

Dear Colleagues,

I'm writing to inform you about new guidelines from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) regarding the collection of data on race and ethnicity for public-school students and staff.

The federal government, which requires all states to collect this information, has developed a set of new reporting standards in order to provide a more accurate picture of the nation's ethnic and racial diversity. These new standards enable individuals to be identified in more than one racial or ethnic category. In the past, data collections allowed individuals to be identified in only one racial or ethnic category.

Beginning this fall, RIDE will ask all districts to start reporting to us their race and ethnicity data using both the current race and ethnicity data categories (in which individuals are identified by only one racial or ethnic category) and the new federal standards (in which individuals may be identified by more than one category). By the 2010-11 school year, all districts will be required to report the data using the new federal standards only.

To ensure successful transition to this new system of data collection and reporting, I ask you to identify a key person or office to be in charge of conducting an inventory of existing data and to identify the data sets that need to be updated with the new race and ethnicity data. This person will be responsible for working with us regarding the development of policies and procedures to implement the new federal standards.

RIDE and ED will use the data with the new racial and ethnic categories just as we currently use race and ethnicity data. For example, we disaggregate by student race and ethnicity the test results that we report to ED and to the public at large. We will continue to do so, but we will use the new race and ethnicity data categories for these disaggregations.

The attached guidance sheets provide additional information about these new reporting standards. In the coming months, RIDE will work with districts to implement these new collection and reporting standards. Information regarding the collection of data on race and ethnicity is available on the ED Web site, at:

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opepd/index.html> .

Guidance on Collecting/Reporting Race and Ethnicity Data Under New Federal Standards

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Office of Network and Information Systems

January 16, 2009

Reporting requirements by 2010

States will be required to report aggregated data to ED using these new standards by the fall of 2010 for the 2010–11 school year. These are the seven categories for reporting:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or more races
- Hispanic of any race

Guidance for Statewide Implementation

- Synchronized transition to new standards across all systems, including the student ID system, the state testing and accountability systems, program-based Census, and all local information systems.
- All source systems will use the Two Question Format to collect data.
- State collects responses using the Two Question Format and reports by seven categories to ED

Schedule for Implementation

- Fall 2008 – initial assessment of local systems, understanding state and federal reporting requirements, timelines
- Winter 2008-Spring 2009 – local and state systems adjustments, local collection of additional information
- Summer 2009 – initial optional reporting of additional information
- Fall 2009 – first required reporting of race/ethnicity data in new categories by districts, in addition to current race/ethnicity
- 2009-10 – data quality and validation checks, resolve problems
- 2010-11 – first year reporting only by new race/ethnicity categories to ED

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