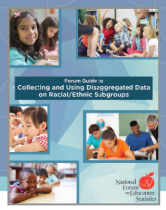


Case Studies

This document presents six case studies, or examples, of education agencies at the state and district levels that collect disaggregated racial/ethnic data, or use other means for determining which students fit into various racial/ethnic subgroups. In broad terms, most of the case studies address the following aspects of the data disaggregation process:

1. Overarching descriptive information about the agency
2. Why the agency disaggregated racial/ethnic subgroups
3. How the agency disaggregated racial/ethnic subgroups
4. Data quality challenges
5. Uses of the disaggregated data
6. Lessons learned

These case studies are presented as examples that states, districts, and others can learn from as they embark on—or continue the implementation of—a data disaggregation project. More and more education agencies are recognizing the educational value that can be gained from racial/ethnic disaggregation. If your agency is planning or implementing such a project, learning about how a similar effort was undertaken in another agency may prove to be useful as you prepare to make decisions and take action in the future.

Case Study 1: A District Striving to Meet Community Needs (Highline Public Schools, Washington)

In 2013, Highline Public Schools gathered a group of community and school personnel, as well as leaders in education, to facilitate and write a strategic plan. A major component of the strategic plan was grounding the agency's work in equity. Since then, the district has made a public commitment to equity: its website notes that Highline is "committed to equity in education, high expectations for all, and partnering with families and the community to ensure that all children achieve their potential." The district has had an equity plan in place since 2010. Nevertheless, the district found that it was having trouble adequately supporting community based organizations (CBOs) that were asking for evidence about how students of different racial/ ethnic subgroups were performing. Further, the district's community liaison learned that CBO leaders were having trouble identifying which subsets of students needed certain services. The CBOs began requesting that data on additional subgroups be collected via the district's enrollment forms so that students could more easily be identified for services. The district wanted to support its community, so it decided to add more racial/ethnic subgroups to its forms and data systems.

About the District

The Highline Public School District sits in the northwest corner of Washington, bordering Seattle to its north and encompassing the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. The district serves nearly 18,700 K12 students in 42 schools. Nearly 37 percent of the student population is categorized in the Hispanic/ Latino group, while the two next largest student groups are the White (non-Hispanic/ Latino) group (24 percent) and the Asian/ Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic/Latino) group (14 percent). Over 7.5 percent of the district's students identify as being more than one race. Nearly 71 percent of its students qualify for free or reduced lunch, and its average annual expenditure per student is approximately $12,400 (NCES, CCD, School Years 2011-12 and 2013-14). *Note: These numbers represent the most recent NCES data, and do not necessarily reflect the latest district data.*

The district contacted its state education agency about making the change. The state was supportive of the district adding subgroups to its student enrollment form, especially since the federally mandated change in racial/ethnic subgroups was impending. The state of Washington had conducted preliminary research on what new subgroups may be needed and provided this research to the district. The district's community liaison then met with the CBOs to receive their feedback on the new subgroups needed.

How the Change Was Made

A community-based organization (CBO) is ...
a public or private nonprofit that is representative of a community, or a significant segment of a community, and is engaged in meeting human, educational, environmental, or public safety community needs.

Students already enrolled in the district had previously reported their racial/ethnic groups using the pre-2010 federally mandated groupings. In order to update the data system, these students had to re-identify using the district's new racial/ethnic subgroups. The district made this change in 2007 when the new student information system (SIS) was implemented. Currently enrolled students were asked to revise their racial/ethnic identification using the new student enrollment form. Families were notified of the change in the data system and the request for re-identification via multiple mailings (four, to be specific), phone calls, and community forums. The district asked CBOs to speak with families in their community groups about the change and encourage them to re-identify themselves. Families had several options for making the change, including paper forms they could mail in, a website (accessible from computers at community forums), and by submitting data in person at a school site. In the first year, less than 70 percent of students re-identified themselves.

In 2010, changes to the federal racial/ethnic codes were fully implemented in states. The state of Washington disaggregated its racial/ethnic subgroups further than what was required federally, which the district was aware of as a stakeholder (see Case Study 2: A Statewide Expansion of Subgroups for more information on Washington's data disaggregation project). But the final racial/ethnic subgroups the state decided to use differed slightly from those on the list it originally provided to the district. The Highline Public School District was able to make slight adjustments and map its subgroups to those required by the state.

Highline Public Schools' Racial/Ethnic Question

Student Ethnicity

Highline Public Schools is collecting more detailed information about the background of our students. The school district will use this information to report on the educational progress of groups of students, but never individual students.

The information you provide below is confidential.

Part One: Is your child of Hispanic or Latino origin? (Check all that apply.)

☐ *Not Hispanic/Latino* ☐ *Cuban* ☐ *Dominican*	☐ *Spaniard* ☐ *Puerto Rican*	☐ *Mexican/Mexican-American/Chicano*	☐ *Central American* ☐ *South American*	☐ *Latin American* ☐ *Other Hispanic/Latino*

Part Two: What race(s) do you consider your child? (Check all that apply.)

☐ *Latino White* ☐ *Latino Black* ☐ *Other Latino* ☐ *African American* ☐ *Eritrean* ☐ *Ethiopian* ☐ *Somalian* ☐ *Other African* ☐ *White*	☐ *Asian Indian* ☐ *Cambodian* ☐ *Chinese* ☐ *Filipino* ☐ *Hmong* ☐ *Indonesian* ☐ *Japanese* ☐ *Korean* ☐ *Laotian* ☐ *Malaysian* ☐ *Pakistani* ☐ *Singaporean* ☐ *Taiwanese* ☐ *Thai* ☐ *Vietnamese* ☐ *Other Asian*	☐ *Native Hawaiian* ☐ *Fijian* ☐ *Guamanian or Chamorro* ☐ *Mariana Islander* ☐ *Melanesian* ☐ *Micronesian* ☐ *Samoan* ☐ *Tongan* ☐ *Other Pacific Islander*	☐ *Alaska Native* ☐ *Chehalis* ☐ *Colville* ☐ *Cowlitz* ☐ *Hoh* ☐ *Jamestown* ☐ *Kalispel* ☐ *Lower Elwha* ☐ *Lummi* ☐ *Makah* ☐ *Muckleshoot* ☐ *Nisqually* ☐ *Nooksack* ☐ *Port Gamble Klallam* ☐ *Puyallup*	☐ *Quileute* ☐ *Quinault* ☐ *Samish* ☐ *Sauk-Suiattle* ☐ *Shoalwater* ☐ *Skokomish* ☐ *Snoqualmie* ☐ *Spokane* ☐ *Squaxin Island* ☐ *Stillaguamish* ☐ *Suquamish* ☐ *Swinomish* ☐ *Tulalip* ☐ *Yakama* ☐ *Other WA Indian* ☐ *Other American Indian*

Do grandparent(s) or parent(s) have Native American tribal affiliation? ☐ Yes ☐ No

SOURCE: Highline Public Schools, 2014.

Figure 1. Highline Public Schools' two-part racial/ethnic question differs from that required by Washington State and the U.S. Department of Education, but because of the district's use of the two-part question structure, the data are still easily rolled up to the state and federal levels.

Data Quality

The district's first full data submission to the state using the new subgroups contained surprising results. The data indicated that the district had a larger student population in the White (non-Hispanic/Latino) subgroup than was previously reported. The state, questioning the accuracy, asked the district to work with families to re-identify. In responding, some families declined to choose the new subgroups and instead just chose the White group. Since a multiracial response was not permitted, some families marked as many as seven or eight unique subgroups. It took the district about 3 years to achieve accurate data about its students. Only then did it begin to use these data for analysis. As of this publication date, the district is considering whether it should add more African subgroups to improve the overall data quality and usefulness.

Using the Disaggregated Data

Since it began collecting these data, the district has been able to use them to record each subgroup's academic performance and disciplinary record. However, the district is not able to provide public reports on its website due to privacy concerns that are still being worked out. Thus far the only public use of the data has come from the district sharing limited statistics at public meetings. Nevertheless, using the expanded list of subgroups in internal analyses enables school

leaders to track the successes and needs of different student groups and schools, helps CBOs provide services to students, and allows subgroup members in the community to feel valued by the district. The district has signed partnership and data sharing agreements with CBOs requesting student-level data. The district also requires that the CBO have consent forms in place with families before they ask for data so the district can match students with their request.

The data are only supplied when all of the appropriate signatures are in place. If a CBO does not want disaggregated data or cannot obtain releases from parents, the district provides aggregated data in non-identifiable datasets.

The most important ways that the district uses its disaggregated data include:

- **Providing services to students.** The district's main purpose in collecting these data was to better support its student population, which is now occurring in several ways. For example, the district strives to support immigrant students as soon as they arrive. Due to the availability of its new data, the district can now more expediently connect these new students with appropriate CBOs so they can receive important services and become better connected to the community. Another example is the district's current deliberations about adding another dual-language program. The district offers Spanish dual-language programs in four schools and a Vietnamese dual-language program in one school. The district is using its new data to inform considerations on whether the current student population would also support a Somali dual-language school. In general, Highline Public Schools has found that as it becomes better at using the data to tell its story, the need and desire for more data—particularly among school leaders and CBOs—increase.
- **Informing the public.** In an effort to make the data more available to the public, the district is in the process of publishing additional information about subgroups on its website. It is working to create approximately five to ten unique, dynamic reports that will always be available online. The reports will display information on grades, graduation rates, attendance, and other topics related to racial/ethnic subgroups. Of course, the main concern throughout this process is data privacy. The district must make sure that the combination of publicly released district data (including these new reports) and publicly released state data will not disclose information about individual students. As the details of the website are being finalized, the data are being shared via other methods, such as videos, flyers, and other educational materials that present more limited statistics and pose fewer student privacy risks. Figure 2 shows a bar graph with the disaggregated subgroups that was used during a recent community meeting to inform the public about racial/ethnic subgroup graduation rates.
- **Supporting CBOs.** The district has a support team whose mission is to determine which CBOs support the district's strategic plan and to review incoming data requests. The district has paid particular attention to organizations that can support the schools' students in socio-emotional learning. For example, the district works with the local YMCA, which serves a number of the district's schools in different capacities. The disaggregated data help the YMCA understand the impact of its services on Highline students. The district also works with White Center Promise (WCP), a long-term initiative focused on eradicating poverty through educational services that lead to social change. One of WCP's main goals is to help all children it works with graduate from high school, receive a postsecondary credential, and transition into a living-wage career. The district is working in tandem with WCP to achieve similar goals, and sharing disaggregated data is one important piece of that collaboration. In two Highline elementary schools, a WCP "family engagement liaison"

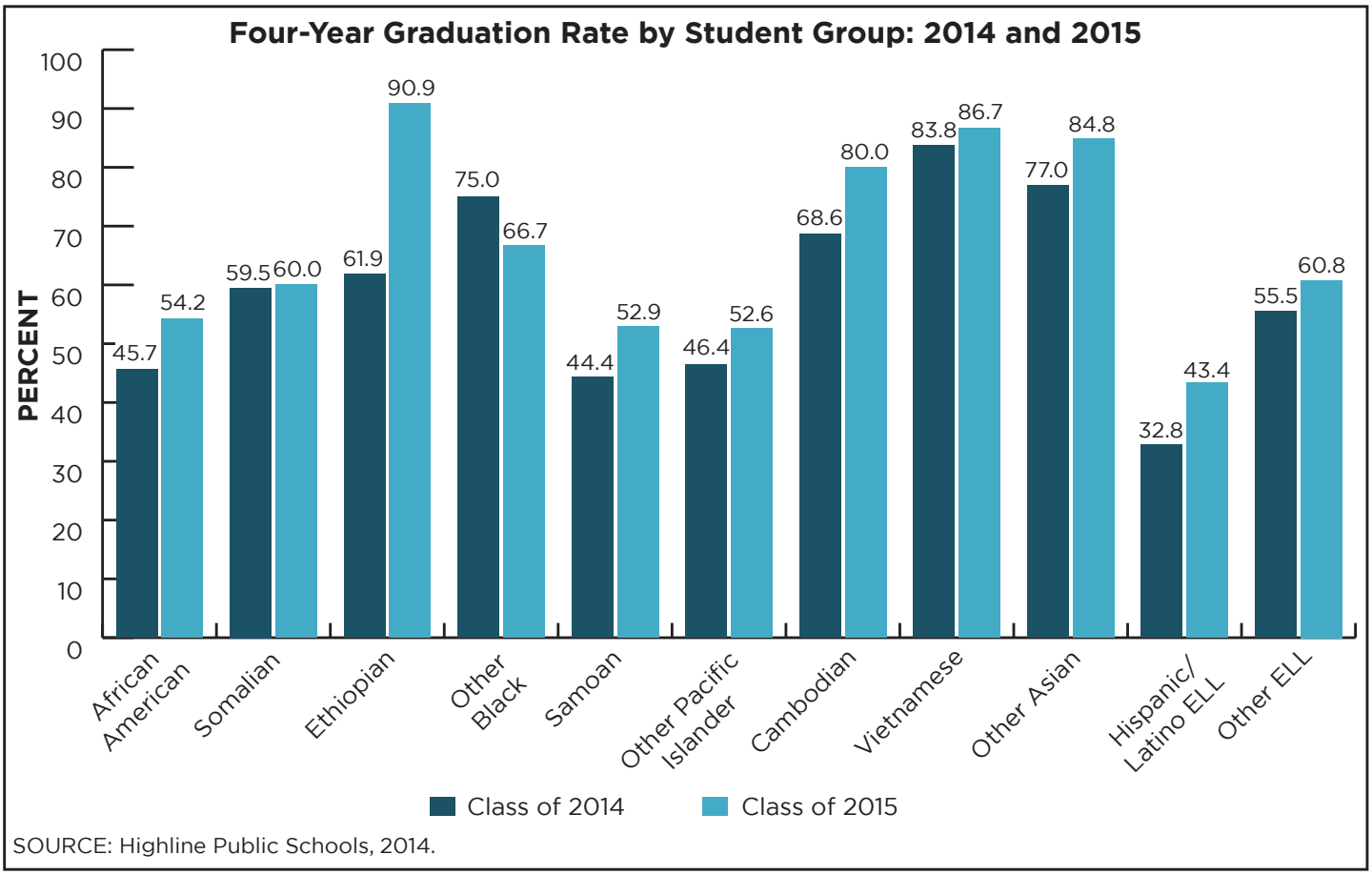


Figure 2. Highline Public Schools used this bar graph with disaggregated subgroups at a recent community meeting.

offers services ranging from coffee hours to Spanish and Somali language supports and referral programs for families who need assistance with housing, bill payment, school searches, and similar services. As the district tries to look outside the box for ways to engage students and families both inside and beyond the classroom, it turns to WCP as a service provider and thought leader, and provides the WCP with data that can help it do its important work. The district has already begun to see a positive impact throughout the school system as a result of its collaboration with WCP.

- **Achieving strategic planning goals.** The new, more comprehensive data have helped Highline Public Schools begin to achieve the benchmarks in its 2013-2017 Strategic Plan. For example, one objective was to "create language-learning courses and programs for all students, K-12, that ensure access to the global workplace, promote cross-cultural understanding, and develop critical-thinking skills" (2013-2017 Strategic Plan for Highline Public Schools). Disaggregated racial/ethnic data have been critical in helping to accomplish such objectives.

Lessons Learned

The lessons learned by the Highline Public School District include:

- **Pay attention to whole community needs.** The district felt that it was important to first pay attention to community needs, and later worry about aggregating the data into the required groups. While expanding the racial/ethnic groups was a lot of work, especially

considering that the district changed its system twice to accommodate state and federal mandates, the district feels that the endeavor was worthwhile. It has found that the richness of the data helps its work and allows it to better respond to community needs. The district recommends collecting more subgroups than an agency originally anticipates needing. It also recommends involving the community in the process via school board meetings, town halls or full forums, the distribution of information (in multiple languages, as appropriate), and the broad dissemination of online resources.

- **Wait for subgroup data to settle.** The current list of racial/ethnic subgroups in the district includes 9 Hispanic/Latino subgroups, 4 African subgroups, 16 Asian subgroups, 10 Pacific Islander subgroups, and 31 Native American subgroups. This list has been refined since it was rolled out several years ago, and it differs from the groups required at the state and federal levels. Over the years, the district has had to make decisions regarding the addition, deletion, or retention of subgroups, and it has had to become comfortable with the fact that other changes might occur regularly in the near future. For example, the district had to decide how to approach families that decided not to identify themselves in multiple subgroups. The district does not pressure families to identify themselves, but it does work with them as much as possible. Still, some families were reluctant to categorize themselves in multiple subgroups and choose only the White (non-Hispanic/Latino) subgroup. In the end, the district decided to keep the majority, though not all, of its new subgroups, which were then aggregated for state and federal reporting purposes.
- **Collaborate with community based organizations.** Working with CBOs was integral to the district's success. CBOs helped families understand the data identification and re-identification process (and other processes, like school enrollment), as well as the rationale for the change. The district suggests to other districts wishing to implement a similar change that they work with CBOs to hold community forums, during which district and/or CBO leaders not only assist in the data collection process, but also explain to families how to comply and why the information is needed. It should be explained to families that the reason for disaggregating the data is to make sure the families feel valued within the public school system and to help the district better understand the unique cultural differences of students in the schools—in order to improve the district's ability to serve different student populations. For instance, with better data, the district can more effectively train teachers and administrators to handle sensitive areas of concern, such as behavioral management in the classroom. Explaining such matters is easier, and the information is better absorbed and trusted by community members, when a district is not working in isolation but is collaborating with CBOs.

Case Study 2: A Statewide Expansion of Subgroups (Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction)

In October 2008, the state's education agency, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), in anticipation of the new federal racial/ethnic requirements coming in 2010, created a feasibility report for its legislators regarding the possibility of collecting more than the required federal groups. The report included recommendations such as aligning the timing of state change with federal changes so as not to burden districts twice, as well as cautioning against including an exhaustive list of all subgroups. The report also referenced subgroups used by the University of Washington for incoming students.

About the State

The state of Washington serves over 1 million K-12 students in 2,409 public schools. Slightly more than 58 percent of the state's student population is categorized in the White (non-Hispanic/Latino) group, while 21 percent are categorized in the Hispanic/Latino group. Over 46 percent of the state's students qualify for free or reduced lunch (NCES, CCD, School Years 2011-12 and 2013-14). *Note: These numbers represent the most recent NCES data, and do not necessarily reflect the latest state data.*

In 2009, the Washington Legislature established the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC). One of the committee's main responsibilities was "to identify data elements and systems needed to monitor progress in closing the achievement gap." The committee's work on this responsibility eventually led to the expansion of data collection on racial/ethnic groups by OSPI.

When the federal government updated the required racial/ethnic codes for reporting in 2010, Washington took the opportunity to expand its collection of racial/ethnic data to include more subgroups. The state had internal discussions about adding subgroups for state data collections, including discussions before a legislative group, and the idea was vetted by community organizations and interest groups. Finally, Washington began collecting data on 9 ethnic subgroups and almost 60 racial subgroups (see figures 3 and 4). There have been no changes to the category groups as of 2016.

How the Change Was Made

Although Washington districts were aware that the change was coming, OSPI wished to share information about the change with them officially. In January 2010, OSPI put out its first official communication—a bulletin—describing the changes in the data system and the new responsibilities of districts. In the first year, school districts could choose to report using the new subgroups or the old ones. From January through June 2010, OSPI held webinars, distributed PowerPoint presentations, spoke at statewide data collection meetings, and conveyed to districts through other communications what they needed to do to facilitate the change.

OSPI created a website and new forms to reflect the expanded data collection protocol. Since the state-level change was conducted in conjunction with the change in the federal racial/ethnic data collection, the two were not differentiated. All district trainings on the new system included all of the expanded racial/ethnic groups. OSPI created templates and presentations to assist with staff and community education. The agency appointed a single person to answer questions from districts, thus providing a consistent voice on the topic.

For the first year of the collection (school year 2009-10) districts could report using the new or old groups. OSPI had to prepare its systems not just for the new groups but also to accept both new and old at the same time, depending on each district's reporting preference during the period of overlap. This included the data collection software, file layouts, documentation, business rules, and reports back to the districts. During this first year, the state spent a lot of time turning on and off

edits and validation errors, depending on which way a particular district was reporting. This was an unexpected time constraint.

Washington State Codes and Aggregates

Aggregate	Codes
Hispanic/Latino (9 codes)	Mexican/Mexican American/Chicano, Cuban, Dominican, Spaniard, Puerto Rican, Central American, South American, Latin American, Other Hispanic/Latino
American Indian/Alaskan Native (31 race codes)	Alaskan Native, Chehalis, Colville, Cowlitz, Hoh, Jamestown, Kalispel, Lower Elwha, Lummi, Makah, Muckleshoot, Nisqually, Nooksack, Port Gamble S'Klallam, Puyallup, Quileute, Quinault, Samish, Sauk-Suiattle, Shoalwater, Skokomish, Snoqualmie, Spokane, Squaxin Island, Stillaguamish, Suquamish, Swinomish, Tulalip, Upper Skagit, Yakama, Other Washington Indian, Other American Indian
Asian (16 race codes)	Asian Indian, Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Malaysian, Pakistani, Singaporean, Taiwanese, Thai, Vietnamese, Other Asian
Black/African American (1 race code)	Black or African American
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (9 race codes)	Native Hawaiian, Fijian, Guamanian/Chamorro, Mariana Islander, Melanesian, Micronesian, Samoan, Tongan, Other Pacific Islander
White (1 race code)	White

SOURCE: State of Washington, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS).

Figure 3. Washington collects data on over 60 racial/ethnic subgroups that can be easily rolled up to the 7 federally mandated reporting groups.

Data Quality

During the initial change to a new SIS throughout the 2009-10 academic year, data quality was an issue. For that school year only, districts could choose which system to use for reporting; thus, it was difficult to draw quality conclusions from the data. Only about 25 percent of districts participated in the new system during that first year. Then, during the beginning of the second year, when the shift to the new information system was complete, there was a 6-month period during which districts submitted data on all the subgroups as requested, but there were concerns about the accuracy and precision of the data. As data administrators and other stakeholders adjusted to the new system, data quality began to improve. The data became significantly more reliable by the end of the 2010-11 academic year, which was the first mandated school year for the new system, the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS).

Today, because there is not yet a significant amount of external reporting, OSPI is not yet sure about its data quality. It seeks to improve in this area over time. One issue with the change that has come to light is the differences in the number of students identified in only the American Indian or Alaska Native (non-Hispanic/Latino) group, which declined after the change was instituted. The differences are due to the fact that previously, only one race was chosen, whereas the new system with numerous subgroup options allows multiple races to be chosen; when this occurs, the student

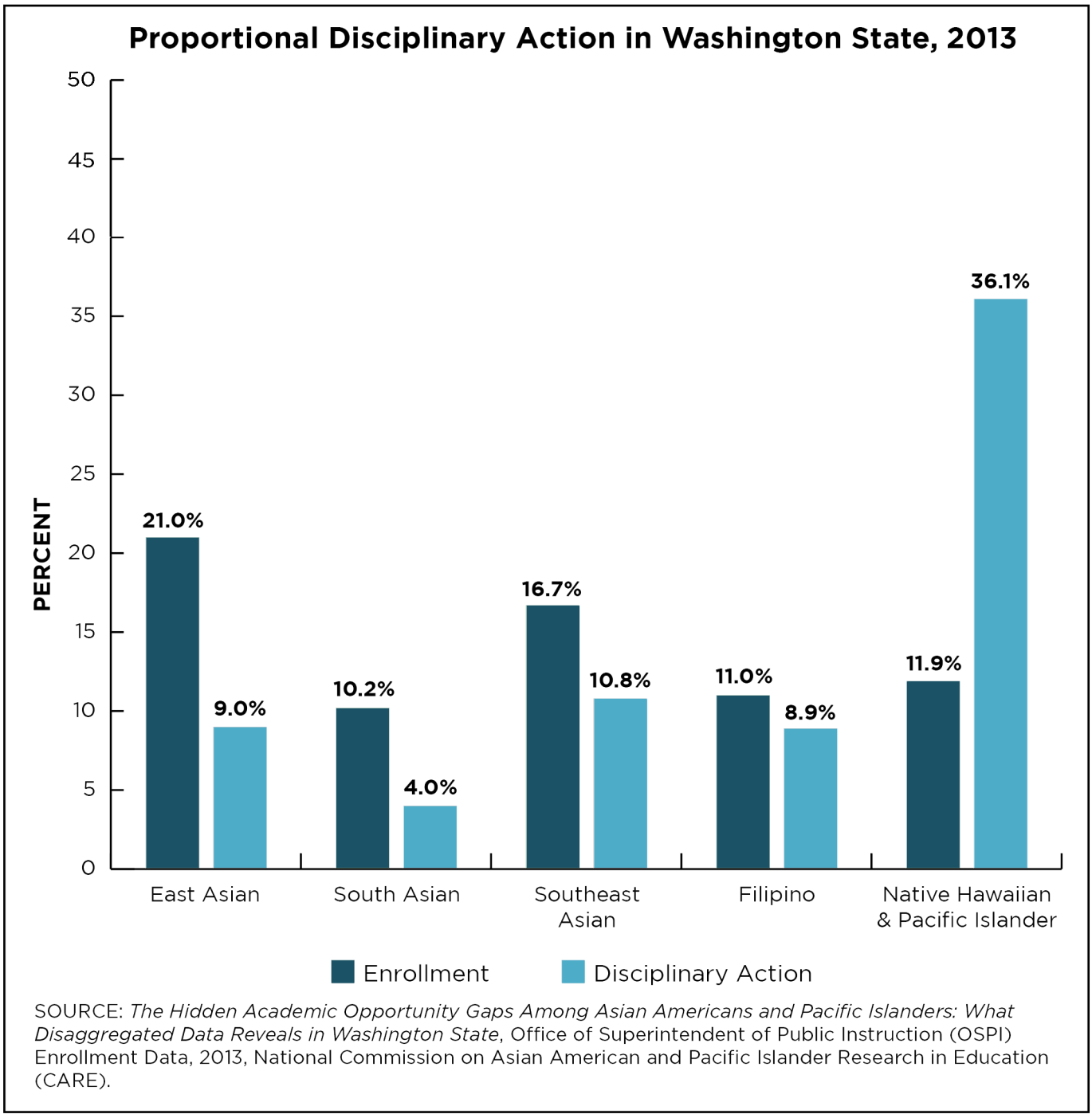
is categorized in the Two or more races (non-Hispanic/Latino) group. Districts approached the Title VII OSPI program office (Indian Education) to voice their concern: when time periods before and after the change were compared using only those students reported in the American Indian or Alaska Native (non-Hispanic/Latino) group, many students who had previously identified in that group were now being categorized in the multiple race group—and distorting data interpretation over time. As a result, the districts were concerned that federal funds were being lost. Upon learning about these issues, the Title VII office reached out to the state's Data Division, and state personnel attended several district-level stakeholder meetings where they had the opportunity to hear from representatives from tribes, tribal schools, and local community members. Subsequently, OSPI designed new, more specific reports that were more transparent. The new reports showed precisely how students with American Indian heritage were being counted: as American Indian / Hispanic, American Indian / non-Hispanic, or American Indian / Two or more races.

Using the Disaggregated Data

Washington is continually working to make the data it collects available to its stakeholders and the public, without sacrificing individuals' privacy. As a result of the state's changes to its SIS database architecture, interfaces, processing, and internal and external reporting methods, many tools are now available for data users. The new system allows stakeholders to filter data by subgroup across data elements with protections in place to shield small cell sizes when appropriate.

OSPI has also been working to incorporate the racial/ethnic subgroups with school-based indicators such as chronic absenteeism, discipline, and graduation rates, with the hope of sharing this information with stakeholders and the public. But privacy issues are inevitable if student subgroups are further divided by discipline categories. OSPI understands that it needs to suppress more information as the data are broken up into smaller subgroups, and it is continually thinking about how to balance data sharing with data privacy in ways that benefit the entire community.

OSPI finds its additional data useful in answering users' and advocates' questions and responding to their requests. It is also helpful for addressing achievement gaps within the state; however, the agency has faced challenges in this regard. OSPI acknowledges how difficult it is to communicate to its stakeholders the nuances of the data. People often want to know how particular racial/ethnic groups are doing, but understanding what it means to have students represented in multiple groups, why small cell sizes can lead to privacy concerns, and comparable data system intricacies is not an easy endeavor. The agency continues to find ways to communicate statistical information in ways that the layperson can comprehend without error. For example, OSPI has assigned a single person to work with the media to improve the public's understanding of its data and data system.



SOURCE: *The Hidden Academic Opportunity Gaps Among Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders: What Disaggregated Data Reveals in Washington State*, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Enrollment Data, 2013, National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (CARE).

Figure 4. An example from the state of Washington of using subgroups, aggregated into slightly larger public categories, to review disciplinary actions.

Lessons Learned

Washington has two main lessons to share about its data disaggregation process:

- **Engage with stakeholders early and often.** OSPI staff members recommend working with as many stakeholder groups as possible when considering additional racial/ethnic subgroups. This engagement helps stakeholders buy in to the process, and it reduces the likelihood of last-minute changes to the system.
- **Provide districts with guidance for communicating the change to families.** After the data disaggregation implementation, Washington districts requested examples of how they might communicate the rationale for the change to parents and guardians. In response to district interest, OSPI published an optional sample form that districts could use as a template with their stakeholders. Another issue was that many districts asked OSPI what to do if students and parents would not answer the racial/ethnic question. OSPI put together multiple PowerPoint presentations and created a set of guidelines on how to observe and then report a student's racial/ethnic status. It also created template letters about the change, translated the document into several languages, and posted all of these resources to its website.

Case Study 3: A District that Added an Optional Question (Portland Public Schools, Oregon)

The district had heard from one of its larger CBOs, Coalition of Communities of Color, which represents many minority groups, about a desire to ensure that students of color have positive performance outcomes. Also, the district experienced a fairly significant backlash when the federal racial/ethnic groups were changed. The backlash centered especially on breaking out the Hispanic/Latino subgroup: some families felt like they could no longer see themselves on the list because they wanted to select the Hispanic/Latino subgroup only, without choosing a racial subgroup.

About the District

Portland Public Schools is the largest school district in Oregon, serving over 47,000 K12 students in 86 schools. Over half of the student population (56 percent) identifies in the White (non-Hispanic/Latino) group, while the two next largest student groups are the Hispanic/Latino group (16 percent) and the Black or African American (non-Hispanic/Latino) group (11 percent). Over 7 percent of the Portland School district's students identify in the Two or more races (non-Hispanic/Latino) group. Nearly 43 percent of the district's students qualify for free or reduced lunch, and the district's average annual expenditure per student is approximately $11,700 (NCES, CCD, School Years 2011-12 and 2013-14). *Note: These numbers represent the most recent NCES data, and do not necessarily reflect the latest district data.*

Portland Public Schools leadership has invested almost 10 years in a racial equity program that works to confront underlying racial issues with the goal of helping to erase the achievement gap. The district's Equity Department—which drives policies, activities, and relationships with CBOs within the racial equity program—and the Equity Team within Evaluation and Research spearheaded the move to collect detailed information on the racial/ethnic identification of the student population (in collaboration with the IT and Communications departments).

In June 2011, the Portland School Board unanimously approved the Portland Public Schools Racial Educational Equity Policy. This plan includes a strategy for reviewing how to report on racial/ethnic subgroups in a way that is culturally sensitive. The district believed that disaggregated data would help in two ways. First, the data would help it better understand the students, and their unique backgrounds, and allow it to provide them a better education. Second, the data would help families "see themselves" on the district's enrollment form—something they didn't have with the aggregated federal categories.

How the Change Was Made

The district reviewed several resources to help determine which new subgroups to add. For example, it looked at other districts—Seattle in particular—to see what subgroups they used. District staff also reviewed the data on home language and primary language spoken by students, as well as the list of American Indian tribes that reported to ED for funding. The district involved both internal and external stakeholders throughout the iterative process.

The implementation of a new district SIS in the 2013-14 school year allowed Portland Public Schools to plan for additional subgroups. Each family in the district receives a paper form that asks them to update any demographic information that has changed during the last year. The form included the additional racial/ethnic subgroups for the first time during the 2014-15 school year, but schools were not required to add the new subgroups until the 2015-16 school year.

The district decided to break the racial/ethnic status request into two questions (see figure 5). The first question includes the required state and federal groups; the second question is optional and includes the additional subgroups collected by the district. In addition, under or beside each heading is a blank line where families can describe their racial/ethnic identity more specifically, or list it if it does not appear as a checkbox. Finally, an optional descriptive area appears at the end

where families can describe their identity in their own words. These write-in sections are meant to capture data that might suggest that more subgroups have become necessary in the district. All of this information is collected in the district's SIS; however, only responses to the first question (the state and federally mandated part of the form) are reported to the state.

Portland Public Schools' Racial/Ethnic Question

Race/Ethnicity Information

26. Federal and state regulations require PPS to gather this information for statistical reports. (Both 26a. and 26b. are required)

26 a. Is your child of Hispanic or Latino origin? ☐ Yes ☐ No

26 b. What races do you consider your child? Mark the one or more races that apply.

☐ Asian ☐ Black ☐ Native American or Alaska Native ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander ☐ White

27. Please provide the following additional information to assist PPS in better representing and responding to our students' racial/ethnic identities:

What races/ethnicities do you consider your child? Please mark all that apply.

☐ **African American**

African

☐ Burundian ☐ Eritrean ☐ Ethiopian ☐ Somali ☐ Other African:_____

Other Black

☐ Caribbean Islands:_____ ☐ Other Black: _____

American Indian/Alaska Native

☐ Alaska Native ☐ Burns Paiute Tribe ☐ Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua & Siuslaw Indians
☐ Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon ☐ Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
☐ Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation ☐ Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
☐ Coquille Indian Tribe ☐ Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians ☐ Klamath Tribes
☐ Other American Indian Tribe/Nation: _____

☐ **Native/Indigenous to Canada** Please Describe:

Asian

☐ Asian Indian ☐ Burmese ☐ Cambodian ☐ Chinese ☐ Filipino ☐ Hmong ☐ Japanese ☐ Karen ☐ Korean
☐ Laotian ☐ Mien ☐ Nepali ☐ Thai ☐ Tibetan ☐ Vietnamese ☐ Other Asian: _____

Hispanic/Latino

☐ Caribbean Island(s): _____ ☐ Central American Country(s): _____
☐ Indigenous Mexican, Central American or South American ☐ Mexican
☐ South American Country(s): _____ ☐ Other Hispanic/Latino: _____

☐ **Middle Eastern/North African** Please describe:

Pacific Islander

☐ Chuukese ☐ Guamanian or Chamorro ☐ Micronesian ☐ Native Hawaiian ☐ Samoan ☐ Tongan
☐ Other Pacific Islander: _____

White

☐ Romanian ☐ Russian ☐ Ukrainian
☐ European Country(s): _____ ☐ Other White: _____

Optional: If you would like to share in your own words how you describe your child's race, origin, ethnicity, ancestry and/or Tribal affiliations, please use this space: _____

_____

SOURCE: Portland Public Schools, 2014.

Figure 5. Portland Public Schools uses two questions to ask about students' racial/ethnic identity. Data gathered from the first question are used for state and federally mandated reporting, while data gathered from the second are used locally in the district.

Data Quality

The first year of implementation, school year 2014-15, was a soft rollout in which not all schools used the new optional question. In the second year, 2015-16, all schools should have used the new question, but responding to the question was still optional. Because the data are new, the district has not completed an audit of the data as of this publication.

However, after the 2014-15 school year, staff ran an internal report to review the data coming in, and it plans on replicating that report to review the 2015-16 school year data.

Using the Disaggregated Data

Since the data are new, no public reporting of the data has occurred as of this publication. The district hopes to use the detailed racial/ethnic information to break out data for public reporting in the future. The data have been used to answer a few requests by specific racial/ethnic communities, and results were shared even though they were incomplete. The data have helped identify two new possible immersion schools: Somali and Vietnamese. In the future the district plans to use the data to develop more dual-language immersion programs, select instructional materials, and refine communications by audience.

Lessons Learned

Portland Public Schools offers the following lessons learned:

- Do not make the disaggregated portion of the racial/ethnic question optional. If the district could do it again, it would not have made its second racial/ethnic question optional. The optionality reduced both the response rate and the quality of the data. If detailed analyses are to be performed based on these data, the question will have to be required. There is hope within district leadership that implementing a broader communications and marketing campaign will result in a higher response rate in future years.
- Be bold in communications to stakeholders. Portland Public Schools had a very quiet rollout of the new racial/ethnic question. If it could do it again, it would have used a much broader communications strategy to announce the change. This would have earned the district better buy-in and compliance, which likely would have resulted in a higher response rate.

Case Study 4: A Historically Racially/Ethnically Diverse State (Hawaii Department of Education)

Hawaii is unique in that the state serves as the only school district. Therefore, Hawaii is a state comprising one district, one data system, and one set of policies. The state began disaggregating its racial/ethnic data about 20 years ago. Since that time, many racial/ethnic groups have changed or been broken down into more detail, as the need has arisen (see figure 6). For example, the most recent change Hawaii made was to break out the Micronesian and Tongan subgroups.

Despite public support for the data disaggregation project, the state experienced some procedural pushback when data teams resisted having to go back into the system to recode students' racial/ethnic identities. However, Hawaii had put policies and procedures in place to inform all stakeholders of the change, the purpose behind the change, the time frame, and other salient information—usually in the form of a statewide memo.

About the State

The Hawaii Department of Education (DOE) serves nearly 185,000 K12 students in 288 schools. Thirty-two percent of the student population identifies in the Asian/Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic/Latino) group and another 32 percent in the Native Hawaiian (non-Hispanic/Latino) group. Fourteen percent of the student population identifies in the White (non-Hispanic/Latino) group and 10 percent of Hawaii's students identify in the Two or more races (non-Hispanic/Latino) group. Nearly 51 percent of the state's students qualify for free or reduced lunch, and the state's average annual expenditure per student is approximately $6,700 (NCES, CCD, School Years 2011-12 and 2013-14). *Note: These numbers represent the most recent NCES data, and do not necessarily reflect the latest state data.*

Using the Disaggregated Data

Hawaii began to use its new data right away, but the state estimated that it took about 3 years for optimal data quality to be achieved. In spite of this, they were able to use the data immediately because Hawaii's primary use of disaggregated data is for federal reporting, specifically enrollment counts by ethnic groups (see figure 7). In some cases, the data helped with the identification of students potentially eligible for English language learner (ELL) instruction and, accordingly, what services schools need to provide based on the number of students in need. For example, administrators review these data trends to ensure that they hire the appropriate number of ELL staff. To a lesser degree, performance measures are broken into racial/ethnic subgroups.

There are a number of public reports, including the annual *Superintendent's Report and the School Status and Improvement Report*, which highlight disaggregated data on student enrollment by racial/ethnic identity. The Hawaii DOE does receive some public requests for disaggregated data.

Hawaii Public Schools' Racial/Ethnic Question

Please complete ETHNICITY INFORMATION, RACE INFORMATION, and PRIMARY ETHNICITY/RACE INFORMATION

ETHNICITY INFORMATION

Are you (J) Hispanic (Ex. Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Spanish, Other Hispanic)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

RACE INFORMATION

Check all that apply:

☐ A - American Indian or Alaska Native	☐ E - Native Hawaiian	☐ K - Samoan	☐ P - Tongan
☐ B - Black	☐ G - Japanese	☐ L - White	☐ Q - Guamanian/ Chamorro
☐ C - Chinese	☐ H - Korean	☐ N - Indo-Chinese (Ex. Cambodian, Laotian, Vietnamese)	☐ R - Other Asian
☐ D - Filipino	☐ I - Portuguese	☐ O - Micronesian (Ex. Chuukese, Marshellese, Pohnpeian)	☐ S - Other Pacific Islander

PRIMARY ETHNICITY/RACE INFORMATION

What is the student's primary race?
(Select only ONE letter from either the ethnicity or race list and fill in the blank) _____

☐ I decline to provide ethnicity and race information. I understand that if I do not provide this information, a school representative will designate the ethnicity and race categories for my child.

SOURCE: Hawaii Public Schools.

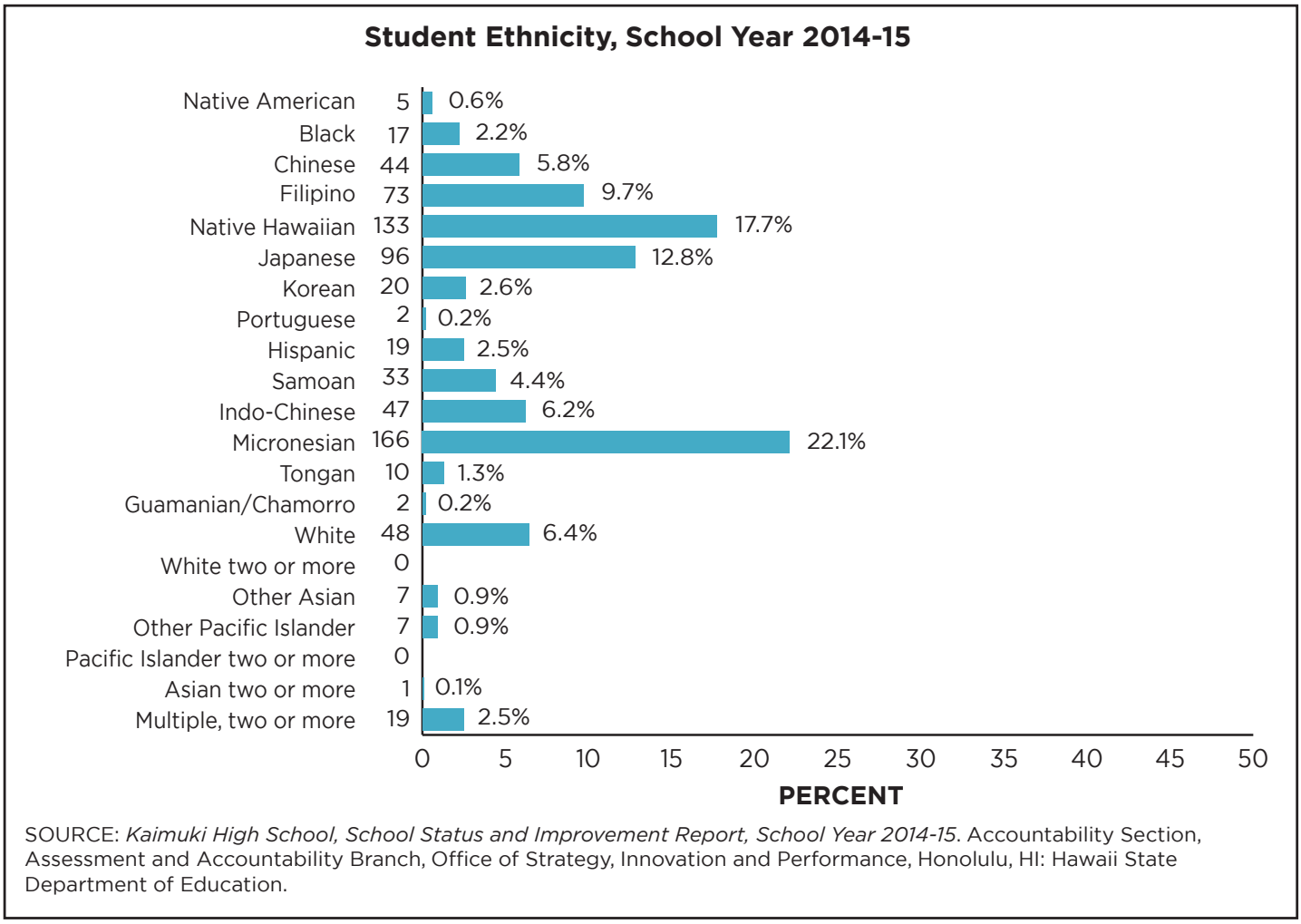
Figure 6. The Hawaii Department of Education serves its schools as their state education agency and their school district simultaneously. It disaggregates its racial/ethnic data more than is required for federal reporting purposes, which helps it serve its diverse student population.

Ethnic Identification of Students, Hawaii Public Schools, 2013–2014

Ethnicity	Students	Percentage
Black	5,398	2.9
Hispanic	6,950	3.8
Native American	1,177	0.6
Native Hawaiian	48,906	26.4
Chinese	5,959	3.2
Filipino	41,178	22.2
Indo-Chinese	2,262	1.2
Japanese	17,084	9.2
Korean	2,148	1.2
Other Asian	836	0.5
Asian two or more	202	0.1
Guamanian/Chamorro	534	0.3
Micronesian	7,441	4.0
Samoan	6,537	3.5
Tongan	1,358	0.7
Other Pacific Islander	958	0.5
Pacific Islander two or more	22	0.0
White	30,716	16.6
Portuguese	2,908	1.6
White two or more	5	0.0
Multiple, two or more	2,694	1.5
TOTAL	**185,273**	**100.0**

SOURCE: *2014 Superintendent's Annual Report*, Hawaii State Department of Education: Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance: Assessment and Accountability Branch: Accountability Section, State of Hawaii, Department of Education, Office of the Superintendent, 2015.

Figure 7. The Hawaii Department of Education uses its disaggregated racial/ethnic data—especially as it relates to enrollment counts and percentages—to serve its diverse population.



SOURCE: *Kaimuki High School, School Status and Improvement Report, School Year 2014-15*. Accountability Section, Assessment and Accountability Branch, Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, Honolulu, HI: Hawaii State Department of Education.

Figure 8. The Hawaii Department of Education releases annual School Status and Improvement Reports that use its disaggregated racial/ethnic data at the school level. This example is from school year 2014-15 for Kaimuki High School.

Case Study 5: An Outlying Area That Is Part of the Compact of Free Association (Guam Department of Education)

Guam's need to disaggregate student data by ethnic subgroups was prompted both by the reporting requirements of the Compact of Free Association (COFA), and by the need to keep track of the rapidly growing and diversifying student populations in need of appropriate services. One result of the COFA was that citizens from the neighboring islands of the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia were authorized "unrestricted immigration into the United States, its territories and possessions, enabling citizens of these nations to enter into, lawfully engage in occupations, and establish residence as non-immigrant aliens" (Office of the Governor, Government of Guam, 2015).

About the Outlying Area

The Guam Department of Education is a state and district school system that serves over 30,000 K12 students across approximately 40 schools. Guam does not participate in the free lunch program (NCES, CCD, School Years 2011-12 and 2013-14). *Note: These numbers represent the most recent NCES data, and do not necessarily reflect the latest outlying area data.*

A wave of migration started in 1986 at a slow pace, but has increased steadily in the last 10 years. Student demographics in Guam's public schools today differ greatly from a decade ago due to the rapidly increasing enrollment of Compact island students. In 1986, students from Compact islands were grouped in the data system as FAS, or Freely Associated States. Today, there are important accounting reasons to have accurate student counts by the various Compact island racial/ethnic subgroups—such as Chuukese, Yapese, Pohnpeian, Kosraean, Palauan, and Marshallese—because each correctly identified Compact island student increases the total cost of providing educational services which, in turn, will "release, reduce, or waive, in whole or in part, any amounts owed to the United States Government as an offset for past un-reimbursed Compact impact costs by their respective governments" (Office of the Governor, Government of Guam, 2015).

How the Change Was Made

Guam public schools contain at least 21 main racial/ethnic subgroups. The three highest in number as of September 30, 2015, are Chamorros (48.6 percent), Freely Associated States (25.8 percent), and Filipinos (21.9 percent). To provide an accurate FAS student enrollment count to the U.S. Department of the Interior (that is, to provide an enumeration for all sectors coordinated by the Guam Bureau of Statistics and Plans, Office of the Governor of Guam), Guam disaggregates the FAS subgroup even further, into the Chuukese, Yapese, Pohnpeian, Kosraean, Palauan, and Marshallese subgroups.

The district made the change by

- **training school computer operators** how to use the new ethnic/racial groups (as well as other student information groups that were adjusted or adopted at the same time);
- **altering the student registration form** to include the racial/ethnic subgroups, using the two- part question;
- **informing families** of students whose ethnicity was unknown, unspecified, or undetermined in the system about the need to identify or re-identify their student; and
- **asking students to re-identify** themselves using the new form.

In order to most effectively communicate with families, the Guam Department of Education made announcements during parent-teacher conferences and Parent Leadership Committee meetings. Translators were available, as needed, to ensure that the information was understood appropriately.

Data Quality

Because of the influx of Compact island migrants in the past 5 years, collecting accurate and complete student demographic information became an especially important task of the data quality team. The data quality team is led by the Administrator of Research, Planning & Evaluation (RP&E) division, in cooperation with the Financial, Student & Administrative Information Systems division. It is composed of computer operators from each school who are trained to (1) use the new groups in the SIS and (2) ensure data quality and confidentiality by referencing the *Forum Curriculum for Improving Education Data* and the *Forum Guide to Implementing New Federal Race and Ethnicity Categories*. The data quality team implements a thorough quality check before the official student enrollment as of September 30 is published by RP&E, and through the school year.

Using the Disaggregated Data

An accurate disaggregated student count by racial/ethnic subgroups is critical to the Guam Department of Education due to the dollar amount attached to each correctly identified Compact island student. The Guam Bureau of Statistics and Plans collects annual enumeration data from the Department (as well as from other Guam agencies providing health, housing, safety, and other services to the alien immigrants from the Compact islands) on disaggregated racial/ethnic identification of FAS students (due annually on February 1). As of school year 2014-15, the total number of FAS students who received full education services was 7,499, at the cost of $8,863 per pupil. A running total cost of Compact island students enrolled from school year 2003-04 to school year 2013-14 was over $375 million (see figure 9).

In addition to helping Guam assess costs and reimbursements, keeping track of racial/ethnic data also helps it develop intervention programs for students—and not only students from the Compact islands, but also many other migrants, such as students from Asia (e.g., Filipino students who comprise 21 percent of the Guam student population).

Assessment and discipline data are disaggregated by racial/ethnic identification to provide planners, program managers, and policymakers with correct data to help them design new education programs and services and adjust existing programs and services in light of the rapid influx of a diverse student population.

Lessons Learned

The Guam Department of Education found that disaggregating data based on new student subgroups was not a difficult task. However, lessons were learned regarding several "less obvious" details that turned into major considerations for the Department as it implemented its change:

- **Using citizenship was not enough.** The COFA was signed in 1986 and amended in 2003, so many Compact island migrants who long ago settled in Guam have since given birth. These children, by virtue of Guam being a U.S. territory, are U.S. citizens. Guam considered the question of whether these children should be counted as Compact island migrants, but decided against it. As a result, merely disaggregating the data by racial/ethnic subgroups was not enough for Guam to gain the data it needed. Cross-tabulating the racial/ethnic subgroups by citizenship and place of birth became a necessary additional step when accounting for students whose racial/ethnic subgroup is identified as FAS, but who have U.S. citizenship and are not included in the Compact island count.

- **Convene stakeholder meetings.** Meetings organized by the Guam Bureau of Statistics and Plans became necessary to develop a deeper understanding of "service hours" provided to Compact island students. While Guam education service hours are fixed, there are other services provided by Guam outside of the regular school hours that needed to be counted. Meeting with recipients of these services helped planners better understand the nature and extent of relevant service hours.

Guam Department of Education, Average Daily Membership, Audited Expenditures and Per Pupil Cost

Department of Education	FY 2004 SY 2003-2004	FY 2006 SY 2005-2006	FY 2008 SY 2007-2008	FY 2010 SY 2009-2010	FY 2012 SY 2011-2012	FY 2014 SY 2013-2014
Total Students (Average Daily Membership)	29,745	29,965	30,362	30,306	30,233	30,507
Total FAS Students	4,023	4,898	5,603	5,073	6,979	7,334
Federated States of Micronesia	3,273	4,168	4,870	4,413	6,291	6,556
Chuuk	2,406	3,092	3,535	3,425	4,462	4,948
Kosrae	112	132	142	143	224	188
Pohnpei	485	610	702	381	1,218	983
Yap	270	334	386	377	387	437
Not Stated	0	0	105	87	0	0
Marshall Islands	100	96	97	118	207	138
Republic of Palau	650	634	636	542	481	640
Percent FAS Students	13.5%	16.3%	18.5%	16.7%	23.1%	24.0%
FAS Student Enrollment - Minus Baseline	3,507	4,382	5,087	4,557	6,463	6,818
Total Program Expenditure	$146,094,649	$168,417,216	$186,160,966	$203,441,230	$224,505,257	$253,334,609
Per Pupil Cost	$4,912	$5,620	$6,131	$6,713	$7,426	$8,304
Total FAS Students Expenditures	**$17,224,876**	**$24,628,875**	**$31,190,331**	**$30,590,69**	**$47,993,169**	**$56,617,673**
CUMULATIVE FAS STUDENT COST: $375,952,507						

SOURCE: Guam Department of Education, "Average Daily Membership, Audited Expenditures and Per Pupil Cost," 2015.

Figure 9. The Guam Department of Education's disaggregated data on student racial/ethnicity group are used to calculate the costs of educational services that will be reimbursed by the U.S. government.

Case Study 6: A U.S. Mainland District with a Pacific Islander Population (Springdale School District, Arkansas)

Springdale Schools has a mission: "Teach Them All." In pursuit of this mission, Springdale has long recognized the role data have in informing instruction and engaging parents in the education of their children. Data have been used to identify gaps in services provided to students and families; to build cultural understandings among teachers, students, and parents; and to help teachers craft instruction that is relevant to students and honors their cultural and linguistic heritage. Community partners of Springdale Schools use the data to improve services to students and to apply for grants and research opportunities.

About the District

The Springdale School District, located in the northwest corner of Arkansas, serves 21,369 K12 students in 28 public schools. Thirty-eight percent of the student population identifies in the White (non-Hispanic/Latino) group, while over 45 percent identify as Hispanic/Latino and another 10 percent as Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic/Latino). Sixty-eight percent of the district's students qualify for free or reduced lunch, and the district's average annual expenditure per student is approximately $11,697 (NCES, CCD data 2011-12 and 2013-2014 school years). *Note: These numbers represent the most recent NCES data, and do not necessarily reflect the latest district data.*

Springdale School District has a large number of students from the Marshall Islands. The city of Springdale is home to the second-largest population (19.3 percent) of Marshallese Americans in the United States (Duke, 2014). The majority of students in the district identifying as Pacific Islander are from the Marshall Islands. The lack of economic and employment opportunities in their home islands, as well as the better access to education, continue to prompt Marshallese families to migrate to the northwest corner of Arkansas.

The opportunities in the region have also attracted other families from all over the world, and over 41 languages are now spoken in the district. The district uses the home language survey and the parent/student interview methods to determine which students are part of the community's Marshallese population. The district is using these data to improve services to this subgroup of students, including supporting grant applications and research by community organizations that serve the Marshallese population and other minority communities in Springdale.

How the Data Were Found

Unlike the other districts and states described in the case studies in this chapter, the Springdale School District does not collect data about any racial/ethnic subgroups beyond the required federal categories. Instead, the district uses a Home Language Survey Form and a Parent/Student Interview Form to ascertain a student's home language, language of communication between school and parents, and student's place of birth. The district also conducts parent-student interviews with all new families as a way to ask about the student's detailed racial/ethnic identification. The Springdale School District annually reevaluates its programs and provided services for each student to make sure that it is serving all students equitably, fairly distributing resources, and making regular adjustments to account for cultural and linguistic changes in the student population.

To view samples of the Springdale School District Home Language Survey Form and the Parent/Student Interview, visit http://tinyurl.com/j3fmvmj.

Note that the forms are being revised, and the revised forms have not yet been published.

Using the Data

The collection of these data from the Home Language Survey Form and the Parent/Student Interview Form allows the school district to communicate with parents in a language they understand, thereby increasing parents' engagement in the education of their child. The district

has been able to use the data both internally and externally. Most performance outcome data are used for internal programming, services, and research. For example, the district is currently investigating the performance levels of students who test out of English as a second language (ESL) programs relative to their ESL counterparts, with the goal of determining how to best allocate resources for second-language learners.

Externally, Marshallese advocacy and other community organizations have many uses for aggregated data from the district. The Consulate General of the Marshall Islands, the Arkansas Coalition of Marshallese, GAPs in Services to Marshallese People, and the Marshallese Educational Initiative are all located in Springdale, and often these groups need the data for research and grant-writing purposes. Additionally, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences has begun a collection of health-related data on the local Marshallese population and has reached out to the district for information such as attendance records.

Lessons Learned

The Springdale School District shares the following lessons learned:

- **Be careful not to overshadow smaller subgroups.** All of the services and programs in the district are accessible to all students, including Pacific Islanders as needed (as they qualify). However, the district has found that other Pacific Islander student populations can be overshadowed by the larger Marshallese student population. For instance, when looking at outcome data, teachers and administrators sometimes ascribe data addressing the Pacific Islander population to Marshallese students when other ethnicities are represented within this subgroup. Additionally, since Springdale's employment industries attract families from all parts of the world, the district needs to be continually prepared to serve newly arrived linguistically and culturally diverse populations. For example, in January 2016, 27 Puerto Rican students whose families had relocated to Springdale became members of the school system (Interview, 2/29/2016). The Springdale School District is committed to ensuring an equitable educational experience for all students–thus, providing new students from abroad with services and programs on par with those dedicated to the Marshallese community or any other culturally or linguistically diverse population currently served.
- **Connect performance outcome data with changes in the classroom.** The Springdale School District relies heavily on performance outcome data to direct school services and programs. The school system has extensive language supports in place, including (1) teachers trained in the art of making content comprehensible and attainable to students who speak languages other than English, (2) language academies that serve as "arrival centers" for new immigrants, and (3) opportunities for students to learn, converse, and collaborate with their native English-speaking peers and others who have reached full proficiency in the English language. These supports are available at the elementary, junior high, and high school levels. Other district initiatives include providing professional development and support to teachers and administrators in the use of language supports in the content areas and targeted English language development classes based on each student's degree of English language proficiency. Teachers may also elect to take part in a series of classes that focuses specifically on how to make a classroom more accessible both linguistically and culturally for English language learners. After successfully completing the courses and the state exam, teachers earn 12 graduate hours in TESOL and an ESL Endorsement. The classes and exam are free to teachers who have met the course and exam requirements. While these examples are specific to the Springdale School District,

the larger lesson for other districts is that the district implements its programs based on what the data suggest would provide all students with the best educational experiences through individualizing instruction and services provided to each student and initiating and refining programs offered to groups of students.

- **Embrace diversity and work toward common education goals.** The Springdale School District offers a great example of how a district can bring together school staff members, parents/guardians, CBOs, and the community in general to better serve its diverse student population. The district's commitment to equitably serving students is laid out in its 2015 Annual Report to the Public: "The Springdale School District in partnership with parents and community provides a quality educational environment, which guides all students to learn the skills and acquire the knowledge necessary for them to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world." Another example of this commitment is the district's efforts to recruit and empower Marshallese teachers. While many Marshallese teachers who relocate to Springdale do not meet the educational requirements to teach in Arkansas, the district has hired many of these individuals as bilingual instructional assistants and community liaisons. The district, in partnership with a local nonprofit, OneCommunity, has begun to make college scholarships available to Marshallese instructional assistants wishing to pursue a degree in education. This is one of the initiatives the district is pursuing to fulfill the need for Marshallese teachers and administrators. This commitment to embrace and promote diversity drives the Springdale School District in pursuit of excellence so that its diverse population of students each fulfills their potential and promise.