

School of Choice Policy

Opaskwayak Educational Authority Inc.



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2014 - 2015

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Opaskwayak Education Authority Inc. (OEA) believes that each child should have an equal opportunity to achieve success at school.
- 1.2 OEA further acknowledges parental choice, within limits, in selecting the school best suited to their child's learning requirements.
- 1.3 OEA wishes to enact a policy to take into consideration those Opaskwayak Cree Nation eligible students wanting to attend an alternative school, or School of Choice, while being fair to the education of all OEA students.
- 1.4 OEA funding provided by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) is originally based on nominal roll numbers set in 1999 and adjusted annually by main over main increases.
- 1.5 The nominal roll is determined by the amount of students attending OEA schools. There is NO additional funding being received by OEA from AANDC to assist with funding for those students living off OCN lands.
- 1.6 OEA wishes to assist, where possible, those students that excel or may have additional needs that OEA schools cannot provide, by way of **ONE- TIME** funding on behalf of the student to a School of Choice.
- 1.7 THEREFORE this policy shall endeavour to assist in a way that is fair and equitable for all OCN students that will not adversely affect those students attending OEA schools.

2.0 Definitions

- 2.1 For interpretation the following are definitions for this Policy:
 1. **AANDC** – shall mean Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.
 2. **Applicant** – must be a status member of OCN.
 3. **Exceptional Family Circumstance** – a terminal illness in the immediate family and a child who has to move away for medical treatment.
 4. **Fine Arts** – music, drama, art, etc.
 5. **High Achiever** – a student who excels academically.
 6. **Nominal Roll** – a document required by AANDC that records the students enrolled in OEA schools, in October of any given year.
 7. **OEA** – shall mean Opaskwayak Educational Authority Inc.
 8. **OCN** – shall mean Opaskwayak Cree Nation.

9. **Private School** – is a school supported by a private organization or private individuals rather than by the government.
10. **Profound Special Needs** – a student who has a severe learning disability (blind, deaf, etc.) that cannot be met by OEA schools.
11. **Public School** – a school supported by public funds.
12. **School of Choice** – a public or private school not under the jurisdiction of OEA, which an Opaskwayak Cree Nation student wishes to attend as an alternative to pursuing education through OEA.
13. **Sports** – all types of sport (hockey, baseball, volleyball, etc.).

3.0 Categories of Needs of Assistance

- 3.1 High achiever, sports, and fine arts - student is status from OCN and on nominal roll (those students from Kindergarten to Grade 12).
- 3.2 Profound special needs.
- 3.3 Exceptional family circumstances.
- 3.4 Status from OCN and not on the nominal roll.

4.0 Criteria for Assistance

Criteria for Financial Assistance are as follows:

- Priority 1: Status from OCN, residing on reserve lands and on nominal roll year prior to application.
- Priority 2: Status from OCN with Exceptional Family Circumstances living on reserve lands and on nominal roll.
- Priority 3: Status from OCN with Profound Special Needs, living on OCN reserve lands and are listed on nominal roll with a letter of support from the Special Education Coordinator outlining the special needs.
- Priority 4: Status from OCN residing off reserve and not on nominal roll.

5.0 Application

- 5.1 Application letter for assistance by the parent(s) or guardian(s) on behalf of the student, to OEA Board of Directors before deadline date of April 30 in any given year.
- 5.2 The application is for the upcoming school year.
- 5.3 The application letter must include the following information:

1. Type of school, private or public, they want to attend.
 2. Parental support information.
 3. Background information.
 4. Latest transcript.
 5. Reasons why they want to attend School of Choice.
 6. Documentation of associated cost from the school student wishes to attend.
- 5.4 If application is approved, OEA will not release payment to the School of Choice until OEA receives a written invoice from said institution.

6.0 Level of Assistance

- 6.1 Applicant from OCN residing On Reserve and on nominal roll during the prior year, the following may apply:
1. OEA will cover a **ONE-TIME** base funded amount as per the instructional services formula that AANDC provides for a student.
 2. The remaining tuition balance (school division charge per student) will be the responsibility of the parent[s]. (See OEA Finance policy section: Elementary & Secondary Off-Reserve Tuition).
 3. All funding is dependent on budgetary restraints.
- 6.2 Applicant from OCN living Off Reserve and not on nominal roll during the prior year, the following may apply:
1. For any student attending Public School and living off or outside of OCN Reserve land, the tuition to attend Public School is covered by way of Rental Agreement (house) or by taxes paid if you are a home owner. The student would be entitled to attend public school in the division in which they live. In this case no tuition fee will be awarded.
 2. For Private Schools, a ONE-TIME ONLY tuition payment of \$2500.00 may be awarded, depending on budgetary restraints of OEA, for students entering private schools.
- 6.3 For greater clarity to Section 6.1 and 6.2, ONE-TIME funding means that, the particular student will only receive this assistance **once** during their student (applicant) year's (Kindergarten to Grade 12), and **may not** reapply for any future subsequent calendar or school years.
- 6.4 OEA will not be responsible for any other additional costs or associated costs whatsoever with School of Choice, including, but not limited to:
1. The remainder of tuition that OEA does not assist with
 2. Any school fees.

3. Books and supplies.
4. Transportation.
5. Room and Board.
6. Field Trips and other related activities.

6.5 For further clarification, no payment will be paid under this Policy directly to the student or parent(s), but only to the School of Choice, on behalf of the student.

7.0 Selection Criteria

7.1 School of Choice applicants will have their application reviewed by the Finance Committee and recommendation shall be submitted to the OEA Board of Directors.

7.2 Each fiscal year, OEA shall set aside funds to be made available for the School of Choice. This will determine the amount the applicants will be granted assistance from OEA.

7.3 Due to limited funding, the criteria section of this Policy will be utilized to determine if applicant may be given assistance.

8.0 Approval Process

8.1 School of Choice funding may be granted upon the recommendation of the Finance Committee.

8.2 The OEA Board of Directors shall make the decision for final approval, at a duly convened meeting for which proper notice has been given and for which a quorum is in attendance.

9.0 Contract

9.1 All persons receiving tuition payment assistance, or having payment made on their behalf to a School of Choice, pursuant to this Policy, will be required to sign a contract acknowledging the terms and conditions outlined in the School of Choice Policy.