

2017

Race & Ethnicity Student Data: Guidance for Washington's Public Education System



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Student Data Task Force

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Glossary

The Race and Ethnicity Student Data Task Force wants this guidance to be as accessible as possible. This glossary helps define education-related terminologies and acronyms that will be referenced throughout the guidance.

Aggregate: a compilation and summary of data on information such as gender, grade level, school, and race/ethnicity.

American Community Survey: a national data set providing annual (or multi-year average) estimates of selected social, economic, and housing characteristics of the population for many geographic areas and subpopulations. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>

Chapter 72, Laws of 2016 (Education—Opportunities and Outcomes): Washington State law, effective June 9, 2016, related to implementing strategies to close the educational opportunity gap, based on the recommendations of the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee. <http://leg.wa.gov/CodeReviser/documents/sessionlaw/2016pam1.pdf>

Disaggregate: a breakdown of information into smaller subpopulations, such as by gender, grade level, school, and race/ethnicity.

Eligible student: a student, who is at least 18 years old or who attends a postsecondary institution, with all the rights under FERPA that were formerly given to their parents/guardians.

Ethnicity: a social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base.¹

EOGOAC: Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee
<http://www.k12.wa.us/WorkGroups/EOGOAC.aspx>

FERPA: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

FRL: free and reduced lunch, which serves as a proxy to indicate low-income status.

Nationality: a person's subjective sense of belonging, and self-identification, to one state or to one nation. In this instance, nationality may be separate from one's birth country and/or citizenship status.

N-size: the total number of participants within a data set.

Opportunity Gap: systemic inequity in the education system that structurally disadvantages certain demographics of students.

Race: a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies. Although the concept of race invokes biologically based human characteristics (so-called "phenotypes"), selection of these particular human features for purposes of racial signification is always and necessarily a social and historical process.²

Report Card: an online database containing student race/ethnicity, absences, gender, and test score data maintained by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and published annually.
<http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/summary.aspx?groupLevel=District&schoolId=1&reportLevel=State&yrs=2015-16&year=2015-16>

¹ Wijeyesinghe, C. L., Griffin, P., and Love, B. (1997). Racism Curriculum Design. Retrieved from <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/oacs/wp-content/uploads/sites/140/Key-Terms-Racism.pdf>

² Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. (1994). *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. New York: Routledge.

Restorative Justice: a program based on respect, responsibility, relationship building, and relationship repairing. It aims to keep students in school through mediation rather than punishment.

Treaty Rights of Tribes: the rights of tribes as contained in these nine treaties: Treaty with the Yakamas, Treaty with the Walla Wallas, Treaty of Olympia, Treaty of Point No Point, Treaty of Point Elliott, Treaty with the Nez Perces, Treaty of Neah Bay, and Treaty of Medicine Creek.

U.S. Census: a national data set that produces specific socioeconomic and demographic estimates, for the United States and individual states, using selected characteristics and subpopulations. It provides estimates of income and health insurance, as well as official poverty estimates. <https://www.census.gov/>

Purpose of Guidance

The Race and Ethnicity Student Data Guidance is a statewide resource for schools, districts, and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) on how to collect student race and ethnicity data in a transparent manner, ensuring parents/guardians and eligible students know and can practice their right to self-identify. This guidance includes sections on: (1) background information; (2) data collection; (3) data reporting; (4) rights of families and students; (5) data utilization; and (6) family and community engagement.

Objectives of the Race and Ethnicity Student Data Guidance:

- Define school and district mandates on collecting student race and ethnicity data and the rationale for collecting this data (see [Data Collection](#)).
- Establish a Washington State Observer Identification Protocol (see [Observer Identification](#)).
- Provide reciprocal and transparent communication about how and why student race and ethnicity data are collected and should be delivered in a culturally responsive manner (See [Family and Community Engagement](#)).
- Help families understand their rights under FERPA to inspect and correct their child's records (see [Family and Student Rights](#)).

A guidance for Washington State schools and school districts to know how to collect student race and ethnicity data **transparently** and also how to **help** families understand the importance of receiving their student's information.

This guide specifically focuses on Washington State's rules and regulations as mechanisms to address opportunity gaps and directly impact support and resources provided to local students.

Given the unique and distinctive history of the indigenous peoples in Washington, the Race and Ethnicity Student Data Task Force wishes to respect the sovereignty and treaty rights of tribes as established between the U.S. federal government and State of Washington via the [Centennial Accord](#) (see Page 9).

It is the intention of the Task Force that this guidance encourages greater communication, engagement, and clarity between schools and families about student race and ethnicity information. The Task Force's ultimate goal is to advance data practices that help close educational opportunity gaps and promote racial equity.

Overview of the Task Force's Guidance:

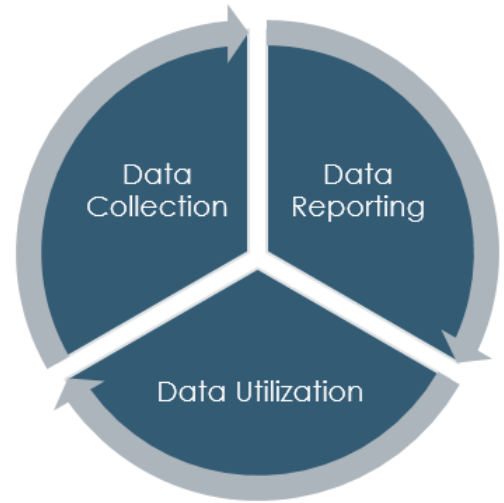


Background Information

Student Data Overview

The Legislature can mandate schools and districts to collect data in a particular way, such as discipline data disaggregated by race and ethnicity. In Washington, various educational agencies and institutions collect and report elementary and secondary student data for multiple purposes. Additionally, school districts, statewide organizations, and researchers can make formal requests to OSPI to collect certain student information. The [Data Governance Group](#) at OSPI is responsible for approving these requests.

Currently, schools and districts collect and report the following student information to OSPI:



➤ Student Information and Demographics	Name, date of birth, race and ethnicity, gender, and language spoken at home
➤ Enrollment Information	School, district, grade level, entry date, exit date, and reason for exit
➤ Program Participation	Special Education, Highly Capable, Free and Reduced Lunch, and English Learner
➤ Course Schedules	Grades for high school students and student schedules
➤ Absences	Full day or half-day absence and date, and excused or unexcused status
➤ Discipline	Suspensions and expulsions, number of days, and behavior resulting in disciplinary action

Additionally, OSPI publishes annual data in the form of online [report cards](#). Report cards provide school, district, and state-level summaries of enrollment and student achievement data. Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), all states are required to publish the following information on their data report cards:³

- School performance compared to state performance;
- Students' subgroup information including: students receiving Special Education services, English Learners, and students in poverty; and
- School student achievement compared to all students and subgroups of students in the school.

Summary-level student data can be accessed at the following websites: (1) [OSPI K-12 Data and Reports](#)⁴; and (2) [Education Research and Data Center](#).⁵

³ U.S. Department of Education. (2015). The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Webinar. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esso/essastwebinar1222015.pdf>

⁴ OSPI. (2017). K-12 Data and Reports. Retrieved from <http://data.k12.wa.us/PublicDWP/Web/WashingtonWeb/Home.aspx>

⁵ Education Research and Data Center. (2017). Outcomes for Washington Students. Retrieved from <http://www.ercd.wa.gov/publications/student-outcomes>

Race and Ethnicity Student Data

All public schools and districts in Washington State are required to collect student race and ethnicity data at least once per school year and report their findings to OSPI annually (see Figure 1).

OSPI reports aggregate student race and ethnicity data to the U.S. Department of Education annually. The federally recognized race and ethnicity categories are shown below in Figure 2 and Figure 3.

FIGURE 1. ANNUAL STUDENT DATA PROCESS

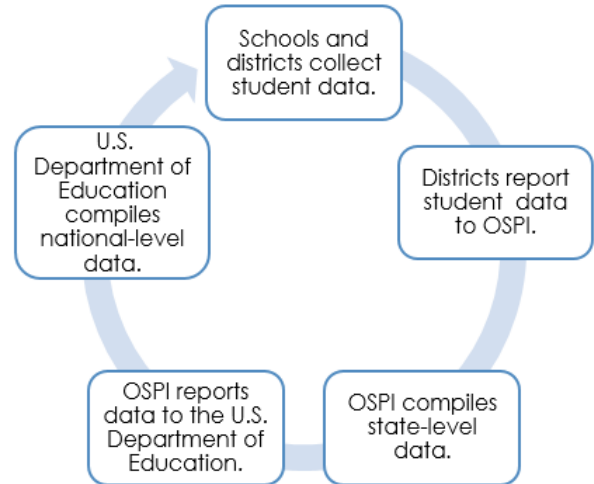


FIGURE 2. FEDERALLY MANDATED ETHNICITY CATEGORIES

Ethnicity	Definition
Hispanic/Latino	A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.

FIGURE 3. FEDERALLY MANDATED RACE CATEGORIES

Race	Definition
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.

For more information on collecting and reporting student race and ethnicity data, see [Data Collection](#) and [Data Reporting](#).

Data Collection

Benefits of Disaggregated Data

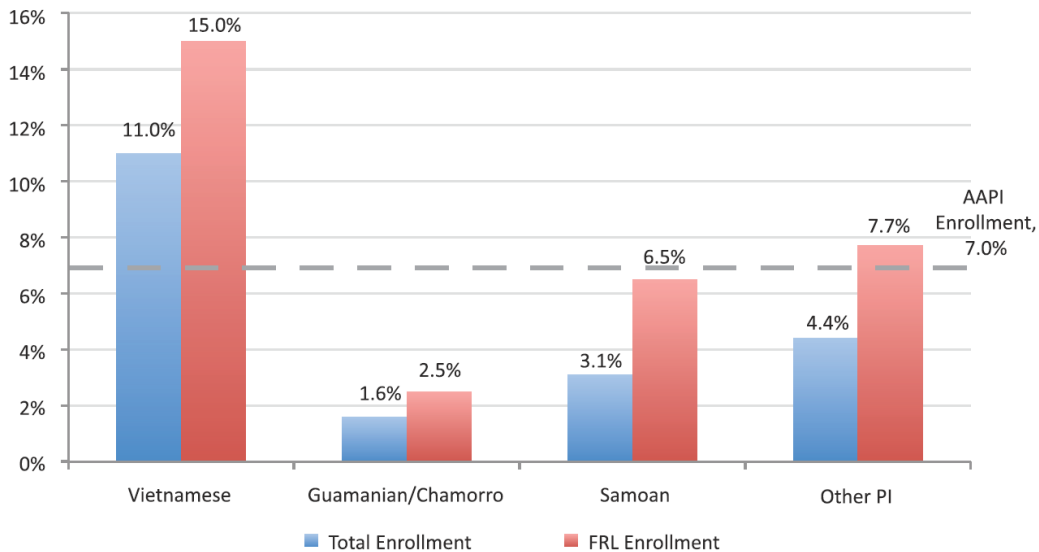
Disaggregating student data refers to breaking down information into smaller subpopulations, such as by gender, grade level, school, and race/ethnicity.

When student race and ethnicity information is collected using the federally mandated categories, subgroups of students within those categories (e.g. Vietnamese students in the Asian category) are often overlooked. For this reason, the federally mandated race and ethnicity categories can and should be disaggregated to the furthest extent possible. Disaggregation provides a more informative summary of where opportunity gaps exist.

For example, in 2010, OSPI began collecting disaggregated data for Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students, providing a unique opportunity to examine the differences that exist *within* federally mandated race and ethnicity categories. In 2013, the National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education analyzed OSPI's data and revealed hidden educational opportunity gaps for K-12 AAPI students.⁶

“ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS TO IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING IS TO COLLECT AND ANALYZE DATA. IT TELLS US IF STUDENTS ARE ON TRACK FOR GRADUATION, COLLEGE, AND CAREERS, OR IF THEY NEED ADDITIONAL HELP. IT TELLS SCHOOLS IF THEIR EDUCATION PROGRAMS ARE WORKING. IT HELPS STATE LEADERS MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS BASED ON FACTS, RATHER THAN ANECDOTES.”
- OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

FIGURE 4. DISAGGREGATED DATA FOR K-12 ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER (AAPI) STUDENTS IN WASHINGTON (2013)



Source: http://care.igeucla.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/iCount-Report_The-Hidden-Academic-Opportunity-Gaps_2015.pdf

⁶ National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education. (2013). The Hidden Academic Opportunity Gaps Among Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders: What Disaggregated Data Reveals in Washington State. Retrieved from http://care.igeucla.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/iCount-Report_The-Hidden-Academic-Opportunity-Gaps_2015.pdf

As shown in Figure 4, AAPI students make up 7.0% of Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) enrollment, suggesting a lower poverty rate compared to the general student population.⁷ However, when the AAPI data is disaggregated, we find opportunity gaps for subpopulations of students. Vietnamese, Guamanian/Chamorro, Samoan, and Other Pacific Islander students are disproportionately enrolled in the FRL program, meaning these groups of students face barriers and challenges associated with poverty at higher rates than their AAPI peers.

Analyzing disaggregated data enables schools, districts, and the state to more clearly understand where educational opportunity gaps exist and to offer more targeted supports to students in need. With this information, schools can plan appropriate programs, implement evidence-based interventions to target specific populations, and use resources on students who need it most. Additionally, collecting disaggregated data over time enables Washington State to track progress on closing opportunity gaps that exist across and within racial and ethnic populations.

Disaggregated Race and Ethnicity Categories

Beginning the 2018-19 school year, all K-12 schools in Washington State are required to collect disaggregated student race and ethnicity data. As stated in Chapter 72, Laws of 2016 (Education—Opportunities and Outcomes), OSPI must collect and school districts must submit all student-level data using the U.S. Department of Education's 2007 Race and Ethnicity Reporting Guidelines.⁸ Categories must include the subracial and subethnic categories within the Guidelines, with the following modifications:

- Further disaggregation of the Black category to differentiate students of African origin and students native to the United States with African ancestors;
- Further disaggregation for Asian students;
- Further disaggregation of the White category to include subethnic categories for Eastern European nationalities that have significant populations in Washington; and
- For students who report as multiracial, collection of their racial and ethnic combination of categories.

The Race and Ethnicity Student Data Task Force drafted a list of race and ethnicity categories that fulfill the above requirements. The list also includes further disaggregation of the American Indian/Alaska Native category to encompass all federally and non-federally recognized tribes in Washington State. The Task Force created the list based on research, its internal discussions, and feedback from community members through focus groups, surveys, and community forums. Although numerous stakeholders have vetted and analyzed the proposed list, these categories should not remain stagnant. Rather, schools, districts, and OSPI should continue to collect feedback from community members and make changes to the race and ethnicity categories accordingly. When implemented, Washington will be the first state to collect such comprehensive race and ethnicity student data.

To generate the list of sub-racial and sub-ethnic categories, the Task Force grounded its work in the 'inclusion and exclusion criteria' listed below. Recognizing the socio-political nature of creating race and ethnicity categories, established criteria helped to ensure decisions were consistent and rooted in research.

INCLUSION & EXCLUSION CRITERIA:

⁷ Ibid, page 10.

⁸ Washington State Legislature. (2016). Chapter 72, Laws of 2016 (Education—Opportunities and Outcomes). Retrieved from <http://lawfilesexxt.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2015-16/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1541-S4.SL.pdf>

- ADOPT ALL RACIAL AND ETHNIC CATEGORIES USED BY THE U.S. CENSUS AND AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY.
 - PRESERVE THE ABILITY TO ADD MORE CATEGORIES, BUT DO NOT REMOVE ANY CATEGORIES.
- SUB-RACIAL AND SUB-ETHNIC CATEGORIES SHALL ONLY BE ADDED FOR THE PURPOSE OF REVEALING OPPORTUNITY GAPS BETWEEN AND WITHIN GROUPS.
- ETHNICITY, NATIONALITY, AND REGION ARE CONFOUNDING VARIABLES. AS SUCH, METHODOLOGIES DEEMED MOST APPROPRIATE WERE SELECTED FOR EACH RACIAL GROUP.
 - BASE METHODOLOGY ON FEDERAL AND STATE EXAMPLES AND RESEARCH.
 - EXAMPLE: THE ASIAN CATEGORY IS BROKEN DOWN BY ETHNICITY AS THIS CAPTURES BOTH COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND NATIONALITY, WHEREAS THE BLACK CATEGORY IS BROKEN DOWN BY REGION AND THEN BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN.
- THE AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE (AI/AN) CATEGORY IS DISAGGREGATED INTO TWO SUBGROUPS: FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBES AND NON-FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBES, BECAUSE THE TASK FORCE WISHES TO RESPECT THE UNIQUE SOVEREIGNTY AND TREATY RIGHTS OF TRIBES. IN ADDITION TO THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE NINE TREATIES (LISTED BELOW), THE CENTENNIAL ACCORD PROVIDES A FRAMEWORK FOR THE GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE OF WASHINGTON AND EACH OF THE TWENTY-NINE FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED, SOVEREIGN TRIBES. STUDENTS BELONGING TO TRIBES OUTSIDE OF WASHINGTON ARE ABLE TO SELECT THEIR RACE AND ETHNICITY ON THE SURVEY BY CHECKING A FILL-IN BOX AND WRITING IN THEIR TRIBE.
 - TRIBES' RIGHTS ARE CONTAINED WITHIN THE FOLLOWING NINE TREATIES:
 - TREATY WITH THE YAKAMAS (1855);
 - TREATY WITH THE WALLA WALLAS (1855);
 - TREATY OF OLYMPIA (1856);
 - TREATY OF POINT NO POINT (1855);
 - TREATY OF POINT ELLIOTT (1855);
 - TREATY WITH THE NEZ PERCES (1855);
 - TREATY OF NEAH BAY (1855); AND
 - TREATY OF MEDICINE CREEK (1854).

Race and Ethnicity Categories

ASIAN (may check categories and use write-in)

<input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> Malaysian
<input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/> Mien
<input type="checkbox"/> Bhutanese	<input type="checkbox"/> Mongolian
<input type="checkbox"/> Burmese/Myanmar	<input type="checkbox"/> Nepali
<input type="checkbox"/> Cambodian/Khmer	<input type="checkbox"/> Okinawan
<input type="checkbox"/> Cham	<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani
<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Punjabi
<input type="checkbox"/> Filipino	<input type="checkbox"/> Singaporean
<input type="checkbox"/> Hmong	<input type="checkbox"/> Sri Lankan
<input type="checkbox"/> Indonesian	<input type="checkbox"/> Taiwanese
<input type="checkbox"/> Japanese	<input type="checkbox"/> Thai
<input type="checkbox"/> Korean	<input type="checkbox"/> Tibetan
<input type="checkbox"/> Lao	<input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese
	Write in: <hr/>

PACIFIC ISLANDER (may check categories and use write-in)

<input type="checkbox"/> Carolinian	<input type="checkbox"/> Papuan
<input type="checkbox"/> Chamorro	<input type="checkbox"/> Pohnpeian
<input type="checkbox"/> Chuukese	<input type="checkbox"/> Samoan
<input type="checkbox"/> Fijian	<input type="checkbox"/> Solomon Islander
<input type="checkbox"/> i-Kiribati / Gilbertese	<input type="checkbox"/> Tahitian
<input type="checkbox"/> Kosraean	<input type="checkbox"/> Tokelauan
<input type="checkbox"/> Maori	<input type="checkbox"/> Tongan
<input type="checkbox"/> Marshallese	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuvaluan
<input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian	<input type="checkbox"/> Yapese
<input type="checkbox"/> Ni-Vanuatu	
<input type="checkbox"/> Palauan	Write in: <hr/>

BLACK (may check categories and use write-in)

African American

African Canadian

Caribbean

<input type="checkbox"/> Anguilla <input type="checkbox"/> Antigua <input type="checkbox"/> Bahamas <input type="checkbox"/> Barbados <input type="checkbox"/> British Virgin Islands <input type="checkbox"/> Cayman Islands	<input type="checkbox"/> Cuba <input type="checkbox"/> Dominican Republic <input type="checkbox"/> Grenada <input type="checkbox"/> Guadeloupe <input type="checkbox"/> Haiti <input type="checkbox"/> Jamaica <input type="checkbox"/> Martinique	<input type="checkbox"/> Montserrat <input type="checkbox"/> Netherlands Antilles <input type="checkbox"/> Puerto Rico <input type="checkbox"/> Saint Barthélemy Write in: <hr/>
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Central Africa

<input type="checkbox"/> Angola <input type="checkbox"/> Cameroon <input type="checkbox"/> Central African Republic <input type="checkbox"/> Chad	<input type="checkbox"/> Congo <input type="checkbox"/> Democratic Republic of the Congo <input type="checkbox"/> Equatorial Guinea	<input type="checkbox"/> Gabon <input type="checkbox"/> Sao Tome <input type="checkbox"/> Principe Write in: <hr/>
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East Africa

<input type="checkbox"/> Burundi <input type="checkbox"/> Comoros <input type="checkbox"/> Djibouti <input type="checkbox"/> Eritrea <input type="checkbox"/> Ethiopia <input type="checkbox"/> Kenya <input type="checkbox"/> Madagascar <input type="checkbox"/> Malawi	<input type="checkbox"/> Mauritius <input type="checkbox"/> Mayotte <input type="checkbox"/> Mozambique <input type="checkbox"/> Reunion <input type="checkbox"/> Rwanda <input type="checkbox"/> Seychelles <input type="checkbox"/> Somalia <input type="checkbox"/> South Sudan	<input type="checkbox"/> Sudan <input type="checkbox"/> Uganda <input type="checkbox"/> United Republic of Tanzania <input type="checkbox"/> Zambia <input type="checkbox"/> Zimbabwe Write in: <hr/>
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Latin America

<input type="checkbox"/> Argentina <input type="checkbox"/> Bolivia <input type="checkbox"/> Brazil <input type="checkbox"/> Chile <input type="checkbox"/> Colombia <input type="checkbox"/> Ecuador <input type="checkbox"/> Falkland Islands <input type="checkbox"/> French Guiana	<input type="checkbox"/> Guyana <input type="checkbox"/> Paraguay <input type="checkbox"/> Peru <input type="checkbox"/> South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands <input type="checkbox"/> Suriname <input type="checkbox"/> Uruguay <input type="checkbox"/> Venezuela	<input type="checkbox"/> Belize <input type="checkbox"/> Costa Rica <input type="checkbox"/> El Salvador <input type="checkbox"/> Guatemala <input type="checkbox"/> Honduras <input type="checkbox"/> Mexico <input type="checkbox"/> Nicaragua <input type="checkbox"/> Panama Write in: <hr/>
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South Africa

<input type="checkbox"/> Botswana <input type="checkbox"/> Lesotho <input type="checkbox"/> Namibia	<input type="checkbox"/> South Africa <input type="checkbox"/> Swaziland Write in: <hr/>
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West Africa

<input type="checkbox"/> Benin <input type="checkbox"/> Burkina Faso <input type="checkbox"/> Cabo Verde <input type="checkbox"/> Cote d'Ivoire <input type="checkbox"/> Gambia	<input type="checkbox"/> Ghana <input type="checkbox"/> Guinea-Bissau <input type="checkbox"/> Liberia <input type="checkbox"/> Mali <input type="checkbox"/> Mauritania <input type="checkbox"/> Niger <input type="checkbox"/> Nigeria	<input type="checkbox"/> Saint Helena <input type="checkbox"/> Senegal <input type="checkbox"/> Sierra Leone <input type="checkbox"/> Togo Write in: <hr/>
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Write in: _____

HISPANIC OR LATINO (may check categories and use write-in)

<input type="checkbox"/> Argentine <input type="checkbox"/> Bolivian <input type="checkbox"/> Brazilian <input type="checkbox"/> Chicano (Mexican American) <input type="checkbox"/> Chilean <input type="checkbox"/> Columbian <input type="checkbox"/> Costa Rican <input type="checkbox"/> Cuban <input type="checkbox"/> Dominican <input type="checkbox"/> Ecuadorian <input type="checkbox"/> Guatemalan <input type="checkbox"/> Guyanese <input type="checkbox"/> Honduran <input type="checkbox"/> Jamaican	<input type="checkbox"/> Mexican <input type="checkbox"/> Mestizo <input type="checkbox"/> Native Write in: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Nicaraguan <input type="checkbox"/> Panamanian <input type="checkbox"/> Paraguayan <input type="checkbox"/> Peruvian <input type="checkbox"/> Puerto Rican <input type="checkbox"/> Salvadoran <input type="checkbox"/> Spaniard <input type="checkbox"/> Surinamese <input type="checkbox"/> Uruguayan <input type="checkbox"/> Venezuelan Write in: _____
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The American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) race and ethnicity category is disaggregated into two subgroups: Federally Recognized Tribes and Non-Federally Recognized Tribes. The Task Force wishes to respect the unique sovereignty and treaty rights of tribes. In addition to the relationship with the U.S. federal government established through nine treaties, the [Centennial Accord](#) provides a framework for the government-to-government relationship between the state of Washington and each of the twenty-nine federally recognized, sovereign tribes. Students belonging to tribes outside of Washington are able to select their race and ethnicity on the survey by checking a fill-in box and writing in their tribe.

AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE (may check categories and use write-in)

Washington State Federally Recognized Tribes

<input type="checkbox"/> Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Nisqually Indian Tribe	<input type="checkbox"/> Spokane Tribe of the Spokane Reservation
<input type="checkbox"/> Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Nooksack Indian Tribe of Washington	<input type="checkbox"/> Squaxin Island Tribe of the Squaxin Island Reservation
<input type="checkbox"/> Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation	<input type="checkbox"/> Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe	<input type="checkbox"/> Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians of Washington
<input type="checkbox"/> Cowlitz Indian Tribe	<input type="checkbox"/> Puyallup Tribe of the Puyallup Reservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Suquamish Indian Tribe of the Port Madison Reservation
<input type="checkbox"/> Hoh Indian Tribe	<input type="checkbox"/> Quileute Tribe of the Quileute Reservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Swinomish Indian Tribal Community
<input type="checkbox"/> Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe	<input type="checkbox"/> Quinault Indian Nation	<input type="checkbox"/> Tulalip Tribes of Washington
<input type="checkbox"/> Kalispel Indian Community of the Kalispel Reservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Samish Indian Nation	<input type="checkbox"/> Upper Skagit Indian Tribe of Washington
<input type="checkbox"/> Lower Elwha Tribal Community	<input type="checkbox"/> Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe of Washington	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lummi Tribe of the Lummi Reservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe of the Shoalwater Bay Indian Reservation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Makah Indian Tribe of the Makah Indian Reservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Skokomish Indian Tribe	
<input type="checkbox"/> Muckleshoot Indian Tribe	<input type="checkbox"/> Snoqualmie Indian Tribe	

Washington State Non-Federally Recognized Tribes

- | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinook Tribe
<input type="checkbox"/> Duwamish Tribe
<input type="checkbox"/> Kikiallus Indian Nation
<input type="checkbox"/> Marietta Band of Nooksack Tribe
<input type="checkbox"/> Snohomish Tribe
<input type="checkbox"/> Snoqualmoo Tribe
<input type="checkbox"/> Steilacoom Tribe |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Alaska Native

Write in: _____

American Indian

Write in: _____

WHITE (may check categories and use write-in)

Eastern European

<input type="checkbox"/> Polish	<input type="checkbox"/> Ukrainian
<input type="checkbox"/> Romanian	<input type="checkbox"/> Bosnian
<input type="checkbox"/> Russian	<input type="checkbox"/> Herzegovinian
	Write in: <hr/>

Write in: _____

The Interagency Working Group for Research on Race and Ethnicity was created in 2014 by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to examine research, identify implementation issues, and collaborate on a shared research agenda to improve federal data on race and ethnicity. In its 2015 National Content Test (census pilot), the Interagency Working Group tested the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) group as a distinct reporting category. While the federal government will decide whether to incorporate this category change, the Task Force recommends the MENA category be included in the survey as a distinct reporting category that rolls up into the White category, which would reflect the federal government's practices should MENA be included in the 2020 U.S. Census.

MIDDLE EASTERN AND NORTH AFRICAN (may check categories and use write-in)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Algerian <input type="checkbox"/> Amazigh or Berber <input type="checkbox"/> Arab or Arabic <input type="checkbox"/> Assyrian <input type="checkbox"/> Bahraini <input type="checkbox"/> Bedouin <input type="checkbox"/> Chaldean <input type="checkbox"/> Copt <input type="checkbox"/> Druze <input type="checkbox"/> Egyptian <input type="checkbox"/> Emirati <input type="checkbox"/> Iranian <input type="checkbox"/> Iraqi <input type="checkbox"/> Israeli <input type="checkbox"/> Jordanian <input type="checkbox"/> Kurdish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Kuwaiti <input type="checkbox"/> Lebanese <input type="checkbox"/> Libyan <input type="checkbox"/> Moroccan <input type="checkbox"/> Omani <input type="checkbox"/> Palestinian <input type="checkbox"/> Qatari <input type="checkbox"/> Saudi Arabian <input type="checkbox"/> Syrian <input type="checkbox"/> Tunisian <input type="checkbox"/> Yemeni <p>Middle Eastern Write in:</p> <hr/> <p>North African Write in:</p> <hr/>
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Observer Identification

Background

By law, a student (or the parent/guardian on behalf of the student) is not required to identify their race and/or ethnicity on school forms. However, if a student (or parent/guardian on behalf of the student) does not complete the two-part question on race and ethnicity, by law, school personnel must use 'observer identification' to select the race and ethnicity of the student.

"As a general matter, while educational institutions and other recipients are required to comply with this guidance, individuals are not required to self-identify their race or ethnicity. If respondents do not provide information about their race or ethnicity, educational institutions and other recipients should ensure that respondents have refused to self-identify rather than simply overlooked the questions. If adequate opportunity has been provided for respondents to self-identify and respondents still do not answer the questions, observer identification should be used."- U.S. Department of Education

Federal Policies

When school districts report student race and ethnicity data to OSPI and when OSPI reports this data to the U.S. Department of Education, all students must have identified a race and ethnicity. "Unknown" or "missing" are unacceptable answers, hence schools **must** collect the race and ethnicity of every student.

In the [2007 Race and Ethnicity Guidance](#), the U.S. Department of Education explicitly states observer identification should only be used as a last resort. All students and their respective parents/guardians must first be given adequate opportunity to self-identify. Figure 5 provides guiding principles for self-identification and observer identification, highlighting best practices for both.

FIGURE 5. FEDERAL OBSERVER IDENTIFICATION PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Self-identification is Preferable	
1.1	Self-identification is the preferred choice of selecting an individual's race and ethnicity, although it is not required by law for the individual to make these selections.
1.2	Self-identification of race and ethnicity is found to be the most consistent, accurate, and socially acceptable mode of racial and ethnic data collection.
1.3	Self-identification includes the selection of race and ethnicity categories by a student's parents or guardians. If there is a conflict between the choices of a student and their parent/guardian, the parent's/guardian's choice should be used for the record.
1.4	If a parent/guardian refuses to identify the race or ethnicity of a student, but the student later volunteers to self-identify, this data should be used (unless there is a reason to question the accuracy of the information).
1.5	If the student's biological family is not involved, engagement with the foster family and/or student's social worker should be used as an avenue of identification.
1.6	If family status is unknown (e.g. student lives with non-biological adoptive parents), approach the question with sensitivity and with the understanding there may be no record or historical knowledge of the student's race and/or ethnicity.

Principle 2: Observer Identification is Required as a Last Resort	
2.1	Observer identification is considered preferable to having no data at all. Students and parents/guardians who are reluctant to self-identify should be informed observer identification will be used.
2.2	School district policy should indicate the steps to be taken before an observer makes a selection. All observers should be trained on the procedures for racial and ethnic identification.
2.3	Although not a requirement, it is good practice to designate one administrator responsible for conducting observer identification (e.g. principal).
2.4	The state should provide clear guidance to school districts in establishing district policies.
2.5	Parents/guardians who have limited literacy skills in their native language may be less likely to fill out the race and ethnicity questions on a school form. In this scenario, one-on-one interviews in the parent's/guardian's native language is a more accurate way to collect this information.
2.6	Observers should never tell a student, a parent/guardian, or a staff member how the student should self-identify.
2.7	When conducting observer identification, observers should stay within their comfort zone. Supporting information (e.g. talking with the student's teachers) can be helpful when making such determinations.
2.8	A best practice would be to flag a student's record in the information management system if their race and ethnicity categories are selected by an observer. Currently, there is not a federal requirement to do so.
2.9	Observer identification may not be feasible in cases such as distance education. The state should provide guidelines to school districts on how to collect racial or ethnic information in these circumstances.

Washington State Policies

Although observer identification is a federally mandated last resort policy, guidance on conducting observer identification is determined locally by school districts with direction from the state. As stated under Principle 2.4 of Figure 5, states are responsible for providing clear guidance to school districts on observer identification practices. State guidance on observer identification should help school districts establish policies to:⁹

- identify a student's race and ethnicity if the student and their parent/guardian did not self-identify;
- alert parents/guardians an observer will identify if no such information is provided, not only to encourage response from the parent/guardian, but also to protect the school and district if the parent/guardian later objects to the selection; and
- flag instances of observer identification in the data set.

After reviewing state and federal observer identification policies, the Task Force encourages all schools and districts adopt and implement the proposed '[Washington State Observer Identification Protocol](#).' When implemented, the Protocol will provide consistency and continuity across schools and districts, which is currently lacking. Additionally, the Protocol will clarify for staff and families how schools collect race and ethnicity information.

Washington State Observer Identification Protocol

All schools shall select one or two representatives who will be responsible for conducting observer identification. Ideal candidates for this role include staff who interact regularly with all families, such as the

⁹ National Forum on Education Statistics, Race/Ethnicity Data Implementation Task Force. (2008). Managing an Identity Crisis: Forum Guide to Implementing New Federal Race and Ethnicity Categories. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008802.pdf>

school secretary, the family engagement coordinator, registrar personnel, the principal, and/or the vice principal.

The school representative(s) shall receive annual training on culturally responsive best practices for observer identification. The Task Force recommends OSPI create and implement this training. Trainings should consist of online modules aligned with the Professional Educator Standards Board's (PESB) [cultural competency standards matrix](#). Upon completion, the school representative(s) shall receive a certificate, enabling them to conduct observer identification *as a last resort*.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES REGARDING OBSERVER IDENTIFICATION:

- OBSERVER IDENTIFICATION SHALL ONLY BE USED AS A LAST RESORT (SEE OBSERVER IDENTIFICATION STEPS BELOW).
- ALL SURVEYS ASKING FOR THE RACE AND ETHNICITY OF A STUDENT MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION ON THE OBSERVER IDENTIFICATION PROCESS.
- IF ENGLISH IS NOT THE STUDENT'S PRIMARY LANGUAGE AT HOME, ALL FORMS MUST BE TRANSLATED TO THEIR NATIVE LANGUAGE AND IF FOLLOW-UP IS NEEDED, SCHOOLS SHALL USE HIGH QUALITY INTERPRETERS WHEN INTERACTING WITH THE PARENTS/GUARDIANS.
- IF OBSERVER IDENTIFICATION IS USED, THE STUDENT'S INFORMATION MUST BE FLAGGED IN THE LOCAL STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM TO ENSURE TRANSPARENCY AT EVERY LEVEL.

The [Observer Identification Steps](#) outlined below apply if a student or parent/guardian does not fill out the race and ethnicity questions on the original school survey sent home. The school representative(s) responsible for conducting observer identification must record what steps they took to reach out to families. This will help the school representative(s) stay on track, and will serve as proof that observer identification was only conducted as a last resort.

The Observer Identification Steps are written in a specific and intentional order with the idea of being a step-by-step guide. By using the steps in the suggested order, it will ensure the school representative(s) make multiple attempts in reaching out to students' parents/guardians. The ultimate goal of this guide is to reduce the usage of observer identification and improve student data accuracy. However, if observer identification is needed, it must be done in a culturally competent manner with full transparency.

Observer Identification Steps

1. Contact Parent or Guardian

- Reach out to the parent/guardian of the student. In-person contact is preferred; however, if that is not possible, reach out by phone. (Note: By law, schools are required to provide interpretation services if needed.)
- During this conversation, explain why it is important to collect student race and ethnicity data (see [The Why behind Race and Ethnicity Data](#)). Additionally, state that it is mandatory for all K-12 schools in Washington and in the country to report the race and ethnicity of every student.
- Describe the observer identification process and ask if they have questions.
- If the parent/guardian is comfortable doing so, provide them with the opportunity to fill out the race and ethnicity questions at this time. If they opt to fill out the questions, you can address their concerns, but do not tell them how they should identify their student's race and ethnicity.

2. Send Letter Home

- Send a letter home stating that if the parent/guardian does not fill out and return the completed form within three weeks (provide an actual date), observer identification will be used. (Note: By law, schools are required to provide translation services if needed.)
- In the letter, re-state all information outlined in Step 1.
- Include the form with the race and ethnicity questions, so the parent/guardian can easily fill it out and return to the school.
- Express in the letter that even if they refuse to identify the race and ethnicity of their child, a school representative will still fill out the form based on observer identification.

3. Gather Student Information

- School representative(s) shall collect background information about the student. *All* of the following actions must be taken:
 - Review student records and document the race and ethnicity of the student from previous years.
 - If the student has siblings, review their student records and document previous race and ethnicity data.
 - Talk with counselors and teachers who have worked with the student. Ask for insight regarding the student's race, ethnicity, and culture.
 - Use responses to the home language survey to identify the student's home language.
- Note: School representative(s) may begin collecting data on the student as early as Step 1, however, they must not perform observation identification until three weeks after the letter was sent home to parents/guardians (Step 2).

4. Conduct Observer Identification

- Use the information gathered in Step 3 to identify the race and ethnicity of the student.
- Send the parent/guardian a letter stating observer identification has been conducted. The letter must include what race and ethnicity category/categories were chosen. Additionally, the letter must inform the parent/guardian that they can change their student's race and ethnicity information at any time. School representative(s) must make sure to provide school contact information in case the parent/guardian would like to make changes.
- Flag the student information in the local student information system indicating observer identification was conducted.

Data Reporting

Reporting to the U.S. Department of Education

How schools and districts collect data differs from how OSPI reports data to the U.S. Department of Education. For example, the Office of Management and Budget has set standards allowing respondents to check all racial and ethnic categories that apply. However, respondents are not offered a 'Two or More Races' category. In contrast, when OSPI reports data, respondents who have checked more than one race are reported as 'Two or More Races.'

When reporting data to the U.S. Department of Education, OSPI must report aggregated race and ethnicity data in the following categories:

Ethnicity:

- Hispanic/Latino of any race
- Not Hispanic/Latino of any race

Race:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or More Races

When OSPI aggregates its data in these reporting categories, an individual student shall never be double reported. To avoid duplicates, the U.S. Department of Education established the following guidelines:

1. Do not double report individuals who identify as multiple races. Rather, mark them as 'Two or More Races.'
2. Report only ethnic data for individuals who self-identify as Hispanic/Latino, even though individuals will have had the opportunity to designate racial information.

Reporting to Stakeholders

Disaggregated data should be shared on a routine basis with key stakeholders, such as families and community-based organizations. One of the core goals of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is to enable stakeholders to engage in a meaningful way with their local education system. For this to happen, stakeholders must have access to clear, robust, and ongoing information about how their

Reporting to the U.S. Department of Education

Example 1: A respondent self-identifies as Hispanic/Latino and as Asian. This respondent is reported only in the Hispanic/Latino category.

Example 2: A respondent self-identifies as Hispanic/Latino and as Asian **and** Black or African American. This respondent is reported only in the Hispanic/Latino category.

Example 3: A respondent self-identifies as non-Hispanic/Latino and as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. This respondent is reported in the Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander category.

Example 4: A respondent self-identifies as non-Hispanic/Latino and as American Indian or Alaska Native **and** White. This respondent is reported in the Two or More Races category.

Example 5: A respondent who self-identifies as Black and White is reported in the Two or More Races category.

students and schools are doing.¹⁰ New regulations under ESSA seek to ensure states and districts work with parents/guardians to develop student data [report cards](#).¹¹ As mentioned previously, data report cards summarize enrollment and student success data for schools, districts, and the state.

Student data should always be accessible and easy to understand. For more information on how to share data with school communities, see [Family and Community Engagement](#).

Protecting Students' Privacy

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) was established in 1974 to protect the privacy of student education records. Education records are maintained by schools and include information about each individual student, such as grades, transcripts, class lists, course schedules, health records, and discipline files.

FERPA applies to all schools receiving funds from the U.S. Department of Education. Under FERPA, parents/guardians have certain rights regarding their child's education records. When the student reaches the age of 18, these rights transfer to the student, deeming them 'eligible students.'

FERPA provides parents/guardians with the following rights:¹²

1. The **right to inspect and review** the student's education records within 45 days after the day the school receives a request for access.
2. The **right to request the amendment** of the student's education records that the parent/guardian or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent/guardian or eligible student has the **right to a formal hearing**. If the school still decides not to amend the record after the hearing, the parent/guardian or eligible student can attach a statement to the student record stating their view.
3. The **right to provide written consent** before the school discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records, except to the extent FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
4. The **right to file a complaint** with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

Schools are required to annually notify parents/guardians and eligible students of their rights under FERPA. See [Appendix A](#) for a model notification letter to parents/guardians or eligible students regarding their rights under FERPA.

Know the rights of families to student's information:

- ✓ Inspect
- ✓ Review
- ✓ Amend
- ✓ Have a hearing
- ✓ Provide written consent
- ✓ File a complaint

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Education. (2016). Every Student Succeeds Act. Accountability, State Plans, and Data Reporting. Summary of Final Regulations. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essafactsheet1127.pdf>

¹¹ OSPI. (2016). Washington State Report Card. Retrieved from <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/summary.aspx>

¹² U.S. Department of Education. (2015). Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html?src=rn>

Protecting Student Privacy when Reporting Data

Schools, districts, and OSPI are responsible for protecting the privacy of student information. Student data shall never be reported in a way that identifies individual students.

Data reporting requirements are in the process of changing as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) for Washington State will not be finalized until September 2017. Still, there are certain n-size requirements schools, districts, and OSPI must implement. The n-size is 20 for accountability purposes, while the n-size is 10 for state report cards. For example, information on sub-groups of students shall not be reported if there are fewer than 10 students in a particular sub-group. If a school has fewer than 10 Snoqualmie students, the school must not publish academic outcomes for students in the Snoqualmie sub-ethnic category. Their scores will be included in the American Indian/Alaska Native aggregate data set if the aggregate set has a sufficient n-size.

Data Utilization

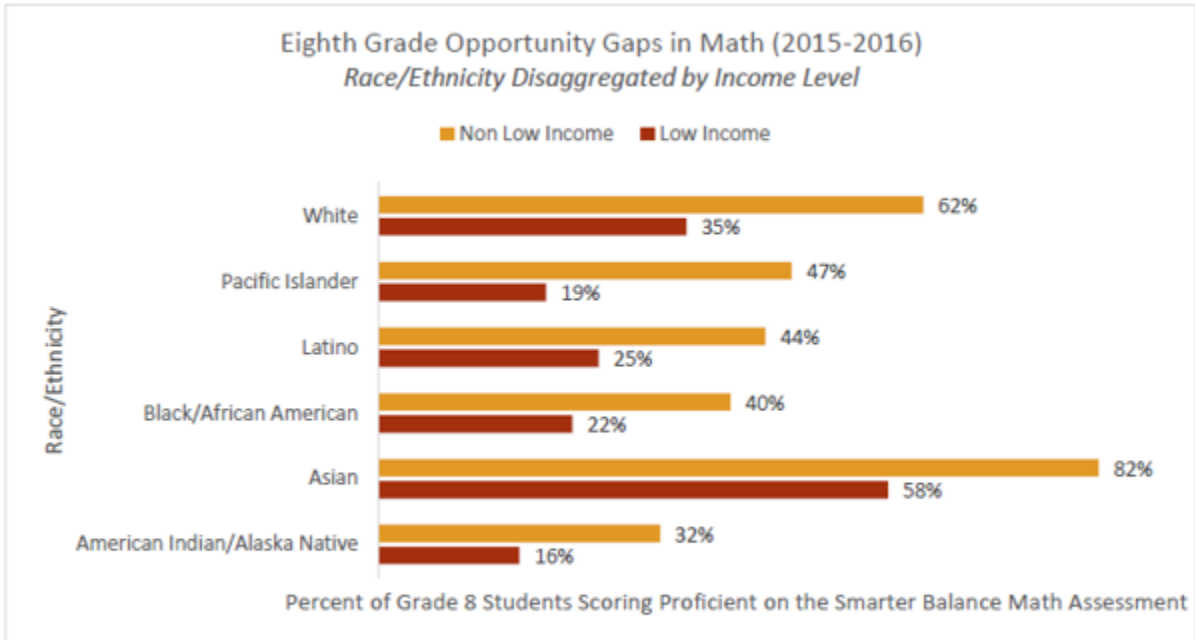
Disaggregated student data should be utilized to close educational opportunity gaps for underserved students. To do this effectively, schools and districts must use student race and ethnicity data strategically. The term 'data-driven decision making' in this context refers to collecting and analyzing various types of data to inform decisions aimed at improving the success of students and schools.

Problems in education can never be solved in isolation. Hence, student data should always be analyzed in ways that portray complexities and begin to answer *who, how, and why* questions. For example, Figure 5 shows there is an interplay between race/ethnicity, income level, and academic achievement. Using cross-tabulations between race/ethnicity and income level allow for a more informative analysis of student achievement.

"Data can be measured on many levels. By looking at aggregate data, superintendents can form a general assessment of a particular curriculum, class, or school. But breaking down or disaggregating data provides a more complete picture. It goes beyond the 'what' and tries to discover the 'why' and 'how.'"

Source: http://www.oasa.org/uploadedFiles/Policy_and_Advocacy/files/UsingDataToImproveSchools.pdf

FIGURE 6. EIGHTH GRADE OPPORTUNITY GAPS IN MATH



Data source: The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State Report Card: <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/summary.aspx>
*Note: Currently, student race/ethnicity data are limited to the federally mandated race/ethnicity categories. Further disaggregation would reveal additional opportunity gaps.

Local and Statewide Examples

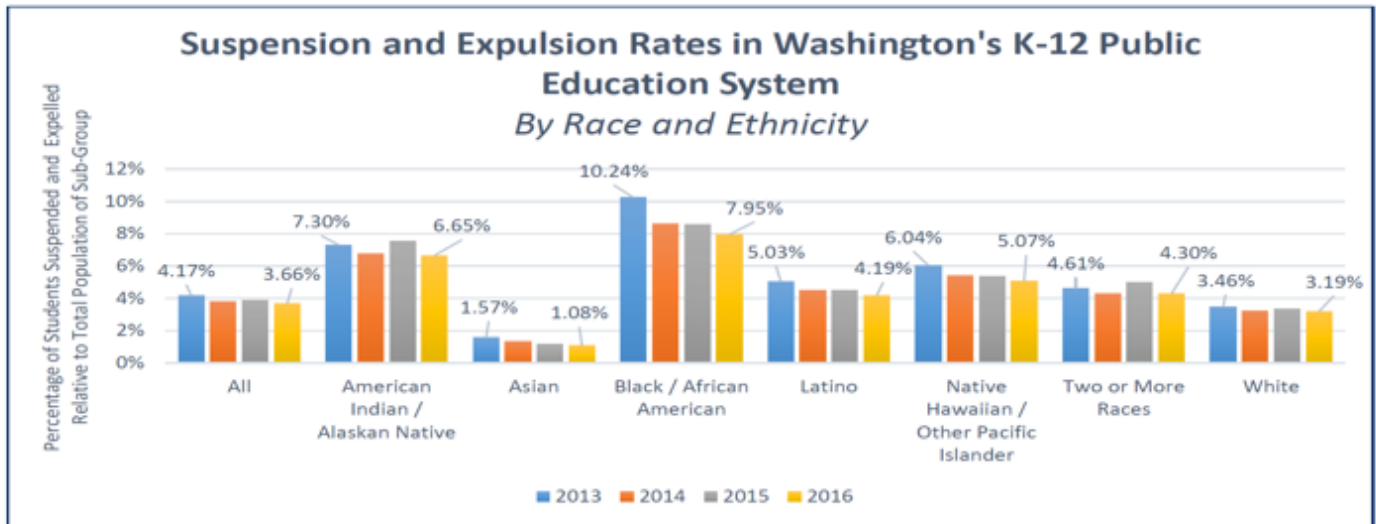
In Washington, student data disaggregated by race and ethnicity have sparked statewide and local policy changes. The [Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee \(EOGOAC\)](#)¹³ has been at the forefront of this movement, using data to advocate for students of color since its

¹³ OSPI. (2017). The Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee. Retrieved from <http://www.k12.wa.us/WorkGroups/EOGOAC.aspx>

inception in 2009. Members of the EOGOAC are committed to using disaggregated student race and ethnicity data to: (1) create more equitable statewide education policies; and (2) hold schools, districts, and the state accountable for reducing disproportionalities in education.

The EOGOAC's work led to [Chapter 72, Laws of 2016 \(Education—Opportunities and Outcomes\)](#), which implements strategies to close opportunity gaps faced by students of color.¹⁴ Student discipline is a focal point of this statute. Figure 7 shows African American students and Alaska Native/American Indian students are suspended and expelled at much higher rates than their peers. Although disproportionalities persist, gains have been made. Suspension and expulsion rates continue to decrease for all race and ethnicity groups.

FIGURE 7. DISPROPORTIONALITIES IN SCHOOL DISCIPLINE BY RACE AND ETHNICITY



Source: OSPI, Student Information Department.

*Note: 'Suspended and Expelled' include long-term suspension, short-term suspension, and expulsion.

Changes to school discipline policy, implemented in the 2016-2017 school year due to Chapter 72, Laws of 2016 (Education—Opportunities and Outcomes), seek to further reduce discipline disparities and hold schools and districts accountable for their discipline policies and procedures.

CHANGES IN SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICIES DUE TO CHAPTER 72, LAWS OF 2016 (EDUCATION—OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTCOMES):¹⁵

- EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE (SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS) ARE LIMITED TO NO MORE THAN ONE ACADEMIC TERM (WITH AN EXCEPTION FOR THE OFFENSE OF BRINGING A FIREARM TO SCHOOL).
- SCHOOL DISTRICTS MAY NOT IMPOSE LONG-TERM SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION AS A FORM OF DISCRETIONARY DISCIPLINE.
- SCHOOL DISTRICTS MAY NOT SUSPEND THE PROVISION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES TO A STUDENT AS A DISCIPLINARY ACTION, AND THE SCHOOL DISTRICT MUST PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A STUDENT TO RECEIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DURING THE PERIOD OF SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION.
- ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS SHOULD BE COMPARABLE, EQUITABLE, AND APPROPRIATE TO THE REGULAR EDUCATION SERVICES A STUDENT WOULD HAVE RECEIVED WITHOUT THE EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE.
- FAMILIES MUST BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE MEANINGFUL INPUT ON THE REENGAGEMENT PLAN OF THE SUSPENDED OR EXPELLED STUDENT.

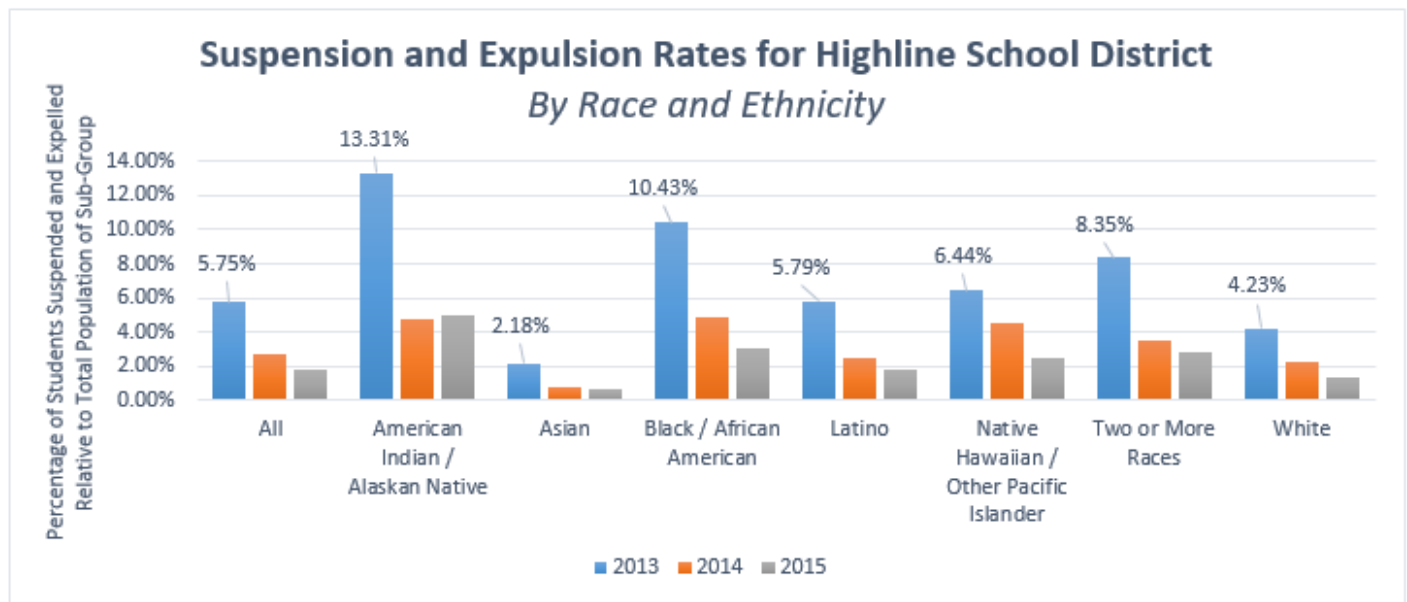
In addition to state-level policy work, districts have enacted local strategies to reduce discipline disparities. For example, Highline School District has implemented a number of alternative discipline

¹⁴ Washington State Legislature. (2016). Chapter 72, Laws of 2016 (Education—Opportunities and Outcomes). Retrieved from <http://lawfilesexft.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2015-16/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1541-S4.SL.pdf>

¹⁵ Ibid.

approaches across its schools, such as in-school suspension and restorative justice, to work toward eliminating out-of-school suspension (except when critical for student and staff safety). Figure 8 demonstrates Highline School District's progress in reducing suspension and expulsion rates for all groups of students, and especially for American Indian/Alaska Native students.

FIGURE 8. HIGHLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S DECLINING SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION RATES



The reduction of racial disproportionalities in suspension and expulsion rates is a result of concerted local and statewide efforts. Disaggregated data has been driving changes to school discipline policy, which demonstrates how student race and ethnicity data can be utilized to close opportunity gaps and reduce disproportionalities in education. Comparing student data over time enables schools, districts, and the state to track progress and hold themselves accountable for providing equitable services to historically underserved students.

Moving Forward

Figures 6, 7, and 8 are useful in comparing opportunity gaps between groups of students. However, the data does not reveal opportunity gaps *within* racial and ethnic groups. Collecting sub-racial and sub-ethnic information to the level proposed in this guide (see [Race and Ethnicity Categories](#)) will enable analyses that identify opportunity gaps within racial groups. From there, we will be able to answer the following types of questions:

- How do White students who identify as Eastern European compare academically to their non-Eastern European White peers?
- Why does income level differentially affect the achievement of American-born Black students with African ancestors compared to non-American born Black students of African origin?
- Some Asian students are outperforming their peers; however, are there sub-groups of Asian students experiencing outcomes that do not reflect the aggregate Asian success rate?
- What are common academic barriers faced by American Indian/Alaska Native students?

Disaggregated student data must be at the forefront of decision-making at the classroom, school, district, and state levels.

Family and Community Engagement

Families will be much more willing to fill out school forms and exercise their right to self-identify their race and ethnicity if they understand how the use of disaggregated data can benefit their family, school, and/or community. In order to make data meaningful, it is critical for schools to:

- (1) clarify for families and community members why information about race and ethnicity is collected; and
- (2) present findings to families and community members on a routine basis.

Over time, families and community members should begin to see the benefits and importance of collecting student information. The following sections outline best practices on how to communicate with families and communities about student race and ethnicity data.

Step 1. Clarify the *Why*

There are many ways to collect student data. Some school districts opt for online forms while others send forms home. Regardless of the system, the race and ethnicity survey form should always include a packet of information clarifying why student race and ethnicity information is collected. Information should: (1) clarify federal race and ethnicity regulation; (2) describe the benefits of disaggregated data; (3) highlight family rights under FERPA; and (4) explain the observer identification process (see [Appendix B](#) and [Appendix C](#) for an example).

Step 2. Share Results

Reports on student performance, covering a wide range of variables broken down by sub-groups (e.g. income, race/ethnicity, English Learner enrollment, etc.), should be shared with families and community members on a routine basis.

Questions to consider when sharing data with the community:¹⁶

- What data-sharing method does your community prefer?
- What types of data matter most to your community?
- In what ways is the community involved in discussing data, such as test results, school safety reports, and teacher quality ratings?
- How does your community gather input on how to improve schools?
- How do teachers, staff, and board members in the district communicate with parents/guardians?
- How is jargon-free data reported to the community?

Communications Plan

Schools and districts should have a clear plan on how to communicate student-level data with community members. Questions to consider when creating a communication plan include:

Messages: What do we hope to achieve as a result of communicating?

Audiences: With whom do we want to communicate?

Results: What measurable effect do we hope to achieve?

Medium: What communication method do we want to employ?

Timeline: By what date do we want to be successful?

Expense: How much are we willing to spend on communications?

District and school staff: Who will be responsible for successful communications?

Source:

http://www.aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Policy_and_Advocacy/files/UsingDataToImproveSchools.pdf

¹⁶ Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (2002). Using Data to Improve Schools: What's Working. Retrieved from http://www.aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Policy_and_Advocacy/files/UsingDataToImproveSchools.pdf

- Who are the most credible messengers in the district to deliver information to the community?
- How can the district build an effective working relationship with the media?

Schools and districts can and should share student data in multiple ways and in various settings. The most effective environments for sharing data are face-to-face meetings, such as those displayed in Figure 9.

FIGURE 9. STRATEGIES FOR SHARING DATA¹⁷

Method	Number of People	Structure
Focus Group	8 to 12 people	A neutral moderator leads focus group discussions using a script and predetermined questions. The moderator takes notes on key themes, new ideas, differences of opinion, and common ground. Participants can be a wide range of community members or a specific sub-group of people.
Community Forum / Town Hall Meeting	60 to 200 people	Focus on one issue or one question, such as, "What should students know and be able to do?" Information gathered can help inform the district's strategic planning process, goal-setting or data-gathering efforts.
Study Circle	10 to 15 people	A group of parents/guardians, educators, students, and community members who gather weekly for two hours over four weeks to discuss a particular issue led by a facilitator. At the final meeting, the group makes a final decision on how to address the issue.
High-level advisory committee	10 to 15 people	Consists of cross-section business and community leaders who meet periodically with the district superintendent. The committee offers guidance on key issues and continually discusses community engagement strategies. Committees can be issue-specific or more general and advise on broad issues.

Conclusion

Family rights, as well as family and community engagement, should be at the forefront of the student race and ethnicity data collection, reporting, and utilization process. Moreover, disaggregated data should be used to create more equitable learning opportunities. Educators, administrators, and policymakers *must* make data-driven decisions on how schools, districts, and the state can better serve sub-groups of students in Washington with the objective of closing educational opportunity gaps.

BY COLLECTING DISAGGREGATED STUDENT RACE AND ETHNICITY DATA, EDUCATORS AND POLICYMAKERS SHALL SEEK TO:

- PROMOTE RACIAL EQUITY
- FACILITATE SYSTEMIC CHANGE
- ADVOCATE FOR UNDERSERVED RACIAL AND ETHNIC POPULATIONS
- BETTER SERVE ALL COMMUNITIES IN WASHINGTON

Appendix

Appendix A. Race and Ethnicity Student Data Packet (template)

Race and Ethnicity Student Data: Family Rights and Responsibilities

Student Data Overview

Student data tells us if education programs are working. It tells us if students, schools, and districts are succeeding. This information helps local and state government make informed decisions based on facts, rather than anecdotes.

STUDENT DATA...

- Informs education policies.
- Improves teaching and learning.
- Monitors student progress.
- Monitors school and district progress.
- Identifies struggling students who need additional help.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction compiles and reports state-level student data annually. To view this data see the following website: <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/summary.aspx>

Student information is not intended to harm individuals and/or groups of students, nor will it be presented in a way that identifies individual students. (See [Family Rights](#) for more information.)

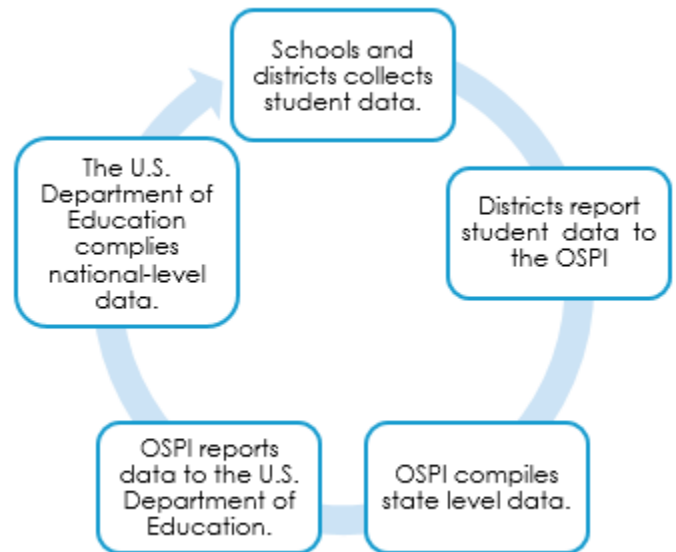
Race and Ethnicity Categories

All K-12 public schools collect and report student race and ethnicity annually. When collecting this data, schools are required to use a two-part question:

(1) Is your child of Hispanic or Latino origin?

(2) What races do you consider your child? (check all that apply)

- A. American Indian or Alaska Native
- B. Asian
- C. Black or African American
- D. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- E. White



Ethnicity	Definition
1. Hispanic/Latino	A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.

Race	Definition
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Black or African American	A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
5. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
6. White	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

Sub-Racial and Sub-Ethnic Categories

Beginning the 2018-2019 school year, schools in Washington will use sub-racial and sub-ethnic categories when collecting race and ethnicity data. For example, if you identify as Pacific Islander, you will also be able to (if you want) select or write-in the ethnic group you identify with. This will provide schools more information on which groups of students need more resources. In the previous system, some groups of students were overlooked because the data did not capture enough information. Sub-racial and sub-ethnic categories will help ensure groups of students in need of support are not overlooked.

PACIFIC ISLANDER

<input type="checkbox"/> Carolinian	<input type="checkbox"/> Papuan
<input type="checkbox"/> Chamorro	<input type="checkbox"/> Pohnpeian
<input type="checkbox"/> Chuukese	<input type="checkbox"/> Samoan
<input type="checkbox"/> Fijian	<input type="checkbox"/> Solomon Islander
<input type="checkbox"/> i-Kiribati / Gilbertese	<input type="checkbox"/> Tahitian
<input type="checkbox"/> Kosraean	<input type="checkbox"/> Tokelauan
<input type="checkbox"/> Maori	<input type="checkbox"/> Tongan
<input type="checkbox"/> Marshallese	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuvaluan
<input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian	<input type="checkbox"/> Yapese
<input type="checkbox"/> Ni-Vanuatu	<input type="checkbox"/> Write-in: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Palauan	

Purpose

By collecting more detailed student race and ethnicity data, Washington State seeks to:

- Promote racial equity
- Create systemic change
- Advocate for racial and ethnic underserved populations
- Better serve all communities in Washington

Family Rights

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), established in 1974, is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Records contain student information, such as grades, transcripts, class lists, student course schedules, health records, and student discipline files. Schools keep an education record on file for every student at the school.

FERPA provides your family with the following rights:¹⁷

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day the school receives a request for access.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent/guardian or eligible student has the right to a formal hearing. If the school still decides not to amend the record after the hearing, the parent/guardian or eligible student can attach a statement to the student record stating his or her view.
3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records, except to the extent FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

For more information: <http://familypolicy.ed.gov/ferpa-parents-students>

Self-Identification

By law, you are not required to identify the race or ethnicity of your child on school forms. However, if you choose not to identify the race and ethnicity of your child, school staff will choose for you. When school staff fills out the race and ethnicity questions on behalf of the student and parent/guardian, it is called 'observer identification'. Schools will only use observer identification as a last resort. We prefer if parents fill this form out instead because it is more accurate.

Student race and ethnicity information is collected for the purpose of improving teaching and learning. Accurately identifying groups of students currently underserved by the education system is the first step in creating positive changes at the local, state, and national level.

Observer Identification

If you decide not to fill out and return the attached race and ethnicity, school staff will do it for you (observer identification). To do this, we will collect background information on your student by:

- Reviewing student records, documenting the race and ethnicity of the student in previous years.
- If the student has siblings, reviewing their student records, documenting their previous race and ethnicity information.
- Talking with counselors and teachers who have had the student previously.

¹⁷ <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html?src=rn>

- Using responses to the home language survey to identify the student's home language.

If we conduct observer identification, we will inform you of the categories we have chosen for your child. As a parent, you always have the option of changing the race and ethnicity records kept at the school. To do this, you can contact me or come into school and ask to change it at the front office.

Appendix B. Letter to Parents/Guardians from School: Race and Ethnicity Student Data (template)

Dear [Recipient Name]:

I am contacting you because [school name] has not received your child's race and ethnicity information. Attached to this letter is the race and ethnicity form we collect from *all* students. Please fill it out on behalf of your child and return it by [date – three week time period]. You can mail it using the address located on the top left corner of this letter or you can drop it off at the front office of the school.

By law, you are not required to identify the race or ethnicity of your child on school forms. However, if you choose not to provide us with this information, the school will fill it out for you. When school staff fills out the race and ethnicity questions on behalf of the student and parent/guardian, it is called 'observer identification'. We will only do this as a last resort. We prefer if parents fill this form out, as this ensures our school data is accurate. Additionally, we feel it is in your best interest to self-identify the race and ethnicity of your child.

Student race and ethnicity information is collected for the purpose of improving teaching and learning. Accurately identifying groups of students currently underserved by the education system is the first step in creating positive changes at the local, state, and national level. Also, please note student data will never be reported in a way that identifies individual students, nor will it be used to harm individuals and/or groups of students. For more information on family privacy rights in education see the following website: <http://familypolicy.ed.gov/ferpa-parents-students>.

As stated previously, if you decide not to fill out and return the attached race and ethnicity form out by [date], the school will do it for you (observer identification). To do this, we will collect background information about your student by:

- Reviewing student records and document the race and ethnicity of the student in previous years.
- If the student has siblings, reviewing their student records and document previous race and ethnicity data.
- Talking with counselors and teachers who have had the student. Ask for insights regarding the student's race, ethnicity, and culture.
- Using responses to the home language survey to identify the student's home language.

If we conduct observer identification, we will inform you of the categories we have chosen. As a parent, you always have the option of changing the race and ethnicity records kept at the school. To do this, you can contact me or come into school and ask to change it at the front office.

If you have any questions at all, please feel free to contact me at [phone number]. We can talk over the phone or arrange a time to meet. Additionally, if you are more comfortable speaking in a language other than English, we can arrange to have an interpreter.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Contact Parent or Guardian

In-person contact is preferred; however, if that is not possible, reach out by phones. By law, you are required to provide translation services if needed.

OUTLINE OF WHAT TO SAY:

- Explain why student race and ethnicity information is important to collect
 - One of the most effective ways to improve teaching and learning is to collect and analyze data
 - Collecting disaggregated race and ethnicity data allows schools, districts, and the state to more accurately identify underserved students. In the previous system, some groups of students in need of more resources were masked by other groups of students that fit under the same racial or ethnic category. Disaggregated race and ethnicity data will help ensure groups of students in need of support are not overlooked.
 - Student data will never be reported in a way that identifies individual students, nor will it be used to harm individuals and/or groups of students.

- Not only is it useful, but it is also required.
 - All K-12 school in Washington and in America are required to collect and report the race and ethnicity of every student to the school district annually.
 - School districts report to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.
 - The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction reports to the U.S. Department of Education.

- Explain Self-identification vs. Observer identification
 - By law, you are not required to identify the race or ethnicity of your child on school forms. However, if you choose not to identify the race and/or ethnicity of your child, the school is required to use 'observer identification' to determine the race and/or ethnicity of the student.
 - We prefer if parents fill this form out, as this ensures our school data are more accurate.
 - Observer identification is only used as a last resort.

- Describe the observer identification process
 - Send letter home.
 - Collect information on the student.
 - Conduct observer identification.
 - Send letter home stating observer identification has been used.

- At this time, provide them with the opportunity to fill out the race and ethnicity questions.
 - If they opt to fill it out, you can answer their questions/concerns, but do not tell them how they should identify their student.