

# **Indigenous Learner Self-Identification: Honouring privacy, confidentiality and aggregation**

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# Contextualizing Community and Institutional History

- In an attempt to raise awareness about Indigenous issues the first Drum Beat conference was organized in 1989. This conference was supported by both the Six Nations community and McMaster University, welcoming Indigenous people from across North America. The three day event, co-hosted by the Six Nations Confederacy, marked the beginning of new possibilities for Six Nations and McMaster to increase the presence of Ogwehoweh people on campus.
- McMaster University has heeded Chief Harvey Longboat's call to support "the Confederacy and raise visibility in both the community and the university which will help all of us"; this has been our guiding compass for the past two decades. The program is a main focal point for McMaster's enhanced commitment to, and support of, Indigenous students.

# Contextualizing FNMI Education Policy in Ontario:

- Aboriginal Education Strategy - comprised of several policy frameworks from both the Ministry of Education, as well as the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.
- Provincial Bill 10, *Early Childcare Modernization Act* - passed December 2014

# **Growing concerns over Indigenous learner rights to privacy, confidentiality and autonomy:**

- Assumption that self-identification data is a reliable metric for "measuring" Indigenous learners.
- Needs to be more discourse around the "reliability" of these data sets. Many communities/families/learners choose not to participate in these types of surveys for a multitude of reasons.
- Potential implications of Schedule 5 of Bill 10, *Early Childcare Modernization Act*

# Proposed Plan:

- Agreement amongst stakeholders that all information collected with an assurance of privacy, confidentiality and aggregation must be honoured. For example: "Your information will be collected confidentially, stored privately, and reported in aggregate only.
- Any change in legislative authority/compliance obligations will be reported to learners - there is an obligation to be transparent and accurate in messaging re: how data will be used.
- Suspension of existing survey, and launch of new survey with modified language about privacy, aggregation and risk of data being used for research purpose without further notice/consent.

# Three take-aways:

- There is a lack of free, prior and informed consent when it comes to using data collected on internal surveys for larger research agendas. Many could (and do) argue that this is a violation of research ethics and the rights of learners.
- Assimilation, dispossession and the devolution of rights.
- Either make a privacy, confidentiality and aggregation statement that has meaning as a standalone assurance, and honour it. Otherwise be sure to articulate the risks of data usage in transparent, accurate and accessible language.