



# 16 First Nation Trustees: Leading in Two Worlds

## **ABOUT FIRST NATION LANGUAGES AND FIRST NATION, MÉTIS AND INUIT STUDIES IN ONTARIO**

The following provides a brief overview of how First Nation Languages and First Nation, Métis and Inuit Studies are described in the Ontario curriculum. (Current curriculum documents use the terminology Native Languages and Native Studies.) Self-identification is an important advocacy tool parents and the First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities in general can use to positively affect the offering of First Nation Language and First Nation, Métis and Inuit Studies courses in high schools in Ontario, as well as the preparation of teachers to work with First Nation, Métis and Inuit students, families and communities. To allow school boards to offer these programs despite limited enrolment, the funding for the programs recognizes an average class size of 12 students.

### **FIRST NATION LANGUAGES**

**Goal**

To inspire First Nation students with pride in their ancestral language and to motivate them to use it to communicate in their daily lives – to use it, in other words, as a living language that is part of a living culture.

**What it provides**

- a general understanding of the nature and function of language, which will serve as the basis for the development of First Nation language skills;
- a foundation of language knowledge and skills in the First Nation language under study that will enable students to communicate in the First Nation language; and
- an understanding and appreciation of the First Nation language as an expression of a distinctive culture.

**Languages taught**

Cayuga, Cree, Delaware, Mohawk, Ojibwe, Oji-Cree, and Oneida.  
Students can take a First Nation language course in place of compulsory French. Courses are offered during the school day and are open to all students.  
Boards must be prepared to continue elementary language programs into the secondary level.  
Research on Aboriginal education confirms that when students develop the ability to communicate in a First Nation language, learning that language will reinforce, not interfere with, the learning of English, French, or other languages.

## FIRST NATION, MÉTIS AND INUIT STUDIES

<p><b>Goals</b></p>	<p>First Nation, Métis and Inuit studies provide students in Ontario schools with a broad range of knowledge related to First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples to help them better understand First Nation, Métis and Inuit issues of public interest discussed at the local, regional, and national levels. They will increase their awareness and understanding of the history, cultures, world views, and contributions of First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples in Canada.</p>
<p><b>Cross-curricular Benefits</b></p>	<p>The program provides students with opportunities to enhance the problem-solving and critical-thinking skills that they will require in post-secondary education, the world of work, and their roles as active citizens. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when students examine the terms of a treaty negotiated by a First Nation with the Crown, they are combining both First Nation, Métis and Inuit studies and history;</li> <li>• when they use the works of First Nation, Métis and Inuit writers to study the theme of renewal, they are combining First Nation, Métis and Inuit studies and English;</li> <li>• when they use multimedia resources to create art forms about contemporary First Nation, Métis and Inuit issues, they are combining First Nation, Métis and Inuit studies with art.</li> </ul> <p>Subject matter from any course in First Nation, Métis and Inuit studies can be combined with subject matter from one or more courses in other disciplines to create an interdisciplinary course.</p>
<p><b>Courses Available</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expressing Aboriginal Cultures, Grade 9</li> <li>• Aboriginal Peoples in Canada, Grade 10</li> <li>• English: Contemporary Aboriginal Voices, Grade 11, University Preparation</li> <li>• Current Aboriginal Issues in Canada, Grade 11</li> <li>• Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations in Contemporary Society, Grade 11, College Preparation</li> <li>• English: Contemporary Aboriginal Voices, Grade 11, College Preparation</li> <li>• Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations in Contemporary Society, Grade 11, Workplace Preparation</li> <li>• English: Contemporary Aboriginal Voices, Grade 11, Workplace Preparation</li> <li>• Aboriginal Governance: Emerging Directions, Grade 12</li> <li>• Issues of Indigenous Peoples in a Global Context, Grade 12</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support for Teachers</b></p>	<p>It is important that all teachers learn about teaching First Nation, Métis and Inuit students so as to include First Nation, Métis and Inuit ways of knowing in their lessons. There are many courses about First Nation, Métis and Inuit education available to teachers. The Ministry of Education has created: <i>Aboriginal Perspectives: A Guide to the Teacher’s Toolkit of Teaching Resources and Strategies for Elementary and Secondary Classrooms</i> that helps teachers bring a First Nation, Métis and Inuit perspective to their teaching and classroom settings.</p>