

## New Federal Guidelines for Collecting and Reporting Race and Ethnicity Frequently Asked Questions

1. I've already provided this information, why must I provide it again?
  - The federal government is requiring that ethnic and racial information for all students and staff be reported in a new way in order to more accurately reflect the nation's diversity. In the past, forms for reporting race and ethnicity allowed individuals to be identified in only one racial category. The new form enables individuals to be identified in ethnic and racial classifications and in more than one racial category.
  
2. What changes have been made and why?
  - Since 1977, the US Department of Education, along with the other Federal agencies, has been collecting aggregated data on race and ethnicity using five categories. In 1997, the Federal Office of Management and Budget published new revised standards for the collection of data on race and ethnicity. The Department of Education aligned its policy for collecting and reporting racial and ethnic data with the revised standards. Educational agencies, including public school systems, are required to report racial and ethnic data to the Department using the new categories starting with the 2010-2011 school year. The change in collecting and reporting racial and ethnic data allows individuals to self-identify their ethnicity and race, and permits individuals to select more than one race and/or ethnicity. This change allows individuals to more accurately reflect their racial and ethnic background by not limiting them to only one racial or ethnic category. There are four major changes in the way that ethnicity and race data will be collected:
    1. There is now a two-part question on ethnicity and race. This allows individuals to report their heritage more accurately.
    2. The term "Hispanic" has been changed to "Hispanic or Latino."
    3. The racial category "Asian or Pacific Islander" has been separated into two new categories – "Asian" and "Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander."
    4. Individuals will be able to select one or more races from the five racial groups.
  
3. What are the ethnicity and race categories?

Part A. **Is this student Hispanic/Latino?** (*Choose only one*)

- **No, not Hispanic/Latino**
- **Yes, Hispanic/Latino** (A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.)

The above part of the question is about ethnicity, not race. No matter what you select above, **please continue to answer the following** by marking one or more boxes to indicate what you consider your student's (or your) race to be.

Part B. **What is the student's race?** (*Choose one or more*)

- **American Indian or Alaska Native** (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.)
- **Asian** (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.)
- **Black or African American** (A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.)

- **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander** (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.)
  - **White** (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.)
4. When and how will the new information be gathered?
    - Sheridan County School District #1 will begin collecting this data on students and staff in the fall of 2009. The new form will be distributed to all staff members, families of newly enrolled students AND all current students. The families will be asked to complete the form and return it to the school. Staff members will be asked to complete an online form.
  5. Who provides the information?
    - Parents will decide their children's ethnic and racial identity. Staff members will complete an online form.
  6. What happens if I do not fill out the form?
    - If a staff member, parent or guardian does not fill out the form and return it, the school system is still responsible for reporting the information. Therefore, a school system staff member will fill out the form for the respondent. The new guidelines mandate that the school system identify any staff members or students for whom a form has not been completed.
  7. How will the information be used?
    - The data with the new ethnicity/race categories will be used in the same manner that racial/ethnic data are currently used. The new categories will replace the existing categories for use in all state and federally sponsored statistical data collections that include data on ethnicity or race, such as student record cards and test results.
  8. Is the federal government checking my immigration status?
    - No. This information will be maintained in your employment or student records. It will not be reported to any federal agency in a way that identifies you or your child. No one will check for immigration status from the information you give here.
  9. How do I know I won't be discriminated against after I've told you I belong to a minority group?
    - This is exactly why we need to maintain better racial and ethnic data about our students and staff. We are required to maintain this information about each individual in his or her record, in case a civil right investigation surfaces. Again, state and local guidelines are in place to ensure that racial and ethnic data will not be reported elsewhere in a way that you may be identified. The state and school district follow FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) rules and regulations to safeguard the privacy of student records (see question above). For employment records, none of the equal employment opportunity rules has changed. Your race and ethnicity will not be used to determine your employment status or condition.
  10. If I have additional questions, where can I find answers?
    - More information on these guidelines can be found on the Internet at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/rschstat/guid/raceethnicity/index.html>.