aboriginal students and their families the opportunity to voluntarily identify themselves to the board and the Ministry of Education as either First Nations, Métis or Inuit whether they live on or off of a reserve. The Ministry of Education and the Education, Quality, and Accountability Office (EQAO) will gather data, which will be depersonalized, and allow the Ministry to report in the aggregate on the achievement of aboriginal students in the areas the Ministry of Education has identified as key priorities. This data will serve to inform the Ministry and school boards as to the best way to meet the needs of FNMI students.

KEY COMPONENTS:

- The school board will provide all families the opportunity to voluntarily self-identify as either First Nation, Métis, or Inuit by checking a box on the registration form or student data verification form.
- Families will also have the opportunity to remove their self-identification by making the correction on the student data verification form.
- Self-identification data will be used by the Ministry and school boards to determine the most effective ways of addressing the learning needs of FNMI students.
- Voluntary self-identification applies to students with any degree of Aboriginal ancestry and no proof of ancestry is required.
- Students who have not voluntarily self-identified will not be included in the data collection.
- The data collected as a result of this Policy will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and the results reported annually to the Board provided a sufficient number of students have self-identified to meet a minimum threshold for a valid, statistically significant sample of data.

REPORT:
Policy 3.24 - Voluntary and Confidential Aboriginal Self-Identification

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RECOMMENDATION:

That the St. Clair Catholic District School Board receive the report: *Policy 3.24 – Voluntary and Confidential Aboriginal Self-Identification* **for information.**

That the St. Clair Catholic District School Board approve Policy 3.24 – *Voluntary and Confidential Aboriginal Self-Identification* effective May 25, 2011.

ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
SECTION 3: STUDENTS

VOLUNTARY AND CONFIDENTIAL ABORIGINAL SELF-IDENTIFICATION (FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT STUDENTS)	POLICY 3.24
EFFECTIVE: 2011 05 25	

Policy Statement:

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board is committed to providing a positive Catholic environment, which enhances the dignity and learning of all members of its educational community.

Policy Goals:

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board will offer to all Aboriginal students and/or their parents/guardians, the opportunity to voluntarily self-identify as First Nations, Métis or Inuit students, whether they live on or off a reserve. To this end, the learning, aspirations and potential of Aboriginal students can be realized through the following:

1. A responsive, transparent and accountable process, which focuses on improving services and supports and builds on strong partnerships with Aboriginal parents and their communities.

2. The collection and analysis of student achievement data, which will be used to provide information about the effectiveness of programs and supports, provided a sufficient number of students have self-identified, to meet a minimum threshold for a valid, statistically significant sample of data.

ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
SECTION 3: STUDENTS

VOLUNTARY AND CONFIDENTIAL ABORIGINAL SELF-IDENTIFICATION (FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT STUDENTS)	PROCEDURE 3.24.1
EFFECTIVE: 2011 05 25	

1.0 Responsibility

1.1 Planning Services will ensure that an opportunity for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) students to voluntarily self-identify, and to withdraw identification, is provided on all registration and Student Data Verification forms.

1.2 Planning Services will ensure that up to date Aboriginal Self-Identification data is stored confidentially and reported to the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS).

1.3 Planning Services and school administrators will ensure that school secretaries are aware of and understand the FNMI voluntary self-identification process.

1.4 School administrators will ensure that all information pertaining to the Aboriginal Self-Identification process is available to all stakeholders.

2.0 Expectations

2.1 The St. Clair Catholic District School Board will include a section on all registration forms and Student Data Verification forms, which provides an opportunity for all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit parents/guardians, or FNMI students age 18 or older, to voluntarily self-identify.

2.2 Voluntary self-identification applies to students with any degree of Aboriginal ancestry and no proof of ancestry is required.

2.3 Parents/guardians and students 18 years of age and older will be able to withdraw the identification or add the identification at any time, upon written request to the principal or by updating the Student Data Verification form.

2.4 Students, who have not voluntarily self-identified, will not be included in the data collection.

2.5 Data will be used for the purpose of analysis and for the potential enhancement of program delivery within the St. Clair Catholic District School Board.

2.6 The data collected as a result of this policy will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and the results reported annually to the Board, provided a sufficient number of students have self-identified to meet a minimum threshold for a valid, statistically significant sample of data.

2.7 All information will be securely stored to respect privacy.

2.8 Information gathered may be used in the aggregate by and reported to the Ministry of Education through OnSIS, where it will be depersonalized for the purpose of planning strategies and programs, to better support FNMI student achievement.

3.0 Additional Information

3.1 Data gathered under this policy will be in accordance with the Education Act, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA).

3.2 The St. Clair Catholic District School Board is committed to the principles of equity and inclusive education, consistent with our Catholic teachings, which value and promote human rights and social justice in all Board policies, programs, guidelines, operations and practices.