

**JAMES BAY LOWLANDS
SECONDARY SCHOOL BOARD**

**BOARD GOVERNANCE POLICY
NO. GOV-14**

Date Adopted	October 24, 2018
Last Revised	
Board Motion	5598-10-18

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

1. PURPOSE

This governance policy of the James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board has been developed to support Board Policy GOV-13 Equity and Inclusion. This policy also supports the values of the Board that all students are entitled to learn in an environment that promotes equity of opportunity.

This policy supports Ministry of Education expectations that school Boards have in place and sustain programs, procedures, and practices which reflect the principles of equity and that foster improved student achievement and well-being, and work toward closing the achievement gap between Indigenous students and other students.

2. DEFINITIONS

Aboriginal Identification: Aboriginal identification refers to the definition in the *Constitution Act*, 1982, Section 35(2), in that “aboriginal peoples” include “Indian, Inuit, and Métis”.

Equity: Equity is the provision of opportunities for equality, ensuring that personal or social circumstances are not an obstacle to achieving potential. Equity of treatment is not the same as equal treatment because it includes acknowledging historical and present discrimination against identified groups and removing barriers, eliminating discrimination, and remedying the impact of past discrimination.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 The James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board is committed to the principles of equity through inclusive programs, curriculum, services, and operations in accordance with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, and the Ministry of Education Indigenous Education Strategy.
- 3.2 The Ministry of Education has identified Indigenous education as one of its key priorities, with a focus on meeting two primary challenges—to improve achievement among Indigenous students and to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the areas of literacy and numeracy, retention of students in

school, graduation rates, and advancement to postsecondary studies. The Ministry recognizes that, to achieve these goals, effective strategies must be developed to meet the particular educational needs of Indigenous students.

3.3 The Board is committed to development strategies that will:

- increase the capacity of the education system to respond to the learning and cultural needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students;
- provide quality programs, services, and programs to help create learning opportunities for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students that support improved academic achievement and identity building;
- provide a curriculum that facilitates learning about contemporary and traditional First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures, histories, and perspectives among all students, and that also contributes to education of school board staff, teachers and elected trustees; and
- develop and implement strategies that facilitate increased participation by First Nation, Métis and Inuit parents, students, communities, and organizations in working to support academic success.

[Subsection 3.3 is from *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework*, Aboriginal Education Office, Ministry of Education, 2007.]

4. POLICY

- 4.1 This policy affirms the responsibility of the James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board to provide a protected learning and working environment that is supportive of the dignity, self-esteem, and fair treatment of all its Indigenous students.
- 4.2 The learning aspirations and potential of the students can be realized through a responsive, transparent, and accountable policy that focuses on improved programs and services and builds on strong partnerships with Indigenous parents and their communities.
- 4.3 Student achievement data needs to be collected and aggregated related to the performance of all Indigenous students. This is to determine whether programs currently delivered offer the greatest opportunities for success for all students. Continued data collection and analysis will provide information for future decision-making surrounding Indigenous student success.
- 4.4 The Board will identify and remove systemic and attitudinal barriers and biases to learning opportunities that have a discriminatory effect on any individual.

BOARD EXPECTATIONS**5. SELF-IDENTIFICATION**

- 5.1 The Board is committed to supporting all students who experience gaps in their education by putting into place measures that respond to particular needs. All Indigenous students and their parents have the right to voluntarily self-identify so that they may receive supportive programming.
- 5.2 The first such measure in recognizing this right is to establish a self-identification process to identify, collect, and aggregate student achievement data for all students.
- 5.3 All data will be securely stored to respect privacy and used only as a means to enhance Indigenous education programs within the James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board.
- 5.4 Data will be treated in the same manner as Ontario Student Records and protected and governed by the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- 5.5 Individual data will not be communicated. The information gathered will be used in the aggregate only and for the purpose of developing and implementing supportive programs.

6. FRAMEWORK GOALS

- 6.1 The James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board has established the following goals for Indigenous education within its jurisdiction:
 - to provide high-quality learning opportunities which are responsive, flexible, and accessible to the learner;
 - to continue to set high expectations for learner achievement in supported learning environments;
 - to improve Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) test scores for Indigenous students;
 - to increase the retention rate of Indigenous students;
 - to increase the graduation rates of Indigenous students;
 - to ensure that learners are well prepared for participation in post-secondary studies and the world of work; and
 - to promote effective, respectful working relationships and partnerships with Indigenous parents and the general Indigenous community.

7. EVALUATION

- 7.1 Ongoing assessment and evaluation will be used to determine whether programs currently delivered offer the greatest opportunities for success for all Indigenous students. Continued data collection and analysis will provide information for future decision-making surrounding student success.
- 7.2 The data collected as a result of this policy will be evaluated on an annual basis and the results reported to the Board and to the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee.
- 7.3 This policy itself will be reviewed annually for its effectiveness and need for its continuation.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Legal:

The Constitution Act 1982

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Ontario Human Rights Code

The Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Education Act, Section 169.1 Board Powers and Duties: Positive School Climate

Education Quality and Accountability Office Act. 1996

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2007) Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2009) *Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy*

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014) *Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation.*

Ontario Ministry of Education. *Ontario's Indigenous Education Strategy. (2016)*

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 *Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies Revised 2013*

Board References:

Board Policy GOV-01 Values, Vision, and Mission

Board Policy GOV-05 Multi-Year Strategic Plan

Board Policy GOV-06 Policy Development and Review

Board Policy GOV-08 Staff Recruitment and Selection

Board Policy GOV-09 Board Communications

Board Policy GOV-13 Equity and Inclusion

Resource:

Ontario Ministry of Education, Aboriginal Education Office. (2007) *Building Bridges to Success for First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students—Developing Policies for Voluntary, Confidential Aboriginal Student Self-Identification: Successful Practices for Ontario School Boards*