

USDOE Required District Diversity Data Changes

Understanding the Reporting Process and How Does it Impact My School?

When did the District change the diversity data on all of the students across the District?

Last year through the District Guidance Department in cooperation with ETS, parents of all students were sent a letter requesting they re-declare their race and ethnicity based on the new Florida Department of Education guidelines. A parent could pick any race or multiple races to identify their child's race as well as if the child was of Hispanic ethnicity or not. This was conducted through a parent survey and directed by FLDOE per US Census reporting.

How will these changes impact the diversity reporting of the school District?

The previous race categories as compared with the new computed race categories will not be a major shift except for the White category will increase. Previously many of the White students were reported as Hispanic and are now calculated in the White race category with a Hispanic ethnicity rather than just as a Hispanic race category. Demographics of the District will be more White (as many of the formerly categorized Hispanic families will now be reporting as a White race with a Hispanic ethnicity) changing the District from a minority: majority district to a majority: majority district. This will not impact AYP classification as students who identify as Hispanic will be included in that subgroup regardless of race.

How is the District educating the community about these changes?

The new FLDOE reporting format was used in the release of the 20th day count for the school District with language in the supporting memo describing the new racial and ethnic data protocol required by the state. An additional report will be forthcoming to the principals, showing the breakdown of how the data was calculated with accompanying bulleted points to assist in answering questions about the new reporting methodology. The new reporting methodology will also be shared with various committees and community groups through the District ESOL Parent Advisory Committee as well as through the District Diversity Committee and the District Advisory Council.

Where do parents go and how do parents change their information if they need to?

All student attending school in the 2009-10 school year were required to return the demographic survey to their school last year. All of these students' demographic information has been updated. All new students to the District have been provided a new registration form with the updated diversity categories. The student registration form at all schools has been updated to reflect the new diversity and ethnicity categories required by the United States Department of Education. If a parent wants to change any information the District has on a child, they must go to the school where their child attends and ask to update their child's information.

Will this change have any impact on the Federal No Child Left Behind Act requirement to track student achievement data by subgroups?

This may be confusing as the District adjusts to these new requirements as they apply to Adequate Yearly Progress. Hispanic is now considered an ethnicity not a race for student data entry and demographic reporting. However, the requirement of NCLB reporting still includes Hispanic as reporting subgroup. Hispanic will remain one of the subgroups that the NCLB requires schools to report on if the school has 30 or more students in that particular subgroup.

Some interesting points for all to be aware of:

There will be an impact at some schools with a higher number of Hispanic students. Students who previously identified as Hispanic and another race will now be included in the Hispanic subgroup. In prior years these students would not have been in a racial subgroup because they were identified as "Multi-racial".

The state will not be changing its subgroup categories for AYP. However, the local numbers in each of these subgroups may change.

There will be no additional AYP subgroup created for the Pacific Islander racial group.

Schools are accountable for participation of any subgroup with 30 or more students.

Schools are accountable for proficiency of any subgroup that has 30 to 99 students that represent more than 15% of the tested population, or 100 or more students total.

Why does the District need information in this new format?

The demographics of our society have changed significantly in the last few decades. These changes will allow our students and staff to describe more accurately who they are. District staff was also surveyed last year to make sure that all of the district reporting methodologies met the new standards. The District and state are required by the federal government to use the new categories. All states and school districts are required to do the same. There are good reasons in addition to meeting federal requirements, though. We routinely report aggregate information to the federal government for funding and evaluation purposes, as well as civil rights compliance. We also use racial and ethnic data to evaluate our placement and program needs, providing the best services for all students. The U.S. Census in 2000 used the new categories. This is a trend that education and human services agencies will follow.

Is the federal government checking immigration status?

No. Race and ethnicity data collection has nothing to do with immigration status.

Will the school release my student's race and ethnicity to other parties?

Individual student records are protected by the Federal Education Records and Privacy Act (FERPA). The new race and ethnicity standards have no effect on FERPA's protection of student records. FERPA does not designate race and ethnicity as directory information, and race and ethnicity have the same protection as any other non-directory information in a student's education records.

I am Hispanic. It looks like I have to answer more questions. Why do I have to do this?

One of the major changes is the recognition that members of Hispanic populations can be of different races. The federal government would like to afford Hispanic/Latino populations the opportunity to better describe themselves according to their culture and heritage. Therefore, you are being asked to select one or more races, even if you have indicated that you are Hispanic/Latino.

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 the District needs 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 rights 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 districts follow FERPA rules and regulations to safeguard the privacy of student records (see question above). For employment records, none of the equal employment opportunity rules have changed. Your race and ethnicity will not be used to determine your employment status or condition.

How is Hispanic reported in the new requirements?

Hispanic is entered as an Ethnicity by the schools, however, it will still be considered one of the race subgroups for AYP. (When "Hispanic" is considered a category, ethnically Hispanic students of all races are aggregated as one subgroup and only non-Hispanic individuals of White, Black, Asian, and Native American or Native Alaskan categories count as members of those races.)

How will the Hispanic student subgroup for AYP be impacted?

The Hispanic subgroup will likely increase because regardless of race all students with Hispanic selected as the ethnicity indicator will be included in the Hispanic Subgroup for AYP calculations. This means students who used to be indicated as multi-racial because they are Hispanic and another race will now be considered Hispanic. ("Hispanic" as a subgroup takes precedence over other racial categories. Hispanic individuals of all races are grouped together to form the Hispanic subgroup. Therefore, a student who identifies himself as White and ethnically Hispanic, for AYP purposes would count as Hispanic rather than White. For AYP this might result in an increase in the total number of Hispanic students as those who might have previously identified themselves as Black, Multiracial, etc., but are ethnically Hispanic, would now count as Hispanic students.)

Since there is no longer a Hispanic race category will it affect a school's AYP subgroup now that more Hispanic students are classified as White?

While the Native American and White race categories have increased, this will only impact AYP if the students who now identify as these races are not also identified as Hispanic. The Race indicators will only be used for students whose ethnicity indicator is non-Hispanic. (The increase in the numbers of White and Native American students- + ~50,000 White students for example- is overwhelmingly due to ethnically Hispanic students identifying themselves as belonging to these races so therefore for AYP they would still count as part of the Hispanic subgroup.)

How will the new requirements for reporting impact the percent requirements of race and ethnicity on the School Advisory Committees?

Although SAC parent membership percents remain the same this year, it will change for the 2011-12 school year to meet the new reporting guidelines. This will provide the ability to collect parent information in the new reporting format of participating members and allow a comparison of the SAC membership accurately with new student reporting method.