

# Aboriginal student self-identification

## Information for parents and guardians

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### Aboriginal self-identification

The self-identification question box (located at the end of this document), appears on registration and annual verification forms for public, separate, Francophone, charter and Level 2 accredited funded private school authorities.

The **response** to the Aboriginal self-identification question is **voluntary**. Alberta Education does not ask for schools or students for proof of Aboriginal identity. Aboriginal identity is best determined by each individual family.

### Purpose of self-identification

The Aboriginal self-identification question helps determine the number of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students in provincial school authorities. This information is collected during the student registration or annual verification process in public, separate, Francophone, charter and Level 2 accredited funded private schools.

The information is used to improve accountability for Aboriginal education and to inform efforts to close the achievement gap between Aboriginal and all Alberta students. Alberta Education also provides additional funding to school authorities based on the number of self-identified Aboriginal students registered. The funding allocation rate is \$1,178 for each self-identified First Nation, Métis or Inuit students; this amounts to approximately \$54 million annually to school authorities.

Knowing how Aboriginal students, as a whole, are doing in school helps Alberta Education and school

authorities understand what programs are working; where additional programs, resources and supports are required; and what changes may be needed to improve the education system for the benefit of Aboriginal students.

### Aboriginal student data

Alberta Education and school authorities use the information according to section 33(c) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP Act)* to plan for program improvements, to make policy and funding decisions, and to measure and report Aboriginal student achievement. Student achievement measures include high school completion rates, dropout rates, transition rates from high school to post-secondary education, and results on provincial achievement tests and diploma exams.

Achievement results of self-identified Aboriginal students are reported in a respectful way that protects the anonymity of individual students. Provincial Aboriginal achievement results are included in Alberta Education's [Annual Report](#).

### Aboriginal students living on-reserve

The Aboriginal self-identification question applies only to students attending schools off-reserve in Alberta. First Nations students living on a reserve and attending school off-reserve may choose to self-identify as First Nations on the school registration form.

## Aboriginal education funding

School authorities are allocated additional funding based on the number of self-identified Aboriginal students registered annually. School authorities decide how to best use these funds based on the programming needs within their authority. Some school authorities retain the funds to support district-wide initiatives and others distribute funds, or a portion of the funds, directly to schools to support local programs.

Aboriginal education funding is being used to support a range of projects such as:

- the hiring of Aboriginal Liaisons or Cultural Advisors;
- school-based resource centres offering Aboriginal student supports;
- tutoring and mentoring;
- professional development for school and district staff (First Nations, Métis and Inuit resources, protocols, family engagement, etc.);
- purchasing or developing First Nations, Métis and Inuit resources;
- high school completion coaches;
- engaging Elders in the school collaborating with community partners; and
- language and Aboriginal cultural supports for school staff, etc.

Please contact your school principal for further information.

To ensure accountability school authorities share overall Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal student results with the ministry and the public in their Annual Education Results Reports. These reports are available by contacting your school authority and are posted on school authority websites. You may also wish to review the Aboriginal results in Alberta Education's [Annual Report](#).

## Answering the self-identification question

As with all of the other questions on the registration form and annual verification form, the Aboriginal self-identification question is to be answered in relation to the student.

Parents/students are given an opportunity to verify or change information on a student record annually.

The Aboriginal self-identification question is voluntary and answered in relation to the student, including adopted children. The response to this question does not require proof of Aboriginal identity.

Students who respond to the question will not be treated differently. Schools must ensure that confidentiality of student information is maintained and that all children are treated with respect. Your child's personal information is managed and protected by Alberta's privacy laws, the *FOIP Act*, the *Personal Information and Protection Act (PIPA)*, the *Education Act* and the *Student Record Regulation*.

## Aboriginal student data

The Aboriginal student data is stored in a secure area that is tightly controlled to prevent unauthorized access to personal data. Personally identifiable data indicating Aboriginal identity is treated with the same due diligence as all other personal information under the stewardship of Alberta Education. School authorities must also meet their obligations to protect the information in accordance with the *Student Record Regulation* and applicable privacy legislation.

## Further information

For more information, please contact the office of the Director, Strategy and System Supports, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Directorate, Alberta Education, at 780-427-8501 (dial 310-0000 first to be connected toll-free from anywhere in Alberta).

## Self identification forms

Public, separate, Francophone, and charter school authorities:

<b>If you wish to declare the student is Aboriginal, please select one:</b>			
First Nation (status)	First Nation (non-status)	Métis	Inuit
For further information, please refer to: <a href="https://www.alberta.ca/first-nations-metis-or-inuit-student-self-identification.aspx">https://www.alberta.ca/first-nations-metis-or-inuit-student-self-identification.aspx</a> or contact Alberta Education at 780-427-8501.			
If you have questions regarding the collection of student information by the school board, please contact the School Board Superintendent at...(insert your contact information).			
{Level 2 accredited funded private schools: If you have questions regarding the collection of student information by the school, please contact the – (School collection activity contact)}.			