

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORK: THE FOUNDATION FOR IMPROVING THE DELIVERY OF QUALITY EDUCATION TO ABORIGINAL STUDENTS IN ONTARIO

INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Education has identified Aboriginal education as a key priority in Ontario. The Ontario government is dedicated to excellence in public education for all students and the ministry recognizes the need to develop specific strategies through a holistic approach to meet the needs of Aboriginal students to improve Aboriginal student achievement.¹

The Ontario government's *New Approach to Aboriginal Affairs*, released in June 2005, envisions prosperous and healthy Aboriginal communities that will create a better future for Aboriginal children and youth. Ontario and Aboriginal leaders recognize the importance of education in improving lifelong opportunities for Aboriginal children and youth. The *New Approach* commits the government to work with Aboriginal leaders and organizations to improve education outcomes among Aboriginal children and youth.

Two of the key challenges faced by the Ministry of Education are improving achievement among Aboriginal students and closing the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in literacy and numeracy, retention, graduation rates and advancement to post-secondary studies (see Appendix A for further background/context).

The 2005 Federal Auditor General's report estimated it would take 28 years for First Nation high school graduation numbers to reach the Canadian average. There are a number of issues that impact on Aboriginal student achievement such as poverty, low self-esteem, lack of parental support, substance abuse and discrimination. Other factors that contribute to low Aboriginal student outcomes include high absenteeism, low student engagement, a lack of awareness among teachers of the learning styles of Aboriginal students and a lack of understanding within schools and school boards of Aboriginal cultures, histories and perspectives.

A holistic and integrated approach is required in order to improve Aboriginal student outcomes. Factors that contribute to student success include teaching strategies that are appropriate to Aboriginal learner needs, curriculum that reflects Aboriginal cultures and perspectives, effective counselling and outreach, and a school environment that encourages Aboriginal student and parent engagement. It is essential that Aboriginal students are engaged and feel welcome in school, and that they see themselves and their cultures in the curriculum and the school community.

While improvements have been made in some areas, such as curriculum, over the past number of years (see Appendix B for current Ministry initiatives), greater efforts are needed to ensure Aboriginal students succeed at a rate comparable to that of other students in the education system.

¹ References to Aboriginal peoples include First Nation, Métis and Inuit. Specific references may be made to First Nation, Métis or Inuit students depending on the context.

The Aboriginal Education Policy Framework is intended to provide the strategic policy context for the Ministry of Education, school boards² and schools to improve the academic achievement of the estimated 50,312 Aboriginal students who attend provincially funded elementary and secondary students (18,300 First Nations, 26,200 Métis and 600 Inuit students who live in the jurisdiction of school boards and the 5,212 living in First Nations communities but served under a tuition agreement).

The Framework also clarifies the roles and relationships of the Ministry of Education, school boards, provincially funded elementary and secondary schools in helping First Nations, Métis and Inuit students achieve their educational goals and closing the gap in academic achievement with their non-Aboriginal counterparts by 2016.

VISION

Aboriginal students in Ontario will have the knowledge, skills and confidence to complete their elementary and secondary education and successfully participate in post-secondary education and/or the workforce to be full participants in Aboriginal communities as well as full and equal partners in Ontario's future.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Ministry of Education is committed to improving Aboriginal student success. Through collaboration with Aboriginal communities and organizations, First Nation governments and education authorities, school boards, other Ontario ministries and the federal government, the ministry is committed to developing strategies that will:

- increase the education system's capacity to address the learning and cultural needs of Aboriginal students,
- provide appropriate programs, services and resources to facilitate learning opportunities for Aboriginal students that support improved academic achievement and identity building,
- facilitate learning about Aboriginal cultures, histories and perspectives among all students, school board staff and elected trustees, and
- facilitate increased participation by Aboriginal parents, students and communities in developing strategies to support academic success.

² References to school boards include District School Boards and School Authorities.

FRAMEWORK PRINCIPLES

The Aboriginal Education Policy Framework is guided by the following principles:

1. Excellence in Education and Accountability

Ontario believes quality education is essential for the continuing development of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. The academic achievement of every Aboriginal student is supported through improved delivery of quality education. Ontario provides support measures and resources adapted to the specific needs of Aboriginal students.

2. Equity and Respect for Diversity

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

Ontario creates and supports an academic environment that fosters Aboriginal languages and cultures. Ontario endorses learning about Aboriginal cultures, histories and perspectives in the public education system.

3. Inclusiveness, Collaboration and Shared Responsibility

Collaboration among governments, educational institutions and Aboriginal families and communities is essential for the implementation of education programs and services designed to meet the specific needs of Aboriginal students, regardless of where they live.

4. Respect for Constitutional and Treaty Rights

Ontario respects Aboriginal and Treaty rights protected by Section 35 of the *Constitution Act 1982*.

GOALS

The Ministry of Education has developed the following goals to address the objective of increased student achievement and engagement for all students while meeting the expectations of Ontario's diverse society for a quality public education system. The Aboriginal Education Policy Framework is designed to achieve these same goals for Aboriginal students.

1. **High Level of Student Achievement**
2. **Reduce Gaps in Student Achievement**
3. **High Levels of Public Confidence**

STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES FOR ACHIEVING THE FRAMEWORK GOALS

The following high yield strategies have been identified to achieve the goals set out by the Ministry of Education. They set the framework for the Ministry of Education, school boards and provincially funded elementary and secondary schools in providing programs, services and supports for Aboriginal students in Ontario. The limited number of strategies identified are a starting point only and all parties are encouraged to identify additional measures as they implement the Aboriginal Education Policy Framework.

GOAL 1: *High Level of Student Achievement*

Key Results:

- Significant improvement in the percentage of Aboriginal students meeting provincial standards on province-wide assessments in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Significant increase in the number of Aboriginal staff throughout school boards.

Strategy 1.1: Build capacity for effective teaching, assessment and evaluation practices.

The Ministry of Education proposes to :

- Support school boards in developing voluntary, confidential and positive Aboriginal student self-identification policies, in close collaboration with local Aboriginal parents and communities.
- Encourage faculties of education and colleges to train more Aboriginal teachers and teacher assistants, fully knowledgeable of their own culture and traditions, with a specific focus in recruiting Aboriginal adults.
- Encourage faculties of education and colleges to further enhance knowledge and skills of teachers and other staff working with Aboriginal students with special needs.
- Partner with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and an Ontario post-secondary institution to develop a centre of excellence for curriculum development and Aboriginal teacher training.
- Research and promote effective practices for Aboriginal student success including success for Aboriginal students with special needs.

- Increase its internal capacity to support school boards and schools in their efforts to close the gap in Aboriginal students' academic achievement by hiring First Nations and Métis educators.
- Support research that would identify assessment tools that can reflect Aboriginal ways of learning and culture that can be used in the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) process.

School Boards will be encouraged to :

- Consult, develop and implement strategies for Aboriginal student self-identification.
- Ensure Aboriginal students benefit from school based early screening and intervention programs.
- Devote Professional Development activities focussed on the needs of Aboriginal students including Aboriginal students with special needs.
- Enhance expertise by hiring Aboriginal staff at all levels.
- Support teachers to teach and assess Aboriginal students more effectively using a variety of techniques.
- Review tuition agreements and develop strategies designed to improve student achievement.

Schools will be encouraged to :

- Develop awareness among teachers of the learning styles of Aboriginal students.
- Provide instructional methods to enhance the learning of all Aboriginal students.
- Integrate meaningful cultural perspectives and activities in learning planning.
- Implement targeted learning strategies for oral communication and mastery of reading and writing.
- Implement strategies for developing critical and creative thinking.

Strategy 1.2: Promote system effectiveness, transparency and responsiveness.

The Ministry of Education proposes to :

- Support school boards in developing strategic plans to integrate the Aboriginal Education Policy Framework into school board planning to increase Aboriginal student achievement.
- Renew targeted support of boards' initiatives directed towards Aboriginal students.
- Promote the involvement of Aboriginal communities and agencies in the strategy to integrate services for students with special education needs.
- Develop a process for reporting on the implementation of the Aboriginal Education Policy Framework every three years.

School Boards will be encouraged to :

- In collaboration with Aboriginal communities, parents and students, develop a strategic plan to integrate the Aboriginal Education Policy Framework into school board planning to increase Aboriginal student achievement.
- Develop a process for reporting to Aboriginal parents and communities on Aboriginal student achievement.

Schools will be encouraged to :

- Develop a process for reporting to Aboriginal parents and communities on Aboriginal student achievement.

GOAL 2: Reduce Gaps in Student Achievement**Key Results:**

- Significant increase in the graduation rate of Aboriginal students.
- Significant increase in Aboriginal students' achievements.
- Significant improvement in Aboriginal students' self-esteem.
- Increased collaboration between First Nation education authorities and school boards to ensure First Nation students in First Nation communities receive appropriate preparation to succeed when they transition to provincially funded schools.
- Increased satisfaction of educators in provincially funded schools about targeted professional development and resources to serve Aboriginal students more effectively.

Strategy 2.1: Enhance support to improve literacy and numeracy skills.

The Ministry of Education proposes to :

- Provide focused support for training in remedial literacy and numeracy strategies for teachers of Aboriginal students.
- Provide support to school boards to develop yearly action plans focused on improving literacy and numeracy skills of Aboriginal students including students with special needs.

School Boards will be encouraged to :

- Develop yearly action plans focussed on improving literacy and numeracy skills of Aboriginal students including those with special needs.
- Ensure Aboriginal students are included in early screening and intervention programs aimed at identification and remediation of learning difficulties.

Schools will be encouraged to :

- In collaboration with Ministry resource staff, implement yearly action plans focussed on improving literacy and numeracy skills of Aboriginal students.

Strategy 2.2: Provide additional supports to reduce gaps in student outcomes.

The Ministry of Education proposes to :

- Ensure continued Aboriginal representation on Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE).
- Support horizontal policy development among Ministries responsible for Aboriginal children and youth, such as other ministries' and social agencies' efforts in improving early childhood development, including prenatal and postnatal nutrition, prevention of fetal alcohol births, assistance to young parents in raising children, support for early literacy environments, and early detection of learning difficulties, with sensitivity to Aboriginal cultures and traditions.
- Support the Native Counsellor Program that will train qualified Aboriginal Education Counsellors who would provide counselling services to Aboriginal students in elementary and secondary schools
- Continue support of the Alternative Secondary School in Native Friendship Centres Program.

- Ensure Aboriginal students have access to the accommodations and/or modifications and special education programs and services they need to achieve success.

School Boards will be encouraged to :

- Create strategic partnerships with First Nation education authorities to facilitate a better transition for First Nation students moving between publicly funded elementary and secondary schools and schools in First Nation communities.
- Develop strategies and procedures that can ensure smooth placement and subsequent adjustment of Aboriginal students with special needs as they move from on-reserve to off-reserve schools and back.
- Recognize qualified Aboriginal Education Counsellors and promote their effectiveness in providing appropriate services to Aboriginal students.
- Provide Aboriginal students with access to Alternative programs that focus on Aboriginal cultures and traditions, delivered by Aboriginal staff.
- Develop Aboriginal lighthouse programs under the Ministry's Student Success and Literacy/Numeracy initiatives.

Schools will be encouraged to :

- Provide supports for First Nation students transitioning to publicly funded elementary and secondary schools.
- Provide a supportive and safe environment for all Aboriginal students in publicly funded elementary and secondary schools.

GOAL 3: *High Levels of Public Confidence*

Key Results:

- Increased participation of Aboriginal parents in the education of their children.
- Increased opportunities for knowledge-sharing, collaboration and issue resolution among Aboriginal communities, First Nations governments and education authorities, schools, school boards and the Ministry of Education.
- Integration of educational opportunities to significantly improve the knowledge of the rich cultures and histories of Aboriginal peoples in Ontario.

Strategy 3.1: Build educational leadership capacity and coordination.

The Ministry of Education proposes to :

- Through the Aboriginal Education Office, provide leadership on Aboriginal education throughout the Ministry of Education, other ministries, school boards, schools and other education stakeholders.
- Strengthen Aboriginal voice and involvement in educational structures, including First Nations and Métis representation on the Education Partnership Table and the establishment of a Working Group on Aboriginal education.
- Work with the federal government and Aboriginal organizations to increase coordination on Aboriginal education.
- Upon request from First Nations, offer assistance to help strengthen education leadership in areas such as training of principals, with sensitivity to Aboriginal traditions and practices.

- Research and disseminate effective practices for Aboriginal student success.

School Boards will be encouraged to :

- Build strong positive connections with related First Nations, especially where there is significant migration of students from on-reserve to off-reserve schools.
- Engage in shared planning around student transitions, curriculum, resource materials and student supports with local First Nations.
- Sustain continuous dialogue with First Nations around tuition agreements, thus encouraging transparency and accountability.
- Research and promote effective practices for Aboriginal student success.

Schools will be encouraged to :

- Implement best practices on Aboriginal student success.
- Offer career events with Aboriginal role models.
- Foster and promote Aboriginal students' leadership skills.

Strategy 3.2: Build capacity to support identity building, including the appreciation of Aboriginal perspectives, values and cultures by all students, school board staff and elected trustees.

The Ministry of Education proposes to :

- Integrate Aboriginal histories, cultures and perspectives throughout the Ontario curriculum and relevant support resources.
- Improve knowledge and cultural awareness of all Ontario educators about Aboriginal issues by encouraging faculties of education, school boards, teacher federations and professional associations to provide appropriate training and concentrated professional development for teachers, principals and supervisory officers about Aboriginal histories, cultures and perspectives.
- Encourage trustee organizations to promote awareness of Aboriginal perspectives, values and cultures among elected trustees.

School Boards will be encouraged to :

- Offer training for teachers about Aboriginal histories, cultures and perspectives.
- Develop programs and services supporting cultural development.
- Promote Native language programming.
- Encourage intercultural dialogue.

Schools will be encouraged to :

- Promote increased knowledge of Aboriginal cultures among all school staff.
- Acquire and provide access to a variety of Aboriginal resources such as periodicals, books, electronic media and software, including materials in the main Aboriginal languages.
- Recognize and promote the Native Language Policy.
- Foster school-community projects with appropriate cultural components.

Strategy 3.3: Foster supportive and engaged families and communities.

The Ministry of Education proposes to :

- Ensure Aboriginal representation on the Parent Involvement Advisory Board.

- Through the Parent Engagement Office, directly support schools in communities with a significant number of Aboriginal parents, in their efforts to enhance parental engagement.
- Communicate in a clear, concise and user-friendly fashion to Aboriginal communities, overall and specific expectations in Ontario's curriculum which reflect Aboriginal histories, cultures and perspectives

School Boards will be encouraged to :

- Establish Aboriginal Education Advisory Committees.
- Develop strategies to encourage Aboriginal parents to participate more actively and directly in the education of their children.
- Develop strategies to involve Aboriginal communities and service providers to ensure that integrated and seamless services are provided to Aboriginal students with special needs.
- Improve Aboriginal parental, elder and community resources.
- Provide Continuing Education Programs for Aboriginal parents.
- Develop strategies to engage Aboriginal students to participate more actively in school.

Schools will be encouraged to :

- Implement specific strategies, including support networks, to increase Aboriginal parents' participation in their children's education and Aboriginal student participation in school.
- Support Aboriginal families in the areas of literacy, numeracy and career development.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Included in the implementation of the Aboriginal Education Policy Framework will be the development of performance measures and targets designed to assess system effectiveness and Aboriginal student achievement.

Although Census data is available on the educational attainment of Aboriginal peoples in Ontario (see Appendix C), a particular challenge for the Ministry is the inability to identify Aboriginal students who live within the jurisdictions of Ontario school boards. Aboriginal student-specific data is not available on enrolment, EQAO results, graduation rates and/or drop out rates. This information is necessary to identify services and programs required and to quantify the range and extent of the academic gap.

Appropriate efforts will be made to ensure reliable data are available to inform research and policy decisions, measurement and reporting.

Establishing baseline data on the achievement of Aboriginal students in Ontario provincially funded schools will be a key target in the implementation of the Policy Framework.

The Ministry of Education is committed to provide progress reports every three years on the implementation of the three goals and ten key results of the Policy Framework

| Goals | Key Results |
|---|--|
| High Level of Student Achievement | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Significant improvement in the percentage of Aboriginal students meeting provincial standards on province-wide assessments in reading, writing and mathematics. 2. Significant increase in the number of Aboriginal staff throughout school boards. |
| Reduce Gaps in Student Achievement | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Significant increase in the graduation rate of Aboriginal students. 4. Significant improvement in Aboriginal students' achievements. 5. Significant improvement in Aboriginal students' self-esteem. 6. Increased collaboration between First Nation education authorities and school boards to ensure First Nation students in First Nation communities receive appropriate preparation to succeed when they transition to provincially funded schools. 7. Increased satisfaction of educators in provincially funded schools about targeted professional development and resources to serve Aboriginal students more effectively. |
| High Levels of Public Confidence | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Increased participation of Aboriginal parents in the education of their children. 9. Increased opportunities for knowledge-sharing, collaboration and issue resolution among Aboriginal communities, First Nations governments and education authorities, schools, school boards and the Ministry of Education. 10. Integration of educational opportunities to significantly improve the knowledge of the rich cultures and histories of Aboriginal peoples in Ontario. |

APPENDIX A

Background/Context of Aboriginal Education in Ontario

Aboriginal and Treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada are recognized and affirmed in the *Constitution Act*, 1982 (section 35). Section 35(2) indicates that Aboriginal peoples of Canada include Indian, Inuit and Métis people. Section 91(24) of the *Constitution* gives Parliament the exclusive jurisdiction to make laws in relation to “Indians and lands reserved for the Indians”. Section 93 of the *Constitution* gives provincial legislatures exclusive jurisdiction to make laws in relation to education.

There are five cohorts of Aboriginal students in Ontario:

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. First Nation students who live in First Nation communities and attend federally funded elementary or secondary schools in First Nation communities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The estimated number is 20,100³. ▪ Elementary and secondary education of these students is the responsibility of the local First Nation Education Authority. ▪ Funds for education of these students is provided by the federal government. ▪ Elementary schools in First Nation communities are not in the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. ▪ Secondary schools in First Nation communities registered with the ministry as private schools in order to offer credit courses leading to the Ontario Secondary School Diploma. In 2005 there were 34 First Nation secondary schools. ▪ The Ministry of Education provides professional development opportunities for teachers and principals in First Nation schools on a fee-for-service basis. |
| <p>2. First Nation students living in First Nation communities but attending provincially funded elementary or secondary schools under a tuition agreement.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The number is 5,212⁴. ▪ Some First Nations provide education programming up to grade 6, others up to grade 8. Most students must leave their communities to continue their education in provincially funded schools. ▪ A tuition agreement covers the cost of education provided by the school board. |

³ 2001 Census.

⁴ October Report (2004/05)

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>3. First Nation students who live in the jurisdiction of school boards and attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The estimated number is 18,300⁵. ▪ These students are a provincial responsibility. ▪ Education funding for these students is provided by the Ministry of Education under the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) they are treated like all other students of the board. |
| <p>4. Métis students attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The estimated number is 26,200⁶. ▪ These students are a provincial responsibility. ▪ Education funding for these students is provided by the Ministry of Education under the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) they are treated like all other students of the board. |
| <p>5. Inuit students attend provincially funded elementary or secondary schools.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The estimated number is 600⁷. ▪ These students are a provincial responsibility. ▪ Education funding for these students is provided by the Ministry of Education under the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) they are treated like all other students of the board. |

According to 2001 Census data, there is a significant gap in the education attainment of the Aboriginal population versus the non-Aboriginal population (see Appendix B for detailed Census data). Many Aboriginal people have few employment skills or the academic/literacy skills to upgrade their qualifications in a labour market that is increasingly becoming knowledge-oriented.

Census data indicates that 42% of the Aboriginal population in Ontario, aged 15 years and over, have less than a high school diploma, and only 6% have completed a university degree. The 2005 Federal Auditor General's report estimated that it would take 28 years for First Nation high school graduation numbers to reach the Canadian average.

Aboriginal students face a number of challenges that impact on student achievement. With high unemployment rates affecting First Nation communities and off reserve Aboriginal people, many Aboriginal students face issues of low self-esteem, little or no parental support, substance abuse and other personal issues affecting student success. The result is many Aboriginal students leaving school without completing their secondary school diploma.

A further challenge is the lack of coordination between First Nation governments, Aboriginal organizations and the provincial and federal governments, which has resulted in varied levels of educational supports for Aboriginal students. However, efforts are currently underway at a number of levels to find collaborative ways of improving the education outcomes of Aboriginal students.

In September 2004, the Council of Ministers of Education Canada identified Aboriginal education as a priority issue. Ministers acknowledged the need to find new and varied ways of working together to improve the outcomes of Aboriginal students across both the elementary/secondary and postsecondary education systems.

⁵ 2001 Census

⁶ 2001 Census

⁷ 2001 Census

The Ontario government's *New Approach to Aboriginal Affairs*, released in June 2005, envisions prosperous and healthy Aboriginal communities that will create a better future for Aboriginal children and youth. Ontario and Aboriginal leaders recognize the importance of education in improving lifelong opportunities for Aboriginal children and youth. The *New Approach* commits the government to work with Aboriginal leaders and organizations to improve education outcomes among Aboriginal children and youth by:

- Working with Aboriginal stakeholders and school boards to develop an Aboriginal Education Policy Framework.
- Fostering good relationships between First Nations and school boards.
- Establishing clear roles and responsibilities, including the federal government's relationship with First Nations.
- Working with the federal government to improve the learning environment and educational outcomes of First Nation students on reserve.

At the November 2005 First Ministers Meeting, First Ministers and National Aboriginal Leaders agreed to close the quality of life gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people by addressing several issues including health, housing and improving the K-12 education achievement of Aboriginal students. Aboriginal education achievement will be measured by regionally determined indicators over a 10-year timeframe. The target is to close the high school graduation gap by 20% over the next five years.

According to Census data, improvements in Aboriginal educational attainment have been made over the years. However, greater efforts are needed to ensure Aboriginal students succeed at a rate comparable to that of other students in the education system. Through strategies such as those mentioned above and the implementation of the Aboriginal Education Policy Framework, the Ministry of Education is committed to ensuring that Aboriginal students in Ontario have the necessary supports to succeed.

APPENDIX B

Selected Ontario Aboriginal Education Initiatives

Alternative Secondary Schools in Native Friendship Centres Program

- The ministry provides \$650,000 in support of alternative secondary schools in eight native friendship centres to address high drop-out rates of urban Aboriginal students.
- Funding is intended to support activities such as cultural programs, elders and counselling.
- Programs are located in: London, Sudbury, Fort Erie, Fort Frances, Kenora, Sault Ste Marie, Hamilton and Ottawa.

Native Studies

- Curriculum policy documents developed for teaching Native Studies, grades 9-12.
- The Curriculum is designed to provide students with a broad range of knowledge related to Aboriginal peoples to help them better understand Aboriginal issues of public interest discussed at the local, regional and national levels.
- The curriculum provides students with an increased awareness and understanding of the histories, cultures and world views of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

Native Languages

- Implemented in 1987, the curriculum includes seven Native languages for grades 1-12.
- Curriculum guidelines and resource guides were developed for the teaching of language patterns (grammar) in support of the Native languages program.
- Native language teacher training programs are in place to train qualified NL teachers.
- Students enrolled in a Native language program may be exempt from learning French as a second language.

Curriculum Review

- Review and revision of curriculum to reflect culturally appropriate Aboriginal content, in consultation with Aboriginal organizations.
- Review of curriculum includes: Social Studies, (grade 1-6), History and Geography (grades 7-8), Canadian and World Studies, Law, Politics and Economics.
- A resource guide to supplement the Social Studies program is being developed.

Turnaround Team Project

- Turnaround Team Program provides tailored supports to selected schools across the province where a third (33 %) or fewer Grade 3 students consistently reach the provincial standard in reading on the Grade 3 EQAO provincial assessment. Turnaround Teams of experienced teachers, administrators and external literacy experts work with each school to provide supports over a three year period.
- Several of the schools identified have a significant Aboriginal student population. Many of the teaching strategies in these schools are specific to the Aboriginal population such as using resources that reflect Aboriginal culture and a focus on oral language and Aboriginal culture.

Aboriginal Student Information

- There is currently no Ministry policy requiring boards to implement Aboriginal student self-identification policies.
- Aboriginal student specific data is not available on enrolment, EQAO results, graduation rates and/or drop-out rates.
- In school year 2006/2007, seven school boards will have a student identification policy in place.

- The Ministry is currently examining ways to gather this information through the Managing Information for Student Achievement (MISA) system.

Northern Ontario Education Leaders (NOEL) Aboriginal Education Project

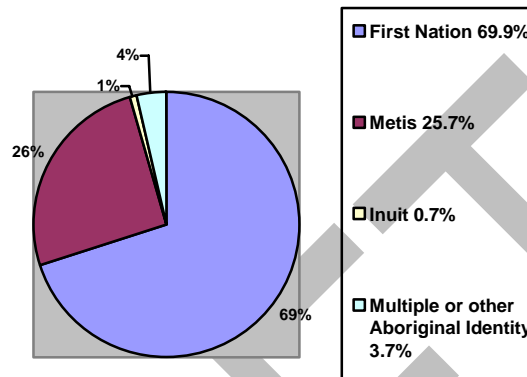
- The Ministry provided \$175,000 to NOEL in December 2003 to develop and implement specific projects that seek to improve Aboriginal student achievement.
- Projects included the development of an Aboriginal student self-identification policy, parental involvement strategy and early and later literacy.
- Results include the establishment of Aboriginal self-identification policies in two boards and recommendations stressing oral literacy.

Aboriginal Student-Focussed Student Success Projects

- In 2004/2005, \$2.3M was provided to boards for seven projects on alternative pathways for Aboriginal secondary school students to complete their secondary education.
- The projects are as follows:
 - Algoma District School Board: *Late School – An Alternative Pathway*
 - James Bay Lowlands District School Board: *Innovation Teacher*
 - Near North District School Board: *Success Through Alternative Routes*
 - Northern Ontario Education Leaders: *Aboriginal Student Success (grades 7-12)*
 - Rainbow District School Board: *MKWA Police Opportunity Circle*
 - Simcoe Country District School Board: *Seventh Fire Education Centre*
 - Toronto District School Board: *Retaining Aboriginal Students in Toronto District Schools*

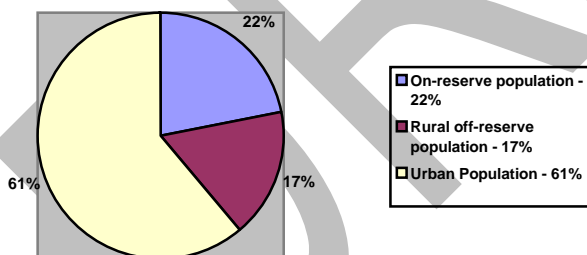
APPENDIX C Demographic and Educational Attainment Statistics (2001 Census)

Breakdown of Aboriginal Identity Population in Ontario (2001 Census)

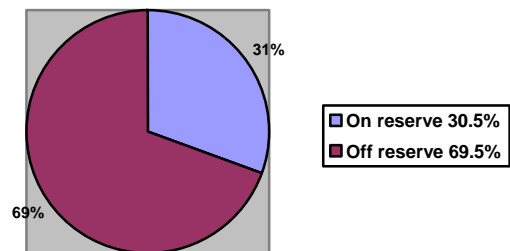


According to 2001 Census, the Aboriginal population in Ontario is 188,315, which represents 1.7% of the total provincial population.

Aboriginal Identity Population in Ontario by Area of Residence (2001 Census)



First Nation Identity Population in Ontario by Area of Residence (2001 Census)

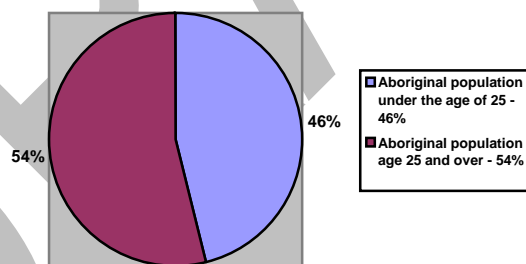


Seventy-eight percent of the Aboriginal population lives off reserve, with 61% living in urban centres. Of the total First Nation population, approximately 70% live off reserve.

| Communities in Ontario with Significant Numbers of Aboriginal People 2001 Census | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| City or Census Metropolitan Area | Aboriginal Identity Population |
| Toronto - CMA | 20,300 |
| Ottawa - C | 8,625 |
| Thunder Bay - CMA | 8,205 |
| Greater Sudbury - CMA | 7,385 |
| Hamilton - CMA | 7,265 |
| London - CMA | 5,640 |
| St. Catharines-Niagara - CMA | 4,970 |
| Sault Ste. Marie - C | 4,530 |
| Windsor - CMA | 3,965 |
| Kitchener - CMA | 3,235 |
| Oshawa - CMA | 3,020 |
| Timmins - C | 2,880 |
| Brantford - C | 2,475 |
| North Bay - C | 2,320 |
| Kingston - CMA | 2,205 |
| Mississauga - C | 2,055 |

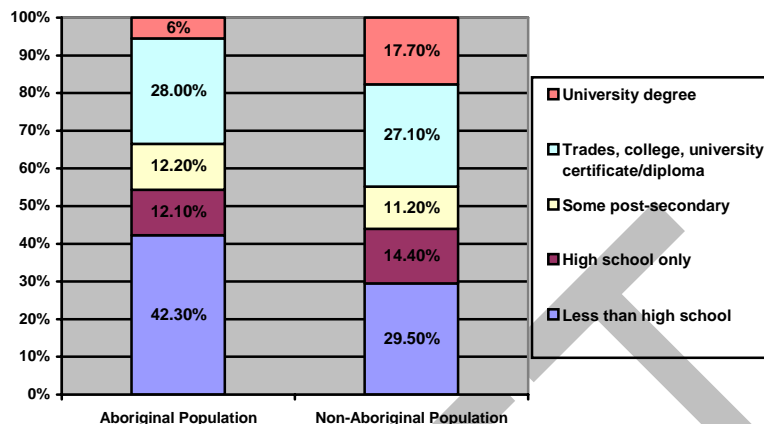
The above chart provides an overview of communities in Ontario with significant populations of Aboriginal people (over 2000).

Aboriginal Youth Population, Under Age 25, in Ontario (2001 Census)



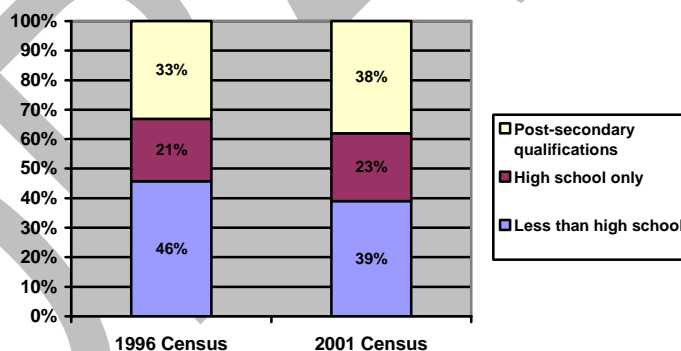
The Aboriginal population is much younger than the non-Aboriginal population. In Ontario, the Aboriginal population (under age 25) makes up 46% of the total Aboriginal population. It is expected that this trend will continue as the birth rate among the Aboriginal population is approximately 1.5 times higher than the Canadian average. This will result in an increasing number of Aboriginal students moving through the school system.

Education Attainment of the Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Population in Ontario, Age 15 Years and Over (2001 Census)



There is a significant gap in the education attainment of the Aboriginal population versus the non-Aboriginal population. Forty-two percent of the Aboriginal population in Ontario, aged 15 years and over, have less than a high school diploma, and only 6% have completed a university degree.

Educational Attainment of the Aboriginal Identity Population in Canada, Age 25-64, 1996 vs 2001 Census



Improvements in Aboriginal educational attainment have been made over the years. In 2001, the proportion of Aboriginal people with a high school diploma increased from 21% in 1996 to 23%, while those with post-secondary qualifications increased from 33% to 38%. However, greater efforts are still required to close the gap in Aboriginal student outcomes.