

VOLUNTARY, CONFIDENTIAL STUDENT SELF-IDENTIFICATION POLICY FOR FIRST NATION, METIS AND INUIT STUDENTS

Frequently asked questions

The following frequently asked questions were compiled from feedback from community organizations and members in Peel and other school boards across Ontario during the process of developing voluntary, confidential self-identification policies for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students. This section will continue to evolve as new questions arise.

PURPOSE OF A VOLUNTARY, CONFIDENTIAL STUDENT SELF-IDENTIFICATION POLICY FOR FIRST NATION, METIS AND INUIT STUDENTS

1. Why is the board collecting voluntary, confidential student self-identification data for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students?

The availability of data on First Nation, Métis and Inuit student achievement in is a critical foundation for the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs by the board, the Ministry, and EQAO to support the needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students. The development of an effective voluntary and confidential self-identification policy is a significant step toward ensuring that First Nation, Métis and Inuit students receive the highest possible quality of education, and that all Ontario students benefit from an appreciation of the richness of First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures and the important contributions of First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities to Peel's, Ontario's and Canada's cultural, economic and social future. Such data is also needed to support improvement planning and accountability, inform policy and funding decisions, and ensure measurement and reporting.

The board's policy sets out three specific purposes:

- To continue working to improve the capacity of the Board to respond to the learning and cultural needs of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students.
- To facilitate increased participation of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit parents, students, communities, and organizations in working to support academic success.
- To increase awareness among non-Aboriginal students, staff, and parents about First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

2. How will a voluntary, confidential self-identification policy for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students help First Nation, Métis and Inuit students?

The board and the Ministry are committed to addressing the specific needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit learners and all of its students through an evidence-informed approach. Reliable, student-specific data is necessary to support improvement planning, accountability,

and to inform policy and funding decisions, measurement, and reporting. The Aboriginal Education Office, through funding opportunities and the work of field staff supports school boards through specific projects related to transitions, community outreach and partnership initiatives.

IDENTIFICATION OF THOSE WHO CAN VOLUNTARILY AND CONFIDENTIALLY SELF-IDENTIFY

3. Who will be able to voluntarily and confidentially self-identify?

The board is committed to using language and terminology that is respectful of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. The board also recognizes that terms used to identify First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in Canada continue to evolve.

Students, or parents or guardians on their behalf, will be able to self-select one of the following identities:

- First Nation
- Inuit
- Métis

The following are some definitions both to help students self-identify and to promote general awareness among non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada:

First Nations people

First Nations people refers to one of the original peoples in Canada. For the purposes of this policy, this term encompasses those who identify as being First Nation and/or of First Nation ancestry. It also includes those who identify with a First Nation community and/or an ancestral land.

Inuit people

The Inuit people refers to one of the original peoples in Canada. For the purposes of this policy, the term encompasses those who are descendants of one of the original peoples in Canada whose traditional territory and/or ancestry spans the Arctic.

Métis people

For the purposes of this policy, the term encompasses those who self-identify as being Métis and who are recognized by the Métis community.

No proof of ancestry is required in order to self-identify.

COLLECTION OF VOLUNTARY, CONFIDENTIAL FIRST NATION, METIS AND INUIT STUDENT SELF-IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION BY THE BOARD AND THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

4. Will the collection of voluntary, confidential First Nation, Métis and Inuit student self-identification information be implemented in Peel for the 2013-2014 school year?

As stipulated in the policy, First Nation, Métis and Inuit student self-identification information at the student level will commence beginning in September, 2013.

5. How will the board collect the voluntary, confidential Aboriginal student self-identification information from First Nation, Métis and Inuit students?

First Nation, Métis, or Inuit students can choose to self-identify through the school registration process by checking off the appropriate boxes on the Student Registration Form and/or Student Verification Form. Students, or their parents or guardians on their behalf, will have additional opportunities after registration to self-identify.

6. If a student no longer wishes to self-identify as Aboriginal can she or he change the information on their student record?

As a general principle, students may elect to remove a self-id designation at a local (board) level. However, once data has been reported in final form to the Ministry, the information will remain in a depersonalized format for statistical purposes.

7. What data specific to First Nation, Métis and Inuit students is intended to be made public by the Ministry?

The Ministry of Education has committed to providing progress reports every *three* years on the implementation of the Framework, based on ten performance measures. The first report *Sound Foundations for the Road Ahead- Fall 2009 Progress Report on Implementation of the Ontario first Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework* was released in the fall of 2009.

The Ministry will continue to engage in on-going discussions about how best to use the voluntary, confidential First Nation, Métis and Inuit student self-identification data to understand more about the progress of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students.

It should be noted that because school boards are subject to MFIPPA and the Ministry and EQAO are subject to FIPPA, *any* person can make an access request for records associated with the voluntary, confidential First Nation, Métis and Inuit student self-identification data. While it is highly unlikely that personally identifiable information would be required to be disclosed, the depersonalized data may be required to be disclosed if someone makes such an access request.

8. How will personal information be protected in public reporting by the Ministry?

Identifiable student information is depersonalized and aggregated *prior* to public reporting. Unless required by law, the Ministry does not disclose ‘aggregate data’ when publicly reporting information if there are five or fewer people involved. This suppression of data about five or fewer people is an extra precaution taken to protect privacy.

The Notice of Indirect Collection of Personal Information and the accompanying fact sheet provide details about the protection of privacy and are available at:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/access.html>

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/faqs.html>

9. What happens to the personal information that the Ministry collects?

Personal information is collected by the Ministry through the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS) at predetermined points of time during the school year. Personal information is maintained in an identifiable format throughout the data collection process to ensure data integrity, e.g. that the correct Ontario Education Number (OEN) is assigned to a student. The personalized information is only accessible by a limited number of authorized staff in the Ministry, and in the educational institutions and entities from which the Ministry indirectly collects the personal information. When the data collection process is complete, the information is depersonalized (stripped of identifiable personal information) and transferred to the Elementary and Secondary Data Warehouse (ESDW). Once the personal information has been depersonalized, it cannot be linked back to the OEN or the identifiable personal information.

Both OnSIS and the ESDW are secure environments that have undergone stringent Privacy Impact Assessments and I &IT evaluations in respect to privacy and secure access.

10. How will the Ministry protect the privacy of students’ information?

The Ministry has the authority to collect personal information, directly or indirectly, under [section 8.1\(1\) of the Education Act R.S.O 1990 Chapter E.2](#). The Ministry is bound by privacy protection rules under FIPPA and takes all necessary steps to safeguard personal information collected.

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11. What will the board do if a First Nation, Métis or Inuit community member or organization asks to review voluntary self-identification information that has been collected under its policy?

It is important that First Nation, Métis and Inuit families, organizations and communities to understand that school boards are subject to MFIPPA and that school boards, are required to protect the privacy of the personal information associated with voluntary, confidential self-identification in accordance with MFIPPA.

The board can only disclose this personal information in accordance with MFIPPA. The board has a Human Rights Manager and any questions about the disclosure of personal information can be directed to the Human Rights Manager or to the board's legal counsel.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner has published *A Guide to Ontario Legislation Covering the Release of Students' Personal Information* which may be of assistance to school boards: <http://www.ipc.on.ca/english/Resources/Discussion-Papers/Discussion-Papers-Summary/?id=350>

USE OF VOLUNTARY, CONFIDENTIAL FIRST NATION, METIS AND INUIT STUDENT SELF-IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION BY THE BOARD, THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND THE EQAO

12. How will the board use the data?

The board will use this data to help inform plans and programs that support student achievement.

13. How will the Ministry use the data?

The Ministry will use the data reported by school boards at an *aggregate* level to develop policies and programmes that better support student achievement across the province. Data will be used to report on results achieved, and to identify areas for improvement.

14. How will the EQAO use the data?

The EQAO will use the data reported by school boards to report on the achievement of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students to the school boards.

For additional information about the EQAO reporting please contact the EQAO office directly.