Forum Guide to
Collecting and Using Disaggregated Data on Racial/Ethnic Subgroups

National Forum on Education Statistics

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National Cooperative Education Statistics System

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) established the National Cooperative Education Statistics System (Cooperative System) to assist in producing and maintaining comparable and uniform information and data on early childhood, elementary, and secondary education. These data are intended to be useful for policymaking at the federal, state, and local levels.

The National Forum on Education Statistics (Forum) is an entity of the Cooperative System and, among its other activities, proposes principles of good practice to assist state and local education agencies in meeting this purpose. The Cooperative System and the Forum are supported in these endeavors by resources from NCES.

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September 2016

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Technical Contact
Ghedam Bairu
(202) 245–6644
ghedam.bairu@ed.gov

National Forum on Education Statistics

The work of the Forum is a key aspect of the National Cooperative Education Statistics System. The Cooperative System was established to produce and maintain, with the cooperation of the states, comparable and uniform education information and data that are useful for policymaking at the federal, state, and local levels. To assist in meeting this goal, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within the U.S. Department of Education, established the Forum to improve the collection, reporting, and use of elementary and secondary education statistics. The Forum deals with issues in education data policy, sponsors innovations in data collection and reporting, and provides technical assistance to improve state and local data systems.

Development of Forum Products

Members of the Forum establish working groups to develop best practice guides in data-related areas of interest to federal, state, and local education agencies. They are assisted in this work by NCES, but the content comes from the collective experience of working group members who review all products iteratively throughout the development process. After the working group completes the content and reviews a document a final time, publications are subject to examination by members of the Forum standing committee that sponsors the project. Finally, Forum members (approximately 120 people) review and formally vote to approve all documents prior to publication. NCES provides final review and approval prior to online publication. The information and opinions published in Forum products do not necessarily represent the policies or views of the U.S. Department of Education or NCES.

Working Group Members

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Chair

Peter Tamayo, Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Members

Frank Cernik, Public Schools of North Carolina
Sonya Edwards, California Department of Education
Gunes Kaplan, Nevada Department of Education
Laurel Krsek, San Ramon Valley Unified School District (CA)
James Lane, formerly of Goochland County Public Schools (VA)
Zenaida Napa Natividad, Guam Department of Education
Linda Rocks, Bossier Parish Schools (LA)
Linda Roska, Texas Education Agency
Andre Smith, Florida Department of Education
Akil Vohra, White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders

Consultants

Beth Young and Mary Barron, Quality Information Partners

Project Officers

Ghedam Bairu and Joel McFarland, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

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Reviewers

Kara Arzamendia, Minnesota Department of Education
Elizabeth Dabney, Data Quality Campaign
Monica Hill and Bill Mendoza, White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education
David Johns, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans
Brian Laurent, Alaska Department of Education and Early Development
Kristi Martin, Macomb Intermediate School District (MI)
Lynn Mellor, Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest
Allen Miedema, Northshore School District (WA)
Ellis Ott, Fairbanks North Star Borough School District (AK)
Jan Petro, Colorado Department of Education
Susan Williams, Virginia Department of Education

Case Study Contributors

Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Peter Tamayo, Chief Information Officer
Deb Came, Director of Student Information
Sheri Dunster, Student Information Coordinator

Highline Public Schools, Washington
Mark Finstrom, Chief Technology Officer
Kisa Hendrickson, Executive Director of Student Support and Family Engagement

Portland Public Schools, Oregon
Josh Klein, Chief Information Officer
Marita Ingalsbe, Director, IT Client Services and Partnerships
Jeanine Fukuda, Senior Director, Equity and Partnerships
Joseph Suggs, Director, Accountability and Reporting Unit, System Planning and Performance Department
Elise Christiansen, Lead, Evaluation and Research Unit, System Planning and Performance Department

Guam Department of Education
Zenaida Napa Natividad, Administrator of Research, Planning and Evaluation

Hawaii Department of Education
Tom Saka, Director of Information Technology Infrastructure

Springdale School District, Arkansas
Marsha Layer, Family and Community Engagement
Joye Ryan Jones, ESOL Program Specialist

Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, Alaska
Ellis Ott, Research Associate and Accountability Coordinator

Foreword

The National Forum on Education Statistics convened the Data Disaggregation of Racial/Ethnic Subgroups Working Group to identify best practices for disaggregating data on racial/ethnic subgroups. This guide is intended to identify some of the overarching benefits and challenges involved in data disaggregation; recommend appropriate practices for disaggregating racial/ethnic data in districts and states; and describe real-world examples of large and small education agencies disaggregating racial/ethnic data successfully. The working group hopes that the discussion and recommendations in this resource will help state and district staff better understand the process of disaggregating data in the field of education, determine whether data disaggregation might be an appropriate analytical tool in their communities, and, if so, how they can successfully institute or advance a data disaggregation project in their agencies.

Disaggregation of student data refers to breaking down data about a student population into smaller groupings, based on qualities or characteristics such as gender, racial/ethnic group, or family income. Educators need both high-level data summaries as well as disaggregated data that accurately describe smaller groups of students they serve.

Access to and analysis of more detailed data—that is, disaggregated data—can be a useful tool for improving educational outcomes for small groups of students who otherwise would not be distinguishable in the aggregated data used for federal reporting. Disaggregating student data into subpopulations can help schools and communities plan appropriate programs; decide which interventions to implement; target limited resources; and recognize trends in educational participation, outcomes, and achievement.

Definitions of race and ethnicity are complicated because they incorporate aspects of biology, identity, and culture, among other factors. In order to place boundaries on the topic, this guide focuses on the federal government's seven racial/ethnic categories as the baseline for aggregated, and subsequently disaggregated, data collection, reporting, and use.

Example of Data Disaggregation Use

Highline Public School District's (WA) main purpose in collecting disaggregated racial/ethnic data is to better customize support to its students. For example, the district strives to assist immigrant students as soon as possible upon their arrival in the district. Access to disaggregated racial/ethnic data enables the district to more expediently connect new students with helpful organizations and services in the community. From an instructional perspective, the district uses the data to make decisions about enhancing dual-language programming. Based on the data, it already offers Spanish dual-language programs in four schools and a Vietnamese dual-language program in another, and district decisionmakers are currently using disaggregated racial/ethnic data to evaluate whether their student population would benefit from a Somali dual-language school.

Organization of the Document

The guide is organized into the following chapters and appendices:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction to Data Disaggregation in Education Agencies** explains the purpose of the document; describes the concept of data disaggregation for racial/ethnic subgroups; discusses why the issue is becoming increasingly important in many communities; refers to current U.S. population data; and provides a case study of why this type of data collection can be important and advantageous in a school district.
- **Chapter 2: Strategies for Disaggregating Racial/Ethnic Data Subgroups** recommends specific strategies for disaggregating data, including tasks undertaken during the two major phases of the effort: (1) needs assessment and (2) project implementation.
- **Chapter 3: Case Studies** offers an in-depth look at how the disaggregation of racial/ethnic subgroup data is already being implemented through a wide range of state and district case studies.
- **Appendix A: Issues to Consider** identifies emerging topics of interest in the field of data disaggregation in education agencies.
- **Appendix B: References and Related Resources**

Intended Audience

Forum Guide to Collecting and Using Disaggregated Data on Racial/Ethnic Subgroups is intended for staff in local, state, and federal education agencies who collect, maintain, or report data on their student populations. This includes program and data staff, administrators and policymakers, and anyone else involved in student data collection and use. While the information presented in this guide may be of interest to many education stakeholders, this resource is designed to help districts and states that recognize a current or emerging need for disaggregating racial/ethnic subgroups. The recommendations in this resource are not mandates. Districts and states are encouraged to adapt or adopt any recommendations they determine to be useful for their purposes.

Callout Box Key

Callout boxes are used throughout the document:

GREEN boxes highlight and/or expand upon the text.

BLUE boxes indicate real-world examples.

PINK boxes feature communications-related details.

WHITE boxes contain Q&A from and about districts.

Subgroup Nomenclature

In the field of education, several terms are used to describe the ways in which students are grouped by their racial/ethnic identification. The terms used in this document are defined below.

Categories: The seven federally mandated racial/ethnic groupings used for aggregated federal reporting.

Subgroups: Disaggregated groupings within the seven federally mandated categories.

Codes: The technical name of the categories or subgroups used in data systems. For example, when a parent or school data entry clerk sees a pull-down menu of subgroups, they see the full subgroup name. However, the data system shortens those names to numeric or alphanumeric codes such as 02 or BL for "Black, non-Hispanic."

Racial/Ethnic Notes

Non-Hispanic/Latino refers to individuals who are neither Hispanic nor Latino.

With the exception of the *Two or more races* group, the racial/ethnic groups are mutually exclusive. When referring to the "Black" group, for example, for the purposes of this document, it means Black *only*, not Black *and* possibly another racial/ethnic group.

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Chapter 1:
Introduction to Data Disaggregation in Education Agencies

The U.S. Department of Education's aggregated student racial/ethnic categories:

- Hispanic/Latino of any race
- For individuals who are Non-Hispanic/Latino
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Asian
  - Black or African American
  - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - White
  - Two or more races

Across the nation, our schools serve a diverse student population. These children reflect a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, interests, identities, and cultures. Most districts and states collect data on a student's racial/ethnic group using the same categories required by the federal government. Since there are no federal restrictions on collecting more detailed data than what is required, collecting more data could be justified. The more accurately education data reflect the diversity of the student population, the better prepared education practitioners will be to customize instructional and support services to meet those students' needs.

To meet the need for more detailed information on subgroups of students, some states and districts have implemented procedures for disaggregating racial/ethnic data. Collecting and reporting disaggregated racial/ethnic data can benefit states and school districts in many ways, including:

- **The use of detailed racial/ethnic subgroups more fully acknowledges the heritage of students and families**. When school and district data collection tools include more racial/ethnic options, students and families can more accurately describe themselves and their heritages, which can increase their sense of feeling recognized and valued by their state or local education agencies. Students and families may also trust administrators' decisions more when it is clear that their identities are being accounted for in data-driven decisionmaking.
- **When disaggregated data more precisely describe the racial/ethnic makeup of communities, state and district administrators can better customize services to students and families**. When administrators use disaggregated racial/ethnic data to inform their decisionmaking, they can better ensure that districts and schools are able to target instructional and support services to meet the actual needs of their community, allowing for a more efficient allocation of resources. Research

Understanding Different Cultures

A student at the Highline Public School District (WA) was absent for two weeks following a death in his family. School administrators were perplexed by the duration of the absence until they accessed disaggregated racial/ethnic data for the student, which identified him as a member of an ethnic culture in which lengthy funeral rituals were common. This information helped school staff improve their understanding of what might be happening in the student's life and enabled them to adjust plans to serve the student's educational needs.

Moreover, the staff realized that this disaggregated racial/ethnic data could help them to better prepare for similar extended periods of excused absences within this subgroup of students in the future.

has shown that a student's racial/ethnic subgroup is a meaningful factor in teaching and learning because cultural and individual perspectives may affect how students respond to instruction and curricula and can also influence teachers' assumptions about how students learn (Hawley and Nieto, 2010). Similarly, disaggregated racial/ethnic data can be an important tool for educators seeking to provide culturally responsive instruction (Ladson-Billings, 1995) or otherwise trying to overcome a lack of examples, tools, and best practices for accommodating cultural and educational diversity (e.g., Griner and Stewart, 2012).

- **The existence of more detailed racial/ethnic data helps monitor equity in educational resources and outcomes**. When disaggregated racial/ethnic information is maintained at local levels, they can be linked to data about program participation, resource allocation, educational outcomes, and other education data—all of which are critical to determining whether students in different racial/ethnic groups have access to the same educational opportunities as other students.

What Is Disaggregation?

Disaggregation of student data refers to breaking down data about a student population into smaller groupings, often based on characteristics such as sex, racial/ethnic group, or family income. This practice enables teachers, administrators, policymakers, and other stakeholders to evaluate how specific groups of students are performing in particular areas—for example, the reading proficiency of students by their racial/ethnic subgroup or the number of math courses taken by sex.

Data disaggregation is sometimes referred to as...
- "separating a whole into its component parts" or
- "drilling down into the data"

Data aggregation is often referred to as...
- "summing the data" or
- "rolling up the data"

Traditionally, student data reporting has focused not on the disaggregation of data, but rather data *aggregation*, which is the addition of individual data values into summary data (e.g., combining the number of students in each school building into a district total). Under state and federal reporting requirements, districts and states collect student-level racial/ethnic data and then aggregate them into summary data for each of the seven groups mandated for federal reporting. However, aggregating data into larger groups for public reporting can result in schools and districts losing sight of important information about smaller student populations simply because there is not a mandate to report those data.

The Changing U.S. Population

Both the size and the diversity of the U.S. population continue to grow in the 21st century. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, between 2000 and 2010 there was an overall nationwide population growth of 9.7 percent (Mackun and Wilson, 2011). Figure 1 shows the change in percentage distribution of students enrolled in public schools by racial/ethnic group between fall 2003 and fall 2013 (and projected to 2025). In the 10-year period between 2003 and 2013, White students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools decreased from 59 to 50 percent of the total student population (28.4 million to 25.2 million) and Black students enrolled decreased from 17 to 16 percent (8.3 million to 7.8 million). Conversely, Hispanic students increased from 19 to 25 percent of total enrollment (9.0 million to 12.5 million) and

Asian/Pacific Islanders increased from 4 to 5 percent (2.1 to 2.8 million). American Indian/Alaska Native students decreased slightly but remained at approximately 1 percent (from 0.6 million to 0.5 million) (Kena et al, 2016).[1, 2]

Figure 1 also includes projections of public school enrollment, with many of the same directional trends expected to continue through 2025:

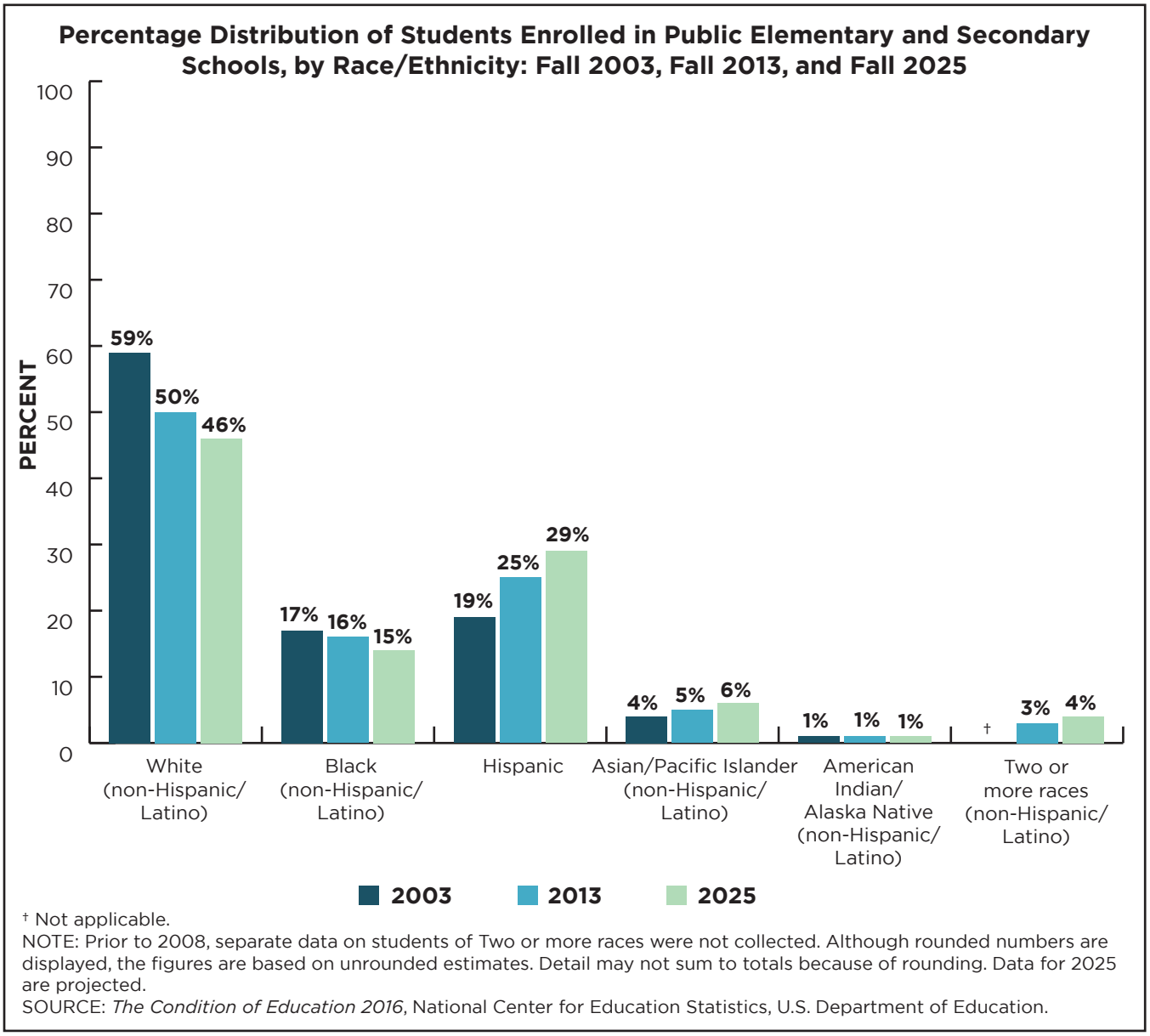
- White student enrollment is projected to decline further as the enrollments of Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and students of Two or more races increase.
- Hispanic student enrollment is projected to increase from 12.7 million in 2013 to 14.7 million (accounting for 29 percent of total enrollment) in 2025.
- Asian/Pacific Islander student enrollment is projected to increase from 2.6 million to 3.1 million between 2013 and 2025 (6 percent of total enrollment in 2025).
- Black student enrollment is projected to fluctuate around 7.8 million during this period, with the percentage of students who are Black projected to decrease by less than 1 percentage point to 15 percent in 2025.
- American Indian/Alaska Native student enrollment is projected to continue decreasing during this period (from 0.5 million to 0.4 million) and to account for 1 percent of total enrollment in 2025 (Kena et al, 2016).

Interpreting National Trends and Changes in Federal Data Collections

In 1997, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) adopted new standards for classifying race. In 2007, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) issued its own guidance on how to collect and maintain racial and ethnicity data about students and staff. The 1997 OMB guidance was first applied in the 2000 Census and the 2007 ED guidance was first implemented in fall 2010 for reporting data from the 2010–11 school year. Caution should be used when interpreting data from before and after these changes to Census and ED data.

[1] Note that in 2003 the change in the federal racial/ethnicity reporting categories had not yet occurred and, therefore, the separation of Hispanic as an ethnicity and the collection of Two or more races had not been instituted.

[2] See Kena et al. (2016) in the References and Related Resources as the formal citation for *The Condition of Education 2016* published by the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education's (NCES 2016-144). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, available at http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe.

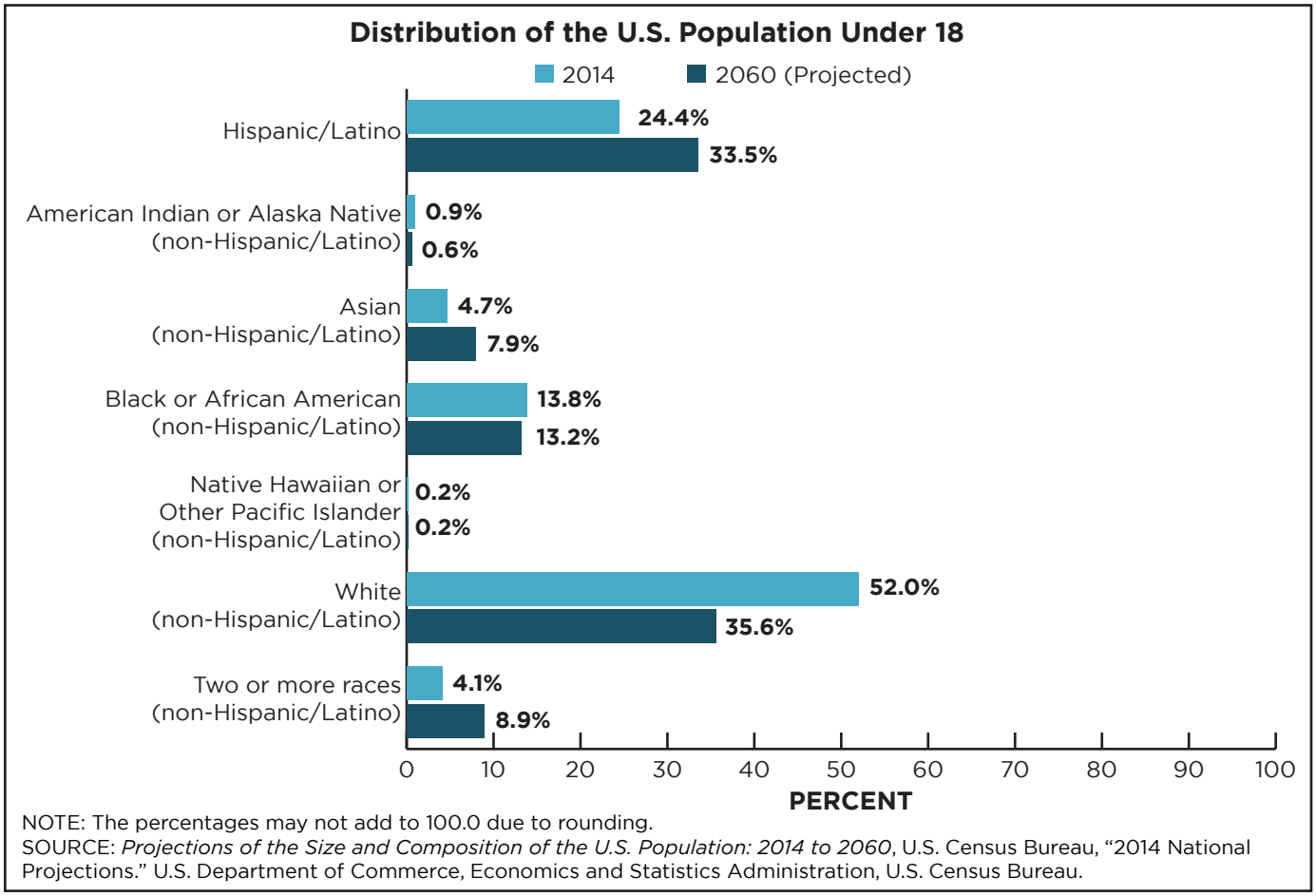


† Not applicable.
NOTE: Prior to 2008, separate data on students of Two or more races were not collected. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded estimates. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Data for 2025 are projected.
SOURCE: *The Condition of Education 2016*, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.

Figure 1. The distribution of the public school population has shifted between 2003 and 2013, with the White and Black populations decreasing and Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander populations increasing as a percentage of all students. These trends are projected to continue to 2025.

Population changes could affect school planning, including the number and types of services provided. Recent projections have suggested that the U.S. population will continue to change over the next several decades. For example, it is estimated that by 2060 almost one-fifth of the U.S. population will be foreign born (Colby and Ortman, 2015). The disaggregation of racial/ethnic data can provide the details needed to plan for the academic needs of tomorrow's students and allocate resources appropriately.

Figure 2 shows projections for the U.S. population under age 18—which is particularly relevant to K12 schools—in 2060 (relative to 2014). The estimates for changes between 2014 and 2060 reveal several significant trends. For example, the data suggest that the percentage of Asian youth will increase from 4.7 to 7.9 percent over the next half-century; the percentage of youth who are Hispanic or Latino is expected to increase from 24.4 percent to 33.5 percent; and the percentage of those under 18 who identify as being of multiple races is projected to more than double, from 4.1 to 8.9 percent.



NOTE: The percentages may not add to 100.0 due to rounding.
SOURCE: *Projections of the Size and Composition of the U.S. Population: 2014 to 2060*, U.S. Census Bureau, "2014 National Projections." U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau.

Figure 2. Over the next half-century, the population of U.S. youth will increase and the relative distribution of racial/ethnic groups within the population will continue to change.

Shorter-term projections for high school graduates also highlight changing school populations. For example, projections from the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education and the Pew Research Center (figure 3) show that the percentage of high school graduates who identify in the Hispanic/Latino group will increase from 9 percent in 1995 to 25 percent in 2025, while the percentage of graduates who are White will decrease from 73 percent in 1995 to 51 percent in 2025 (Prescott and Bransberger, 2012, and Fry, 2015).

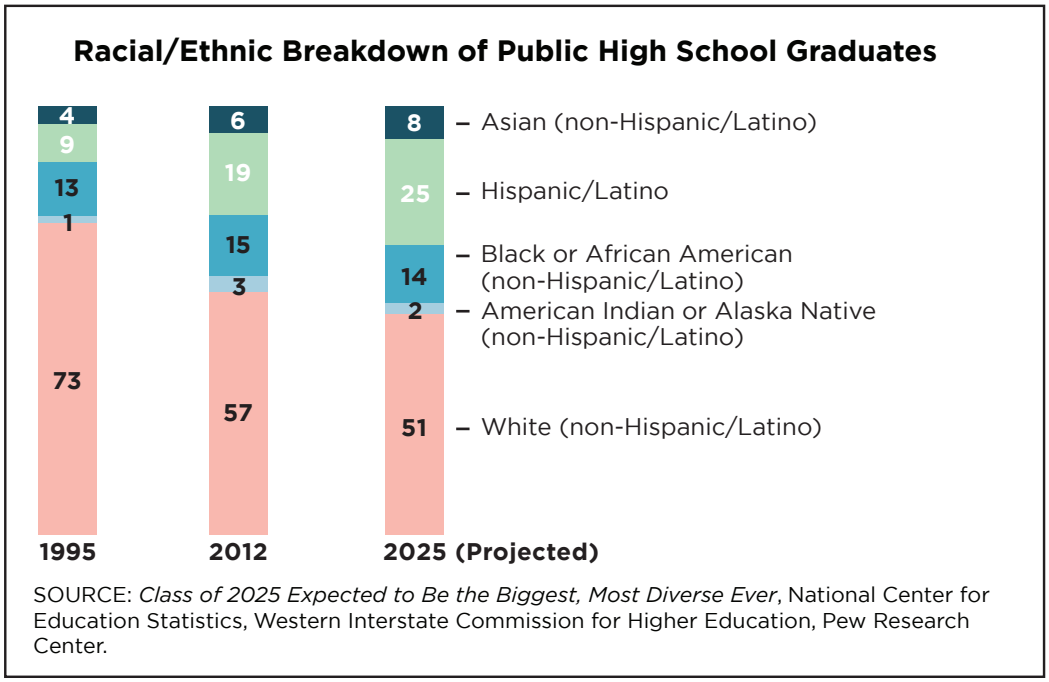


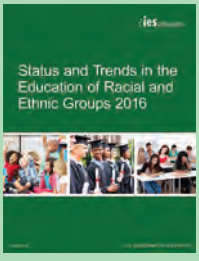
Figure 3. During the previous two decades, high school graduates have become increasingly diverse. This trend is projected to continue during the next decade.

What Is Lost When Disaggregated Data Are Not Available

The seven federally mandated categories are a combination—that is, an aggregation—of numerous backgrounds and nationalities. Disaggregating racial/ethnic data into more than the seven groups adds value to the data, because disaggregating data reveals complexities and nuances that would otherwise be lost within the universe of students. Moreover, disaggregated data can highlight trends and disparities that may otherwise go unnoticed—and help educators allocate resources and target efforts to close educational achievement gaps and improve educational outcomes for all students.

For example, figure 4 shows data from a recent NCES report (Musu-Gillette et al, 2016) on the percentage of Asian American 18- to 24-year-olds who attend 2- or 4-year colleges and universities. In 2013, the total college enrollment rate for Asian 18- to 24-year-olds was 67 percent. The data in figure 4 are disaggregated into smaller subgroups to highlight meaningful variation within the population: the college enrollment rate of Asian American 18- to 24-year-olds *by disaggregated subgroups* ranges from 20 percent for Bhutanese to 84 percent for Other Southeast Asian.[3] These different outcome data would not be apparent if the data were aggregated because, without this detail, one might assume that all students that fall into the overall Asian group were generally similar with respect to college enrollment, when in fact they are not.

Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups

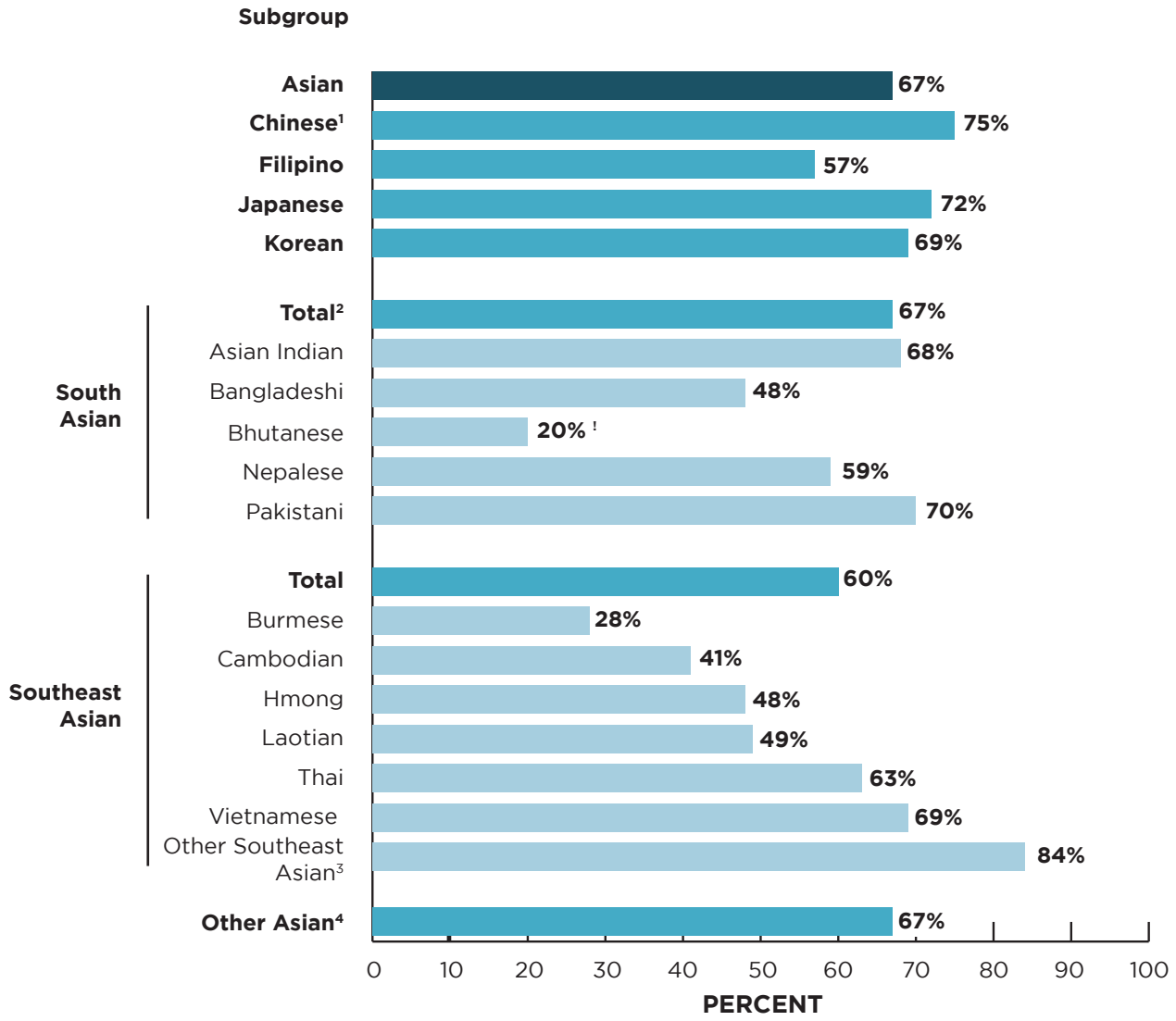


This report uses statistics to examine current conditions and changes over time in education activities and outcomes for different racial/ethnic groups in the U.S. The report includes more detailed tables of racial/ethnic subgroups, including children living in poverty, status dropout rates, and college enrollment rates.

http://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/index.asp

[3] Consists of Indonesian and Malaysian subgroups.

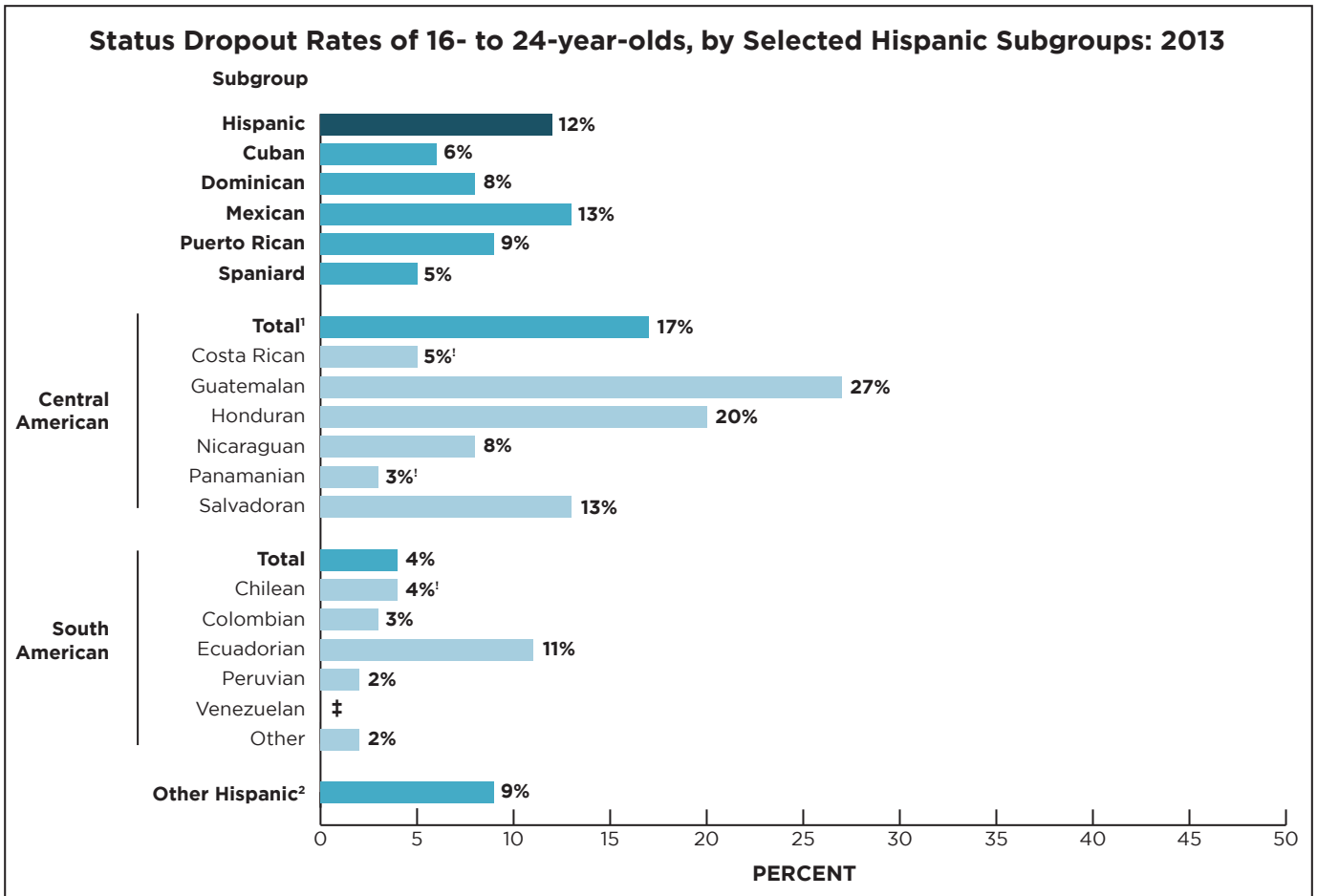
Total College Enrollment Rates of 18- to 24-year-olds in 2- or 4-year Colleges and Universities, by Selected Asian Subgroups: 2013



! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.
[1] Includes Taiwanese.
[2] In addition to the subgroups shown, also includes Sri Lankan.
[3] Consists of Indonesian and Malaysian.
[4] Includes other Asian ethnic subgroups not shown separately, for example, Mongolians.
NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.
SOURCES: *Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups 2016*, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education; *American Community Survey*, 2013, Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce.

Figure 4. Disaggregated data, such as the college enrollment rate of Asian American 18- to 24-year-olds by subgroup, can reveal large differences between subgroups that would not be apparent in a graphic that showed only aggregated data. When viewed as aggregated data, 67 percent of all Asian American 18- to 24-year-olds attend college. However, the disaggregated subgroups show rates ranging from 20 to 84 percent.

Figure 5 provides another example from the NCES report (Musu-Gillette et al, 2016) on the percentage of Hispanic 16- to 24-year-olds who were high school dropouts. In 2013, the high school status dropout rate for Hispanic 16- to 24-year-olds was 12 percent. The data in figure 5 are disaggregated into smaller subgroups to highlight meaningful variation within the population: after taking into consideration the population estimates standard errors, the status dropout rates for individuals of Guatemalan (27 percent), Honduran (20 percent), and Mexican (13 percent) descent were higher than the total rate for all Hispanics. The Salvadoran (13 percent) and Ecuadorian (11 percent) status dropout rates were not measurably different from the total Hispanic rate, and the rates for the remaining Hispanic subgroups were lower than the total Hispanic rate.



! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.
‡ Reporting standards not met. Either there are too few cases for a reliable estimate or the coefficient of variation (CV) is 50 percent or greater.
¹ Includes other Central American subgroups not shown separately.
² Includes other Hispanic ethnic subgroups not shown separately.
NOTE: The status dropout rate is the percentage of 16- to 24-year-olds who are not enrolled in school and have not earned a high school credential (either a diploma or an equivalency credential such as a GED certificate). Data are based on sample surveys of persons living in households, noninstitutionalized group quarters (such as college or military housing), and institutionalized group quarters (such as correctional or nursing facilities).
SOURCES: *Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups 2016*, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education; *American Community Survey*, 2013, Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce.

Figure 5. Disaggregated data, such as the status dropout rates of Hispanic 16- to 24-year-olds by subgroup, can reveal large differences between subgroups that would not be apparent in a graphic that showed only aggregated data. When viewed as aggregated data, 12 percent of all Hispanic 16- to 24-year-olds are not enrolled in school and have not earned a high school credential. However, the disaggregated subgroups show rates ranging from 2 to 27 percent.

Racial/Ethnic Education Data

Prior to discussing how racial/ethnic data might be disaggregated into more detailed subgroups, it is helpful to review how racial/ethnic data are currently collected and maintained at all levels of the education system.

How Racial/Ethnic Data Are Collected from Families

Typically, the first time a student enrolls in a public school district, his or her family is asked to complete multiple forms on topics such as health, enrollment, home language, and emergency contacts. These are the first pieces of data that populate a student information system (SIS) record. A district's enrollment form often includes basic information such as name, address, birth date, and parent/guardian contact information. Districts also include a federally mandated two-part question regarding the student's racial/ethnic identification (for more detailed information, see "Identify and Re-identify Individuals into New Subgroups" in chapter 2). In some districts, families have the opportunity to fill out the enrollment form only once each year—and if a modification is desired at any point between enrollment periods, the family must ask to change its data. In other districts, families have access to their data in a real-time electronic portal and they can readily add or edit information at any time.

Using Complex, Nuanced Data to Enhance the Curriculum

A few years after Highline School District (WA) began collecting disaggregated racial/ethnic data, the district implemented a strategic plan that included the following goal: "Create language-learning courses and programs for all students, K12, that ensure access to the global workplace, promote cross-cultural understanding, and develop critical-thinking skills."

District personnel found themselves better able to work toward this goal as a direct result of having access to disaggregated racial/ethnic data. That is, data at the subgroup level provided rich information about the district's students, which allowed staff to create courses that were well suited to educating and supporting its unique population.

State and District Data Systems

State education agencies have developed statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS) to store and analyze student-level data, but each state collects and maintains student data differently. For example, one state may have all of its student information in a single system, while another may have multiple student systems that are linked together as necessary to access and analyze the data.

A statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) is...

a data system that is intended to enhance the ability of states to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, and use data to help students succeed in education and beyond. An SLDS maintains detailed, high-quality individual-level data from education, workforce, and related services across the entire state; links these data across entities and over time to provide ongoing, long-term information about academic and employment outcomes; and makes these data accessible through reporting and analysis tools.

A student information system (SIS) is...

a management information system that schools and districts use to manage student data. Depending on its design, an SIS can register students, document grades, record test results, build student schedules, track student attendance, and manage numerous other student-related data needs in a school or district.

There is even greater variation in how school districts handle data. In some states, every school district must use a particular SIS as determined by the state. In other states, each district can decide which SIS it will use. This variation may result in slight differences in the ways in which data are exchanged and reported across districts, and between district and state data systems.

While these differences may have significant implications for data accessibility and exchange, they do not necessarily affect the quality of the data. When comparable definitions and code sets are used for racial/ethnic data, the resulting data should also be comparable, regardless of the context in which the data are otherwise managed. Thus, it is possible for a student in one school to report his or her racial/ethnic status in the same basic format and at the same level of granularity as a student in another school, regardless of whether their schools use the same SIS. The same is true for students in different districts, different regions, and even different states.

Current U.S. Department of Education Collections that Include Racial/Ethnic Data

In 1997, following a comprehensive assessment of the racial/ethnic categories being used at the time, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a government-wide standard for the collection of racial/ethnic data. In 2007, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) released its own guidance on the collection and maintenance of student, teacher, and staff racial/ethnic data that aligned with these standards. ED required implementation at the local and state levels by fall 2010.

Currently, the majority of the elementary and secondary universe data collected by ED are obtained through ED*Facts*, a collection of aggregated elementary/secondary data from states. States submit aggregated education data on more than 180 data elements at the state, district, and school level. There are 27 ED*Facts* data tables (sets of data elements) that currently include aggregated information on students' racial/ethnic identification.

Disaggregation in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 through the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. The disaggregation of racial/ethnic subgroups in ESSA is noted in a section concerning technical assistance, stating: "In the case of a state education agency choosing at its own discretion, to disaggregate data… for Asian and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students using the same race responses categories as the decennial census of the population, assist such state education agency in such disaggregation and in using such data to improve academic outcomes for such students."

Another mandatory federal data collection is the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), which is designed to obtain data related to districts' and schools' obligation to provide equal educational opportunity. The CRDC collects a variety of information directly from school districts, including student enrollment, educational programs, and services data that are disaggregated by racial/ethnic group, sex, English learner status, and disability.

A Case for Disaggregation: Fairbanks North Star Borough School District (AK)

Although every school district in the U.S. is unique, a closer look at one specific district, with its own experiences and needs, can shed light on how data disaggregation can be beneficial at the local level.

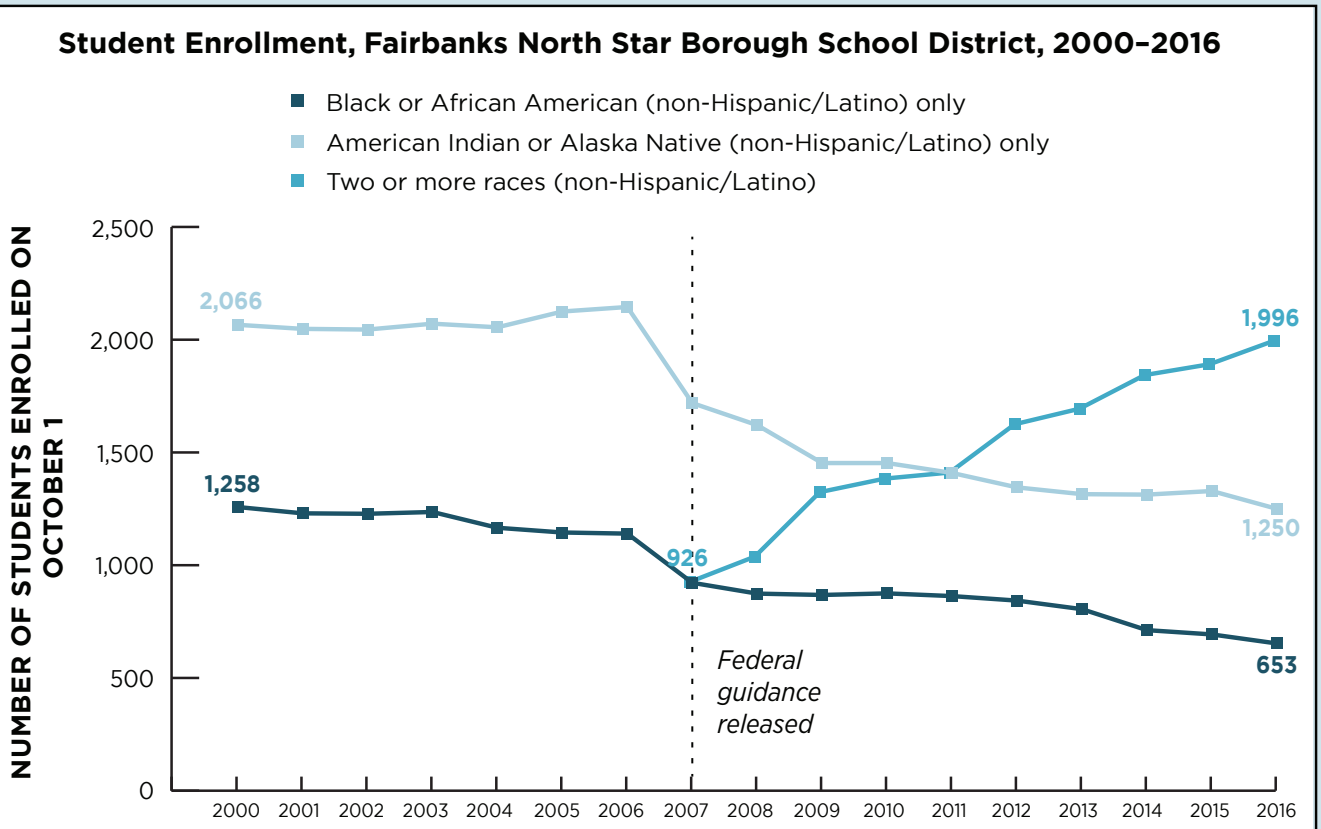
About the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District

The Fairbanks North Star Borough School District serves over 14,000 K12 students in 35 schools. Over half of the student population (61 percent) is categorized in the White (non-Hispanic/Latino) group; the next two largest groups

are the American Indian or Alaska Native (non-Hispanic/Latino) group (13.5 percent) and the Hispanic/Latino group (8 percent). Over 9 percent of the district's students identify as being in the Two or more races (non-Hispanic/Latino) group (Source: NCES, CCD, School Years 2013-14 and 2014-15). *Note: These numbers represent the most recent NCES data, and do not necessarily reflect the latest district data.*

Losing Detail Due to Data Aggregation

Since Alaska moved to reporting the seven federally mandated groups in 2007, the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, like many school districts across the country, has seen an increasing number of students choosing more than one race and therefore being aggregated into the Two or more races (non-Hispanic/Latino) group. As a result, the district—like many other districts—will report less detailed performance outcome data by racial/ethnic group than before because the performance from a student who identifies as Two or more races (non-Hispanic/Latino) will not be included in any of the other races with which they identify.



Source: Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, Board Presentation, 2016.

Figure 6. Since the federal reporting requirements guidance was released in 2007, an increasing number of students select more than one race and are aggregated into the Two or more races (non-Hispanic/Latino) group. American Indian or Alaska Native (non-Hispanic/Latino) and the Black or African American (non-Hispanic/Latino) groups are also displayed to show the corresponding decrease in the number of students in other racial/ethnic groups.

In the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, as more and more students identify in the Two or more races (non-Hispanic/Latino) group, fewer show up in the other race groups (American Indian or Alaska Native (non-Hispanic/

Latino), Black or African American (non-Hispanic/Latino), Asian or Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic/Latino), and White (non-Hispanic/Latino)). Figure 6 shows that the number of students aggregated into the Two or more races group has more than doubled over the 9 years since students were able to choose more than one race. Some of the change is due to increasing numbers of students completing the new enrollment form, which allows the identification of multiple races. In the same time period, other racial/ethnic groups show a corresponding decrease because of reporting as Two or more races (non-Hispanic/Latino). Thus, reporting may be misleading given that the racial/ethnic groups are being treated as mutually exclusive when, in fact, they are not. For example, a student that is both American Indian or Alaska Native and White would be combined into Two or more races, rather than American Indian or Alaska Native.

When the district's Research & Accountability Office noticed this trend, it informed the School Board that the steep performance changes they were seeing in reports comparing pre-2007 and post-2007 data were potentially misleading. Conceivably, at least some of the decrease in the number of students in racial/ethnic groups would be due to students being reported as Two or more races. These two time periods, the office explained, represented two different datasets: "before multi-racial and after multi-racial."

Further, a district researcher determined that the number of Fairbanks students who identify as being in more than one category and then coded into Two or more races will continue to increase over the next 3-4 years when almost all students have completed the new enrollment forms. The "surprising" results were presented to the School Board in December 2015 and January 2016. The researcher explained that district leaders should report performance by racial/ethnic subgroup (without mutual exclusivity) to more accurately represent the student population. For internal district reporting, students would be reported in every racial/ethnic group they identified; for federal reporting, the district would follow the mutually exclusive aggregation requirements. District administrators would need to be aware of the difference when reading internal versus federally mandated reports, but the extra effort would be worth the benefit of seeing the disaggregated racial/ethnic data.

A Lingering Concern

Upon learning about these findings, district leaders began to have concerns about the seven federally mandated categories in their mutually exclusive format. As an example of the possible loss of information such reporting might produce, they noted that the Alaska Native Education program served American Indian or Alaska Native students regardless of Hispanic origin or multiple races. Thus, they were concerned about the conflict between the actual number of students receiving services and federally mandated reporting in which the performance of American Indian or Alaska Native students would not be included in the results for American Indian or Alaska Native if they identified an additional race or as Hispanic—meaning that the performance of such students would not be included in program reporting such as attendance rates or graduation rates. They also had concerns that this reporting might result in a decrease in funding and resources to the American Indian or Alaska Native students who are also Hispanic or an additional race.

Chapter 2:
Strategies for Disaggregating Racial/Ethnic Data Subgroups

Disaggregating data must be undertaken with care. Doing so may prove to be very useful for achieving your agency's instructional, performance, and data analysis goals, but ensuring data quality and comparability requires a thoughtful approach that involves the full range of data system stakeholders—including both users and providers of data. Moreover, issues such as privacy and data integrity must be taken into consideration at all levels of governance and all stages of implementation. During the data disaggregation process, it is important that the data disaggregation planning team remain

- cognizant of the agency's overall strategic goals and the intended outcomes for the project;
- committed to communication within the team and beyond it to other data stakeholders; and
- deliberate in establishing a data governance structure (if one does not already exist) that is effective in its operations at every level.

Disaggregating data need not be undertaken in a linear series of steps. However, there are several proven strategies that agencies may find helpful to follow, including separating the effort into two distinct project phases. The first phase, the *needs assessment*, is a preparatory period when an agency examines what it has, as well as what it would like to have, with respect to the capacity to use disaggregated data to achieve its broader organizational goals. If the needs assessment indicates that data disaggregation is a logical and beneficial next step, the agency can then move to the second phase, *implementation*. During this phase, the agency actively works to establish sound procedures for disaggregating data and then using the data to advance its education goals.

The box on the next page gives an overview of the content in chapter 2, as well as the steps involved in the needs assessment and implementation phases.

A Strategic Approach to Instituting Data Disaggregation

Needs Assessment

Develop a Strong Data Governance Program

- What is the current data governance process, and how can it support this work?

Identify and Involve Stakeholders

- Who are your agency's stakeholders and how does the agency involve them?

Determine Whether Change Is Justified

- What is the problem the agency is trying to solve? How might data disaggregation help?
- What are the applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations?

Assess Your Current Data Systems

- What data collections and systems related to racial/ethnic data are currently in use?

Identify Needed Subgroups

- What subgroups are growing in your area? What subgroups are projected to grow in the future?

Estimate Costs

- What is the impact?
- What will it cost?
- Will the cost yield a return on investment?

Implementation

Develop a Schedule

- What are the project's timelines and implementation calendar?

Provide Communication Materials and Training

- What materials and media are needed?
- Which tools do the stakeholders need?

Update Your Data Systems

- What needs design, development, and testing?
- How will the data be protected when shared?

Identify and Re-identify Individuals into New Subgroups

- How should the question be asked?
- What do you do if students/families refuse to provide the information?
- Did you remember that the new subgroups must roll up to the required federal reporting categories?

Review Data Quality

- What are your data quality processes?
- What are all the ramifications of changes on data quality?

Support Data Use

- What are the impacts on data reporting?
- How can the agency support its users?

Needs Assessment

Conducting a needs assessment is the first critical phase in the process of introducing data disaggregation to an education agency. During this phase, the agency should address the topics and questions posed in the "Needs Assessment" portion of the above box (A Strategic Approach to Instituting Data Disaggregation). The answers to these questions will help the agency determine whether to advance to the second phase, *implementation*. The needs assessment phase of the data disaggregation process includes developing a strong data governance program, identifying and involving stakeholders, providing justification for change, assessing your current data system, identifying needed subgroups, and determining the probable cost.

Develop a Strong Data Governance Program

Data governance is not a new concept to most education agencies; many already have formal or informal data governance processes in place. Some of the most important tasks in a data disaggregation project—such as engaging agency leadership in the process, ensuring buy-in within the agency, identifying stakeholders and gaining their support, setting timelines, agreeing on budgets, and developing communication materials—are nearly impossible to achieve without the existence of a functional data governance program. You should work within your organization's existing data governance structure when considering data disaggregation.

Data governance is...
the overall management of the availability, usability, integrity, quality, and security of data.

Data governance is...
both an organizational structure and an organization-wide process.

Data governance is...
a means for establishing responsibility for data among agency staff tasked with collaboratively and continuously improving data quality through the systematic creation and enforcement of policies, roles, responsibilities, and procedures.

Data governance is...
necessary for creating clear roles and responsibilities for each member of the project team. (Source: NCES 2012)

The term *data governance* refers to the overall management of the availability, usability, integrity, quality, and security of data. It includes the structural organization of your agency's personnel (staff and contractors) responsible for managing data, as well as the processes those personnel follow when managing data and data systems. Data governance is a large and complex organizational effort that is an essential part of every education agency. It encompasses much more than the governance of racial/ethnic data; data governance is comprehensive and should encompass all people, processes, and procedures relating to the agency's entire data system. While a detailed discussion concerning how to develop and strengthen a data governance program is beyond the scope of this document, this section aims to provide recommendations that will help to ensure that your agency's data governance program is strong enough to successfully facilitate a data disaggregation project.

Data Governance Resources

U.S. Department of Education, Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) Grant Program—The SLDS grant program has released many publications and tools on data governance. Some offer general best practice guidance based on the experiences of multiple states. Others provide examples of the data governance systems used in different states. These publications and tools are available at https://slds.grads360.org/#communities/data-governance.

Washington—The state of Washington has a workgroup that oversees the development and implementation of a K12 education data system for financial, student, and educator data. It maintains a Data Governance System for K12 Data: Policy and Procedures Manual at http://www.k12.wa.us/K12DataGovernance.

Every agency has an organizational chart that shows its overall management structure. Your agency will also wish to have an organization chart for its data management structure. This data governance chart may be similar to the organizational chart, but will probably be smaller in scope given that not every staff member is involved in data management. Unlike a traditional organizational chart, some individuals on the data management chart may be contractors who work outside of your agency but still play a role in the management of the data system (e.g., an SIS vendor who troubleshoots errors that agency staff have been unable to address).

It is important to establish who is responsible for each data management task and ensure that the assigned duties are being accomplished in a timely and appropriate manner. The following are examples of some data management tasks related to disaggregated data that might be assigned as staff responsibilities:

- Making the racial/ethnic data accessible to those who are authorized to use the data.
- Using the racial/ethnic data for analysis and communication.
- Ensuring, evaluating, and reporting on data quality of the new data.
- Maintaining data security for the new racial/ethnic subgroups.
- Handling data privacy issues of the new racial/ethnic subgroups.
- Providing technical support for the data systems that collect and maintain the subgroups.

Identify and Involve Stakeholders

The entire education community has an interest in the availability of high-quality data. From classroom teachers, administrators, parents, and community based organizations to district staff who manage programs and state legislators who debate education policies—everyone reaps considerable benefits from having access to timely and accurate data that meet their specific information needs.

It is common for people to mistakenly assume that because they are only in the needs assessment phase of the project that communication with stakeholders is not yet necessary. But by the time the agency has advanced to the implementation phase, it is often too late to start a conversation with stakeholders about what should happen. Your agency can avoid undesirable project outcomes by using its data management/governance organizational chart to identify stakeholders (data stewards and data users) and proactively initiate a conversation with them before decisions about data disaggregation implementation are finalized.

Potential Stakeholders

- Staff in your agency's data governance organizational chart
- Staff not in your agency's data governance organizational chart who work with data or data systems
- Agency contractors
- Partner and peer agencies in the region, state, or country
- Policymakers at the local, state, or federal levels
- Community based organizations
- American Indian and Alaskan Native tribes
- Nonprofit organizations
- Education researchers
- Advocacy groups
- Vendors
- District staff (for an SEA project)
- School staff (for an SEA or LEA project)
- Families and students
- Parent groups

Start by identifying which staff on your data governance organizational chart are your affected data stewards (that is, the people who "own" the datasets within your data management structure). These staff work within your agency, or perhaps are contractors who work closely with agency staff, and are intimately involved with the policies and procedures relating to the agency's collection and use of data. Next, list the many different types of people who use the racial/ethnic data your agency collects. Some of these stakeholders are agency staff and contractors, while others are not directly related to your organizational structure. They include practitioners, policymakers, and the public as well as parents, nonprofits and advocacy groups, and researchers.

Don't delay! Communicate early with stakeholders who may be affected by a change in how data are collected and used by your agency. Waiting to discuss possible changes with data stewards and data users could delay or derail your project. Use your data governance program to reach out to all interested parties as soon as possible.

Finally, consider who else might be affected by a change in the way racial/ethnic data are collected or reported. For example, education researchers who are in the process of conducting time-series analyses might wish to maintain a consistent approach to certain data elements or indicators. Staff who collect or enter data may also have opinions about proposed changes, including the time it will take them to learn and implement a new procedure. Similarly, families may have questions about data privacy and how the data are going to be used.

Once stakeholders have been identified, reach out to each type of stakeholder in a manner that is customized to their specific needs and interests. Tell them about the changes that your agency is considering, and ask them to provide input. Engage families and communities in meaningful ways and provide translation services in order to communicate the information in languages that reflect community needs. It is critical that these types of communications continue throughout the entire project so that stakeholders do not feel out of touch or that their opinions are not valued. While the agency may not be able to incorporate all of these perspectives into the new processes, it is useful to gather, acknowledge, and consider all suggestions.

Topics that might be relevant to representative stakeholders include the need to

- improve awareness of families wishing to express their racial/cultural heritage more precisely;
- determine which subgroups are needed;
- communicate potential or impending changes to racial/ethnic subgroups;
- explain requirements for racial/ethnic data collections required by state and federal agencies;
- customize more racial/ethnic-sensitive programs to support diverse student needs;
- introduce new technology or procedures for data collection and reporting;
- apply new business rules and other data quality checks; and
- create appropriate data use plans and procedures that effectively protect data privacy.

Address Community Needs

The Highline Public School District in the state of Washington felt that it was important to continually consider community needs. The district invited community based organizations (CBOs) to discuss its data disaggregation process, as it began to identify problems and potential solutions. It also involved the community in school board meetings, town hall meetings, and full forums—distributing packets of information in multiple languages at these events and online.

These successful stakeholder communications efforts continued even after the data disaggregation process had been implemented. For example, the district uses its disaggregated data to readily identify migrant students and connect them to local organizations that provide new families with services and a sense of community. When these students' needs are better met by the community, the district, in turn, is better able to serve them educationally. The Highline Public School District learned through firsthand experience that being sensitive to community members' needs and cultural differences is an extremely valuable approach to meeting an organizational goal of effectively serving its students.

Determine Whether Change Is Justified

During the *needs assessment* phase of a data disaggregation project, it is important to determine whether the proposed change is justified. In general terms, justifying a new project is often based on traditional cost-benefit analysis (see Estimate Costs below), but in the case of a data disaggregation project, non-monetary factors can be paramount, including whether and how the project will solve existing problems, provide new opportunities, and comply with applicable laws, regulations, policies, and good practices.

Consider the Need for Data Disaggregation

As a project planning team, identify issues that currently exist both inside and outside of the agency, and that might be addressed by disaggregating data. Here are a few questions that your team can ask planners and stakeholders to consider:

- What questions are currently unanswerable because the data are aggregated at too high a level to drive education of unique populations?
- What services are not being delivered in a targeted manner to populations in need because disaggregated data are not available?
- Which schools and educational programs might be unable to differentiate instruction because the data are aggregated?
- Which agencies, advocacy groups, and nonprofit organizations could target their services more effectively if the data were disaggregated?
- What policies might change for the better if policymakers had access to disaggregated data?
- Which subgroup populations could be better served if disaggregated data were available?

Multi-Step Justification Process

After the federal guidance in 2007 was released, the state of Washington undertook a feasibility analysis on behalf of the agency and the legislators involved in introducing the idea of adding more than the racial/ethnic groups to their state collection. In this analysis the following topics were specifically addressed:

- Background/context
- Subgroup options
- Outside organizations subgroup list
- Approach recommendations
- Sample questions
- Potential district issues
- Data storage
- Analysis and reporting

Ultimately, the answers to these questions should be able to address the following:

- What challenges might the agency address by disaggregating data?
- What new opportunities might disaggregation offer?
- What is the likelihood of *successfully* addressing these challenges or providing these opportunities?
- What will the newly available data be used for?

The answers to these questions can help guide your agency's decision about whether to move forward with a data disaggregation project. The responses will also enable you to better communicate the rationale for the project to stakeholders.

Identify and Comply with Applicable Laws and Policies

A separate, but critically important, question must also be addressed early in the planning process: *Would data disaggregation help our agency better comply with applicable laws, regulations, or policies?* Determining the answer may prevent your agency from wasting valuable time, effort, and money—or from ending up on the wrong side of the law. Before you make a decision about whether to move forward, clearly identify all the laws that govern your proposed actions and work with the authorities in your agency to ensure that your proposed collection complies with relevant laws and policies. A district may proceed with data disaggregation on its own authority as long as no local or state law prohibits it from doing so.

Guiding Legislation Example

The state of California has a long-standing government code that includes a list of the racial subcategories that state agencies must include when collecting race data.

http://tinyurl.com/hcgsekw

District Policy Example

Portland Public Schools, Oregon, has a Department of Equity & Partnerships that outlines business and education partnerships, as well as provides links to all of the equity policies and practices. This includes the district's Racial Educational Equity Policy, Affirmative Action Policy, and Racial Equity Lens. The Racial Equity Lens provides five questions to be asked for any policy, program, practice, or decision to maximize the user's ability to ensure equitable outcomes.

http://www.pps.net/Domain/51

Assess Your Current Data Systems

Before implementing a change in your data systems, conduct a thorough assessment of what currently exists that is related to racial/ethnic data. For each data system that you identify as relevant to a racial/ethnic data disaggregation project, answer the following questions:

- Who are the stewards (owners) of the racial/ethnic data?
- Who uses these racial/ethnic data?
- What is the quality of the data?
- What codes are used in this data system to indicate racial/ethnic status?
- What business rules apply to these data?
- How would the data system need to change to accommodate disaggregated data?
- How would staff responsibilities and procedures need to change to accommodate the collection, stewardship, and use of disaggregated data?
- What would be the cost and burden to modify the collection?

Data Systems that Might Contain Racial/Ethnic Data:

- Student records (student information system)
- Central registration
- Special education
- Assessment
- Title I
- Title VI—Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Education
- Title VII—Impact Aid
- English language learners
- Career and technical education
- Charter schools registration and records
- Free-and-reduced-price lunch
- Migrant education
- Gifted and talented
- Discipline
- Virtual education
- Human resources
- Retirement
- State certification/licensure information

This inventory of data systems with racial/ethnic groups is critical to your planning and implementation strategy—and is necessary to ensure that you have addressed the needs of all relevant data systems, data stewards, and data owners. Also, if more than one data system has racial/ethnic data, this information is vital for subsequent data coordination, matching, and ownership decisions (that is, which system is responsible for the official data of record and which ones simply copy, use, or link to the official data?).

Once you have assessed your agency's relevant data systems, you are ready to make decisions about what precisely you propose to change. Previously, you probably had a general idea about what changes you would like, but at this stage, you need to become specific about proposed modifications to data systems, data codes, data structures, data processes, and related technical and operational procedures.

Identify Needed Subgroups

Identify which subgroups are applicable to your geographic area by asking for input from your stakeholders. You can also identify different racial/ethnic populations by using existing elements in your system, such as demographic data on birth country and language spoken at home. Another valuable resource is the website of the U.S. Census Bureau, which can be used to ascertain populations and subgroups that may reside and attend school in your area.

How to Use American FactFinder: Visit the U.S. Census Bureau's American FactFinder website (http://factfinder.census.gov) to access a "Guided Search" that can be used to look up disaggregated racial categories for your community. Prompts will direct you to select data tables by topic, geography, and racial/ethnic groups. You can choose to view or download the tables you select, which can help you identify which racial/ethnic subgroups might be considered for use in your agency's data systems.

Federally Mandated Aggregation Reporting Categories

As you identify new subgroups, don't forget to consider strategies for rolling up the new subgroups into the federally mandated reporting categories. If you are a school district, also remember to consider strategies for aggregating data to meet any state requirements that differ from the federal ones.

Estimate Costs

At this point, the *needs assessment* phase of your data disaggregation project is almost complete. You have gathered information, communicated with stakeholders, and made key decisions about desired changes. Now you need to estimate the project's costs and decide whether the anticipated outcomes are worth your agency's financial investment.

A Case: Identifying State Subgroups

In July 2016, the Minnesota legislature passed their supplemental budget bill that requires the collection and reporting of aggregated and disaggregated student performance and growth levels. The legislation calls for the identification of subgroups to be determined "by the total Minnesota population at or above the 1,000-person threshold based on the most recent decennial census." https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/?id=189&year=2016&type=0

Identifying needed technical changes is one of the first steps in determining costs. If a disaggregation project is undertaken, your agency's software systems for collecting, managing, and reporting data may need to be updated. This might require the services of in-house staff and contractors, or may include work from vendors that would need to be hired. To assess these costs, clearly define what changes you propose to make to data systems, data structures, data processes, and related technical and support services so that all new subgroups can be integrated seamlessly into your agency's overall scheme for collecting and using data. Be sure to consider the costs of supplementary functions as well, including staff and contractor hours needed for policy development, training and professional development, re-inventorying data, and other ongoing tasks that will be required to operate the revised system.

Communicating Needs Assessment

Depending on the findings of your needs assessment, you may be proposing anything from minor alterations to an existing system to an entirely new data system or collection. In either case, it is critical to understand and communicate exactly what you intend to accomplish (and how it will be designed and operated) before you move to the implementation phase.

Metrics for Success

Prior to beginning the implementation phase, it is advisable to determine which metrics could be used to measure whether implementation is "successful." These metrics may be determined during the needs assessment and could also be used to help estimate costs. They will also be useful when assessing the ongoing progress of your disaggregation project.

Implementation

Completing a *needs assessment* will provide your agency with a solid foundation for undertaking a data disaggregation project and then using your new capabilities to advance your education goals. The second phase of the project is referred to as *implementation*. As with the *needs assessment*, the strategies described in the rest of this chapter may be completed in any order or worked on simultaneously as necessary to meet the unique organizational structure and circumstances of an education agency.

Develop a Schedule

Timing is critical to your project's success. As such, it is imperative that you establish project calendars with timelines that *realistically* reflect the data collection and reporting processes of your agency.

A typical data disaggregation project in a state or local education agency will take 2-4 years to implement. The sample 3-year timeline below designates one year for laying the groundwork, a second year for preparing systems and personnel, and a third year for initiating the re-identification process.

Keep the lines of communication open! Even as your agency is determining the details of the implementation schedule, the tasks to be completed, and the content of the change, be sure to communicate to stakeholders that the data disaggregation project is moving forward. Your stakeholders helped you identify both problems and solutions, and they expect to be kept in the loop as the project advances.

Sample 3-Year Implementation Timeline

Year 1: Lay the Groundwork

- Develop policies, procedures, and guidelines for the project.
- Provide clear direction to partners, such as schools, vendors, contractors, and other stakeholders.
- Be open to exploring a range of possibilities, while progressively narrowing options and making decisions in a timely manner.

Year 2: Prepare Systems and Personnel

- Have your in-house, contractor, or vendor technical experts create or modify your data systems so they can collect disaggregated information. It is likely that existing systems will need to run in parallel until project leaders are convinced that the new system has been successfully released.
- Provide training to personnel who will be tasked with collecting, managing, or using the disaggregated data.
- Continue to provide information and guidance to stakeholders.

Year 3: Initiate the Re-identification Process

- Create forms and notify parents as needed; continue to communicate with stakeholders.
- Ask students, parents, staff, and other individuals to re-identify their racial/ethnic selection.
- Evaluate your processes and procedures to ensure that data are being collected, managed, and used properly.

Provide Communication Materials and Training

Effectively implementing communication and training strategies can foster a culture of quality data throughout your agency and a common understanding of the new data disaggregation approach you are implementing.

Communication

It is critical for planners to communicate with families about why it is necessary *and advantageous* for them to report racial/ethnic data, as well as how the agency intends to use the data and keep the data secure. It is vital that communication materials are written in plain, easy-to-understand language—and if possible, multiple languages. It is also important that you use multiple channels of communication to reach as many families as possible. Use both the Internet and printed materials, and also be prepared to discuss the initiative in person and on the phone. Communications can be viewed as an ongoing dialogue with your stakeholders so that everyone has a chance to voice their perspectives and, in turn, to work together toward the same goals.

Q: My district recently included new racial/ethnic subgroups on our school enrollment forms, and we are getting a lot of community pushback. We already sent out a pamphlet detailing the benefits of the change, but it doesn't seem to be working. What's going on, and what can we do?

A: It is important for agency personnel to understand and promote the data changes because making the case to stakeholders will contribute to a successful implementation phase. But planners should expect resistance, especially when the change involves a great number of respondents, staff time and resources are limited, or stakeholders don't completely trust the reasons behind the change. Some parents might resist providing new racial/ethnic data out of fear of authority or a concern about being stigmatized. School districts should offer reassurance by frequently referring to the protection of personally identifiable information under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html). It is important for agencies to be transparent about any changes, and to ensure that the changes are readily available in multiple formats (such as web pages, mailers, and pamphlets sent home with students) and in multiple languages as needed.

Training

Some of your stakeholders will need more than just communication tools and materials from your agency. By providing training for agency staff and, if applicable, non-agency personnel (such as contractors), you will ensure that your representatives on the front lines of the project have accurate information and instructions on data disaggregation. In fact, the most direct way to achieve efficient and consistent implementation of the new subgroups will be to provide high-quality training to school and district staff.

Data Entry Staff

Note that you may need to temporarily shift personnel assignments to increase the number of staff working on data entry, at least during the initial changeover period when all individuals in the system will need to re-identify themselves. In some districts, it may make sense to assign data entry personnel at the district level, and in other districts it may make more sense to assign them at the school level. Assess your specific data entry needs and make decisions accordingly.

Pay particular attention to training data entry staff so they understand the context as well as the content of the changes. For example, remind your stakeholders that the order of the racial/ethnic groups on your forms and other collection instruments may be different than it had been on old forms. Although "White" may have been the first option on last year's data entry screen, it might now be the last one listed because the options are now presented in alphabetical order. Finally, but very critically, expect that data entry personnel may have questions while actually entering data (rather than only in training sessions) and make sure that they know whom to contact (and how) for ad hoc questions—and be prepared to answer these questions in a timely manner.

Communication Materials and Training Topics

There is a wide range of issues and content that could be developed into communication materials and training topics. The following are examples of communication materials and tools that could be posted on the agency's website:

- a brief overview of the initiative and how it will enhance teaching and learning
- a sample letter to parents
- sample letters to educators
- sample data collection forms
- frequently asked questions and answers
- a description of how the data will be protected and shared
- your data dictionary
- a list of newly adopted racial/ethnic subgroups

There are also several topics that may be especially appropriate for in-person training sessions:

- how to identify stakeholders
- racial/ethnic subgroup definitions
- how to ask the racial/ethnic question
- data entry processes
- effective communication techniques
- how to apply business rules in data systems
- what to do when students/parents do not mark an answer
- observer identification procedures
- data use and reporting

If in-person training is not possible or practical, these topics could be developed into training materials and distributed online or via other distribution channels (see the green box for two Forum resources on this topic). For communication and training materials that will be distributed rather than delivered in person, be sure to provide points of contact for questions or concerns. And, depending on the needs of target audiences, they should be offered in other languages as appropriate.

National Forum on Education Statistics Resources on Training

Forum Curriculum for Improving Education Data: A Resource for Local Education Agencies (2007)
http://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub_2007808.asp

This curriculum supports efforts to improve the quality of education data by serving as training materials for K12 school and district staff. It provides lesson plans, instructional handouts, and related resources, and presents concepts necessary to help schools develop a culture for improving data quality.

Improving Education Data
http://nces.ed.gov/forum/dataqualitycourse/dataquality.asp

The Forum created this online course based on the above curriculum. This course includes multimedia videos, PowerPoint presentations, notes, quizzes, and other supporting materials and can be used to train staff at many levels.

Update Your Data Systems

During this highly technical stage of the project, your agency's main task is to ensure that your IT staff and contractors have the information they need to get the job done—and done right. Remember that your IT specialists are only as good as the information and support you provide them. They cannot work based solely on their own understanding of how your data system should operate; they need clearly defined instructions about how you would like your new data systems to look and function to support data disaggregation. New systems should be tested rigorously, including by likely end users (e.g., data entry clerks or parents who enter their own data).

Work with Your IT Experts to Create and Implement a Plan

Begin by telling your IT experts which new racial/ethnic subgroup codes you would like to add. Design your data entry screen to be as simple as possible for parents and school data entry staff, mimicking the actual paper data collection form if one exists so that it will capture the initial data collection accurately. For accuracy and data quality reasons, do not recycle old codes for subgroups that had previously existed.

Since data systems vary in design, your agency should closely scrutinize its options based on factors such as costs to convert the systems, feasibility, user interface, and the quality of the data produced. Some agencies may prefer a two-digit code system (this works for major groups), while other agencies

A Case: Planning All Aspects of Data Systems

Washington State had an overlap year in its implementation—a school year in which districts could choose to report using the old or the new subgroups. While running old and new systems in parallel can help protect data and ease the transition to a new system, the state's education department spent a lot of time during the first six months turning on and off validation errors (business rules) in its data system because some districts needed the new rules and some the old. The implementation took more staff time than anticipated, and the state would likely take a different approach if going through the process again.

Frequently Asked Questions

The Portland Public Schools (PPS), Oregon, posted the questions and answers below on its website to support the collection of new subgroups data.

1. *What has changed?*

   Along with the two federal and state required questions regarding racial/ethnic information, Portland Public Schools is requesting more detailed student racial/ethnic information from families.

2. *Why is PPS asking families for this additional information?*

   First, we wanted to provide families and students with more choices when identifying their racial/ethnic background.

   Second, we wanted to better understand the racial/ethnic diversity of our students and families in order to provide more culturally responsive instruction and services. For example, this information will help us more easily identify students who may be eligible for special programs or supports. It will also help us better understand the changing demographics in our District. We believe this new format will result in more accurate data collection and reporting and ultimately more effective instruction and services for students.

3. *How were these categories chosen?*

   We started with what we know about the racial/ethnic groups present in our community. We sought both internal and external feedback from a variety of racial/ethnic groups with the goal of being as inclusive as possible. We will use information gathered from this form to adjust the categories as needed.

   Ultimately, our goal is for the categories to reflect our student body demographics.

4. *How will this new information be used?*

   This new information will be used to provide more detailed reports and program evaluations. These reports will help us better understand how well we are serving all of our students.

5. *Where can I go if I need support?*

   If you have any questions, please contact your school. They will be able to answer questions and provide support.

may prefer a four-digit code system (which is more likely to be appropriate to capture highly specific information, such as details regarding ancestry or tribal affiliation).

Once the new data systems, or portions of the systems as applicable, have been fully developed, they will need to be tested. Work with your IT specialists to test for errors, establish business rules and procedures that work with the new systems, and fix any bugs before release. Finally, expect that additional corrections will need to be made once the system is being operated by the full range and number of end users.

A Case: "Soft" Rollout or Pilot

One way to implement the change from the old to new subgroups is to allow for one year of overlap. Both the state of Washington and the Portland School District used soft rollouts where the change was not mandatory in the first year. This allowed new data to come into the systems at a slower pace and also gave the agency a year to work out any issues with the data collection software, business rules, and reporting processes.

Privacy and Security Issues

All student-level data should be private and secure. Be proactive about discussing privacy with your IT experts so they are aware that they need to incorporate appropriate security into your data systems. When student data are collected in small subgroups, such as may potentially happen with disaggregated reporting by racial/ethnic subgroups, privacy concerns are more likely to arise due to smaller cell sizes (i.e., when reporting out data into multiple subgroups, the number of students in any one data point, or cell, may be too small to report). Also, data shared with end users such as researchers and analysts can raise the prospect of confidentiality issues unless they are proactively addressed in data policies and data usage agreements. Agencies may also wish to test their suppression techniques, or other techniques used to protect identifiable data from disclosure, before the data are ready to be shared, as well as discuss de-identification strategies with IT staff to ensure that the system will support the chosen methods.

Q: My district wants to re-identify the student body. When should we start?

A: Re-identification is accomplished most easily during the enrollment period for new students and at the beginning of the school year for returning students. Staggering data collection throughout the year is more difficult to manage. Either way, a specific date should be established for students to return their information. Indicate that current data will be used, or racial/ethnic subgroups will be assigned, if new information is not received. Allow students and their families to check their records if they do not remember what racial and ethnic categories they had selected previously.

Although a detailed discussion about data privacy is outside the scope of this document, there are many resources available on privacy matters, including data usage agreements and cell suppression, from the U.S. Department of Education's Privacy Technical Assistance Center (http://ptac.ed.gov).

Identify and Re-identify Individuals into New Subgroups

There are three primary considerations for agencies in the process of identifying or re-identifying individuals into new racial/ethnic subgroups:

- **The creation and implementation of revised forms for individuals new to the data system, such as students enrolling for the first time**. Forms should clearly and accurately present the revised racial/ethnic subgroups (options). They may be on paper or electronic; if it is a paper form, be sure to have a data entry process built into your plan. Staff charged with entering data or supervising self-reported data by families should receive sufficient training to ensure data quality.

- **The re-identification of individuals who are already in the data system**. Develop and implement a plan for sending a request to individuals to re-identify their racial/ethnic identity using the new categories. This request should clearly explain why re-identification is desirable and beneficial to the individual and the agency. Appropriate paper or electronic forms should be developed to accomplish this re-identification.
- **The inevitability that some individuals and families will be unable or unwilling to identify or re-identify their racial/ethnic subgroup**. In some cases, it may be necessary to use the observer identification method to classify individuals who, for whatever reason, are not able or willing to self-report their racial/ethnic identification. This method should be used with caution, as explained below.

  The identification and re-identification process should be laid out in your multiyear implementation calendar. Be sure to keep track of timelines during this particularly complicated part of the process, so that you do not experience project delays.

Q: What should we do if we believe that a student or a staff member belongs to a different racial/ethnic subgroup than he or she claims?

A: The agency must accept an individual's self-identification of racial/ethnic status. Self-identification is a basic principle underlying these changes. The identification of a student's racial/ethnic subgroups is made primarily by parents or guardians, but a high school student may self-identify his or her race/ethnicity.

Communicate with families in multiple ways. It is critical to keep families informed throughout the entire project, but during the implementation phase there are specific resources that should be shared via mailings, email, and the agency's website. For example, the agency should explain why the change is being made; how the data will be collected, protected, and used; and where families can go if they have questions. Provide these materials in multiple languages, and involve community based organizations to assist with the communication process.

Identify New Individuals Using a Two-Part Question

When new individuals enter your system, the federal government requires a two-part question. The first part of the federal question on racial/ethnic identity requests more broad information about the respondent's ethnic group, while the second part requests more narrow information about the respondent's racial group. To ask individuals in your system for more specific information, simply use the same two-part question and add subgroup options as necessary to collect your desired subgroups. Structuring the question in this manner will ensure that federal reporting requirements can be easily met.

The U.S. Department of Education's Two-Part Racial/ Ethnic Question:

- Is the student Hispanic/Latino of any race?
- For individuals who are Non-Hispanic/Latino, does the student identify as:
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Asian
  - Black or African American
  - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - White
  - Two or more races

You may also wish to collect other information, such as a student's country of origin or the specific Native American tribe(s) in which a student is a member or otherwise affiliated with. However, do not take this additional step without first determining how such data will be collected, agreeing to how it will be used, discussing the ramifications of the data collection with stakeholders, and deciding whether it is worth the agency's investment in staff time and financial resources.

Re-identify Individuals Already in Your Data Systems

If you change only your data systems and your forms for new data collections, all of the individuals currently in your system will remain uncategorized in the new subgroups. Your agency must develop and implement a plan for notifying students, parents, staff, and any other individuals in the system about the change to the data systems, including the reason for the change, and a request that they re-identify themselves using your new form.

Use the Observer Identification Method as a Last Resort

When the federal changes were mandated in 2010, the guidance noted that if racial/ethnic subgroups were not self-identified by a student—or, more typically, by the student's parent or guardian—the observer identification method was to be used as a last resort. Before allowing observers to identify a student's racial/ethnic subgroup, every other possible strategy for encouraging the student or family to self-identify should first be employed. Your agency should create a policy and set of procedures that staff can follow when this situation arises, as it inevitably will. For example, before using the observer identification method, staff should follow up with students or parents by email or phone to determine whether they are unwilling to self-identify, whether they had difficulty answering the question for some reason and need assistance, or whether it was an inadvertent error that can easily be corrected.

> Every possible strategy for encouraging a student or family to self-identify should be employed before allowing observers to identify a student's racial/ethnic subgroup.

When students or families self-identify, they are not engaging in a scientific assessment but, rather, are explaining how they see themselves and their children. Assigning a racial or ethnic subgroup to someone else is fraught with difficulty, especially given the deep feelings and beliefs that many people have concerning their heritage. When necessary, the observer's job is to assign groups to the best of his or her ability, and as consistently and objectively as possible. Observer identification is only used when the student or family does not provide the requested information. If a response is provided, it should be recorded regardless of whether the observer believes that it is accurate.

Q: How should we go about re-identifying students? There are so many forms they have to fill out already.

A: Re-identification may be accomplished in many ways. Some districts have students fill out forms in their homerooms, while others mail out either a request for information or a verification of pre-loaded information requiring a parent's or guardian's signature or web confirmation. Most districts prefer to send a paper form to parents that asks them to identify the student's racial/ethnic subgroup, and then to sign and return the form. If a school district traditionally obtains data more quickly and accurately from high school students than from their parents, it would be preferable to ask students to provide this information themselves. Some districts use what is called a Parent Portal, which is an online tool that provides parents/guardians with immediate access to student information records, assignments, and grades in an effort to facilitate and enhance communications between home and school. Parents/guardians with an active account should have permissions to update their student's information at any time.

If you use the observer identification method, for future data quality purposes, you may want to make a note in your system that it was employed (given that it is plausible that future self-identification may differ from observer identification). Finally, an observer cannot simply look at a student and select a racial/ethnic group. Observers should also consider other pieces of evidence available for such a determination, including

- the student's previous racial/ethnic selection(s);
- the racial/ethnic selection(s) of the student's blood-related siblings;

- firsthand knowledge about the student's family;
- the student's country of birth or country of origin, or his or her parents' country of birth or country of origin;
- the language(s) spoken in the student's home; and
- the community to which the student belongs, including American Indian and Alaska Native tribal identification.

Review Data Quality

Data quality is perhaps the most important feature of any data system. Collecting data becomes a futile enterprise when the data do not accurately reflect the real world. If your agency does not have a process for ensuring data quality, the value of your new racial/ethnic data can be in jeopardy. The following attributes are common to most definitions of data quality:

- **Timeliness**: Are the data available when needed?
- **Completeness**: Are all the data there?
- **Accuracy**: Are the data correct?
- **Validity**: Do the data accurately reflect or measure what they are supposed to reflect or measure?
- **Consistency**: Are the data stable over time and across sources?

Each of these attributes should be evaluated individually, and the agency (and project planners) should take steps to ensure that all facets of data quality are addressed. In doing so, remember that an individual's racial/ethnic selection is more than just a data point; for many people it is a significant part of their identity. Confirming data quality goes beyond defining data and implementing business rules. There are several other areas you may wish to consider when reviewing data quality procedures:

- **Training**: Provide initial training to school and district personnel to help ensure consistency and efficiency when they are introducing new subgroups in the data system.
- **Communication**: Make sure that everyone has the same understanding of how new processes and procedures will work—for example, school data clerks need to follow standard practices when helping parents enroll their children in school.
- **Preparation**: Prepare strategies for observer identification for parents who don't respond to requests for subgroup identification/re-identification.
- **Time**: When making a big change to the existing system, it can take time for staff to get up to speed and for school leaders to adequately explain the change at the school level. Wait at least one school year to use the data so that your staff have sufficient opportunity to work through the inevitable challenges in the system.
- **Reporting plan**: Have a pre-approved approach to rolling up the new subgroups for state and federal reporting, and an understanding of privacy issues such as small cell sizes.

Conduct Regular Data Quality Audits

It is a good practice to conduct regularly scheduled data quality audits. This is true in any data collection process, but it is especially critical when collection processes are in flux. Conducting audit checks, such as assessing the way totals roll up into the seven federal aggregated categories before and after the change or comparing birth country or home language to certain subgroups, is key to catching and correcting mistakes and preventing them from occurring in the future.

Consider the Ramifications of Changing Racial/Ethnic Subgroups

In many agencies, students may change their demographic information at any time. This means that a student may be categorized in one racial/ethnic subgroup in the fall enrollment count and in another subgroup in the spring assessment results. Also, many changes in racial/ethnic status stem from corrections to inaccurate data entry in the agency. Finally, the racial/ethnic subgroups chosen by students and families can vary depending on many factors, such as the wording of the question, the format of the question, and the person who is asked for the information.

Forum Guide to Taking Action with Education Data

For more detailed information on using data, refer to this National Forum on Education Statistics publication at http://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub_2013801.asp.

These and other factors can lead to mismatches in collections over time—or data that are in some other way not perfectly consistent. Data staff should be aware of the ramifications of these inconsistencies and communicate the possibility of such mismatches to data users who need to understand the potential limitation to data quality in this regard.

Support Data Use

At last, all your systems are ready. You have met deadlines, communicated with stakeholders, and provided training and support. Your data systems are updated, individuals are identifying and re-identifying themselves using the new subgroups, and the new data meet quality standards. You and your stakeholders are finally ready to reap the benefits of having access to disaggregated racial/ethnic data. But using data is not always a simple and straightforward activity given the nuances and complexities of data meaning. Many agencies devote resources to supporting a range of education professionals as they use the disaggregated data. Areas in which you may wish to support your data users as they work with newly available disaggregated data include the following:

- **Recurring reports**. Schools, districts, and states report data for a variety of purposes, ranging from simple lists of school profiles to complex accountability results. The introduction of new subgroups can, and will, alter the processes and display of results.
- **Education program/services**. Education programs and services within schools, districts, and states can use disaggregated racial/ethnic data to offer ongoing school and program improvement. For example, teachers can use the data to individualize instruction while staff in charge of allocating funds can use disaggregated racial/ethnic data to monitor the equitability of education funding.
- **Education research**. Education researchers can use disaggregated racial/ethnic data to improve statistical analyses and to enrich other types of research. They can then offer the education community research results, including suggestions for improvement, that are more customized and better reflect the communities studied.
- **Education outreach**. School staff who wish to reach out to families and the community at large will be better able to customize their communications in a manner that makes more sense to the recipients with respect to language, culture, and community context.

As your agency and its stakeholders continue to move forward with collecting disaggregated data, talk to people about how things are going and periodically check to make sure that the data are being used appropriately. Include data literacy as an area in which your agency can support their data users—just because the data are now available doesn't mean your stakeholders know how to use it to support action. Also make sure that your staff are available to talk with

any stakeholders who have questions about using the newly disaggregated data. Your agency's written agreements with external data users (e.g., memoranda of understanding, data licenses, or general data use agreements) can also be used to identify data users who may benefit from receiving direction regarding how the introduction of disaggregated racial/ethnic data should be interpreted in datasets.

Reporting

Changes in racial/ethnic subgroups will offer both challenges and opportunities for regularly scheduled reporting, including:

- **Small cell size**. As data are disaggregated into more subgroups, there may be more instances of cell sizes small enough to raise privacy issues (for more information, see "Privacy and Security Issues" earlier in this chapter, or refer to the Privacy Technical Assistance Center at http://ptac.ed.gov).
- **Subgroup selection**. As the number of subgroups increases, so too does the complexity of displaying the data. In addition to addressing small cell sizes, agencies will need to weigh the benefits of displaying data from small populations against the investment of time and resources to modify reporting. In spite of the advantages of data disaggregation, you may decide to exclude certain subgroups from a report.
- **Two or more racial/ethnic subgroup reporting**. The agency will need to develop protocols for how to report students who identify with more than one subgroup. For example, in a table displaying test scores by racial/ethnic subgroup, there are two common options for students who identify with two or more racial/ethnic subgroups:
  a. **Include only those students identifying with one subgroup, and include students who identify with more than one in a "Two or more" subgroup**. Again, details about those students identifying with more than one subgroup are lost and the total number of students identifying with any one subgroup may be underrated.
  b. **Include these students within every subgroup identified**. Without a "two or more" option to display, however, important details about how many students identified with more than one subgroup will be lost. Additionally, these students would appear in more than one subgroup (or reporting column), leading to percentages totaling more than 100 percent—a concept that might be hard to explain to your reporting audience.

  Both of these options could be problematic and misunderstood by stakeholders without a thorough understanding of the data, raising the question of how best to explain such nuanced data within the context of a report. It is imperative that whichever option is used, the presentation of data should be accurate and consistent, and should clearly state which subgroups are or are not included in counts.

Figure 7 shows an example of enrollment by subgroups in Washington. Although the data are contained within relatively simple circle graphs, the full meaning of the graphs can still be difficult to explain. For example, are the students identifying with more than one subgroup represented in each of those subgroups? Are they represented anywhere in the graphics?

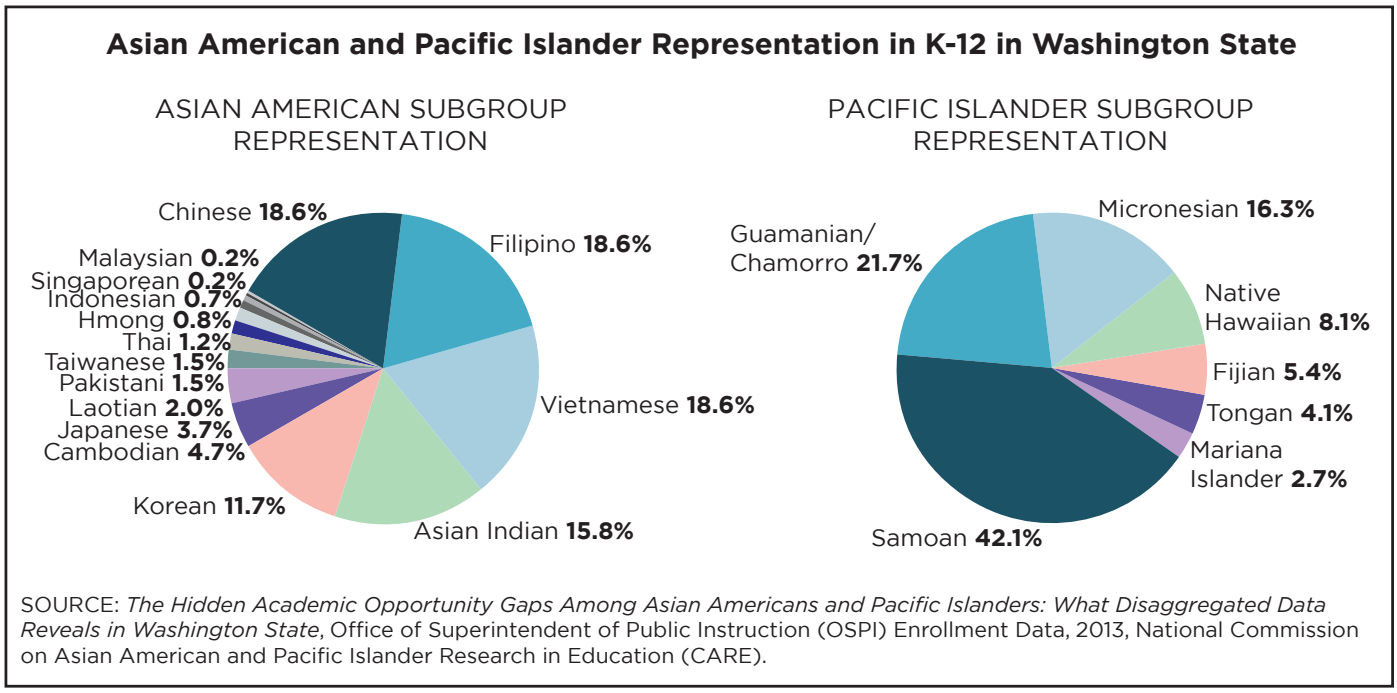


Figure 7. Washington collects disaggregated data on a multitude of racial/ethnic subgroups. This graphic illustrates the different subgroups within the Asian (non-Hispanic/Latino) and Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic/Latino) categories.

Data Translation

Every time there is a change in how data are collected, a "before" period and an "after" period are created. There is a "before" period when racial/ethnic data were collected only in aggregated groups, and an "after" period when the data were collected in disaggregated subgroups. Researchers and analysts must be careful when comparing data from the "before" period with data from the "after" period. In order to do so, the data must be translated. Data translation is the process of making the data from the two periods more comparable through crosswalks or other bridging methods. It allows for time-trend analyses using two datasets that would otherwise be incomparable because of their differences.

Data Storage

The final guidance from the federal government on reporting the seven racial/ethnic groups requires educational institutions to store original responses to the two-part question for 3 years; this is also a good practice for your new subgroups. One exception to the general 3-year rule for data storage is cases in which litigation, a claim, an audit, or another action involving the records begins before the 3-year period ends. In these cases, the records must be maintained until the action has been resolved. If individuals or families submit responses on paper, it is best to keep the paper records for at least 3 years as well, although your agency may have more stringent policies or laws on record retention and disposal.

Chapter 3:
Case Studies

This chapter 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 8. 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 9 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.

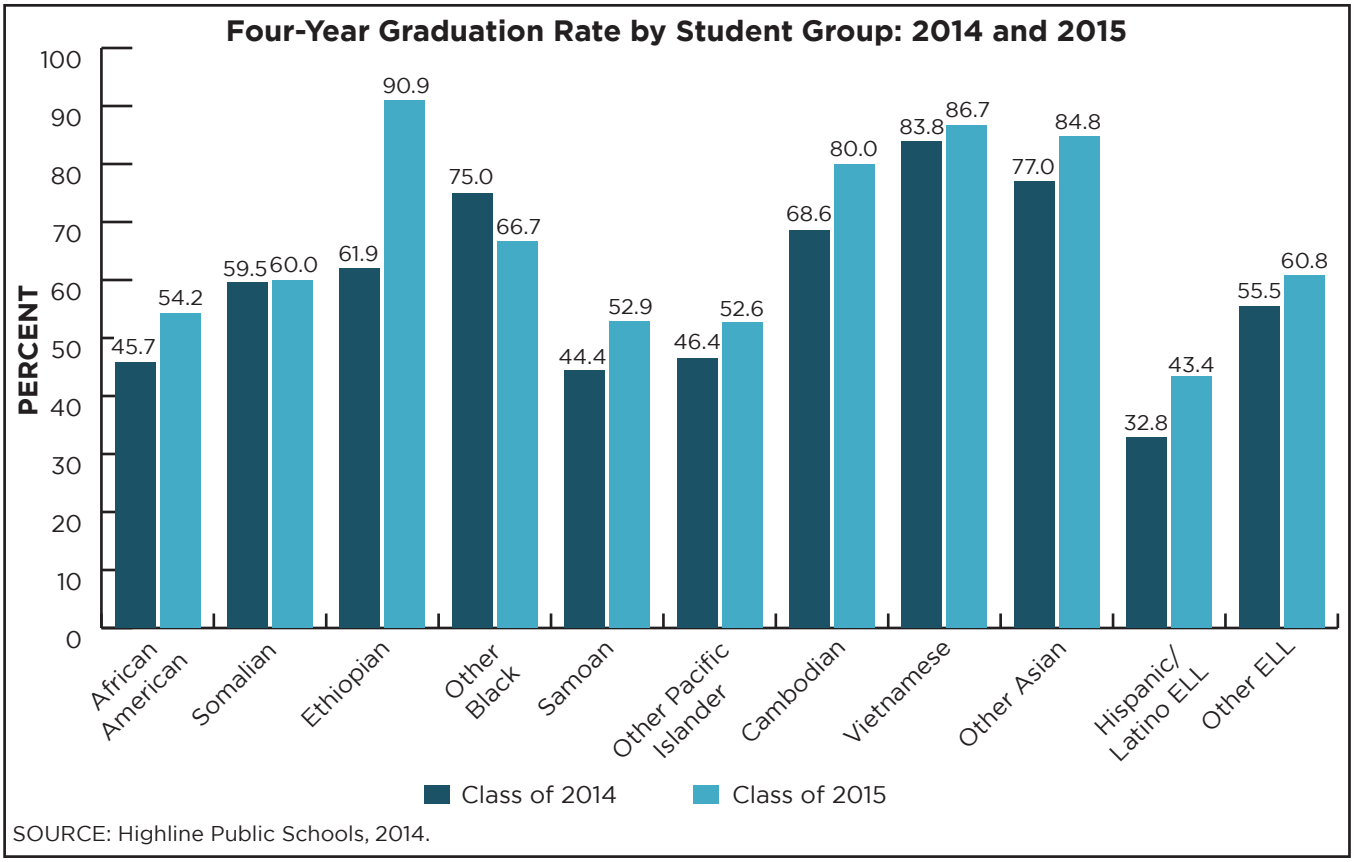


Figure 9. Highline Public Schools used this bar graph with disaggregated subgroups at a recent community meeting.

- **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" 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 Superintendent of Public Instruction)

In October 2008, the state's education agency, the Office of the 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 10 and 11). 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 10. 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.

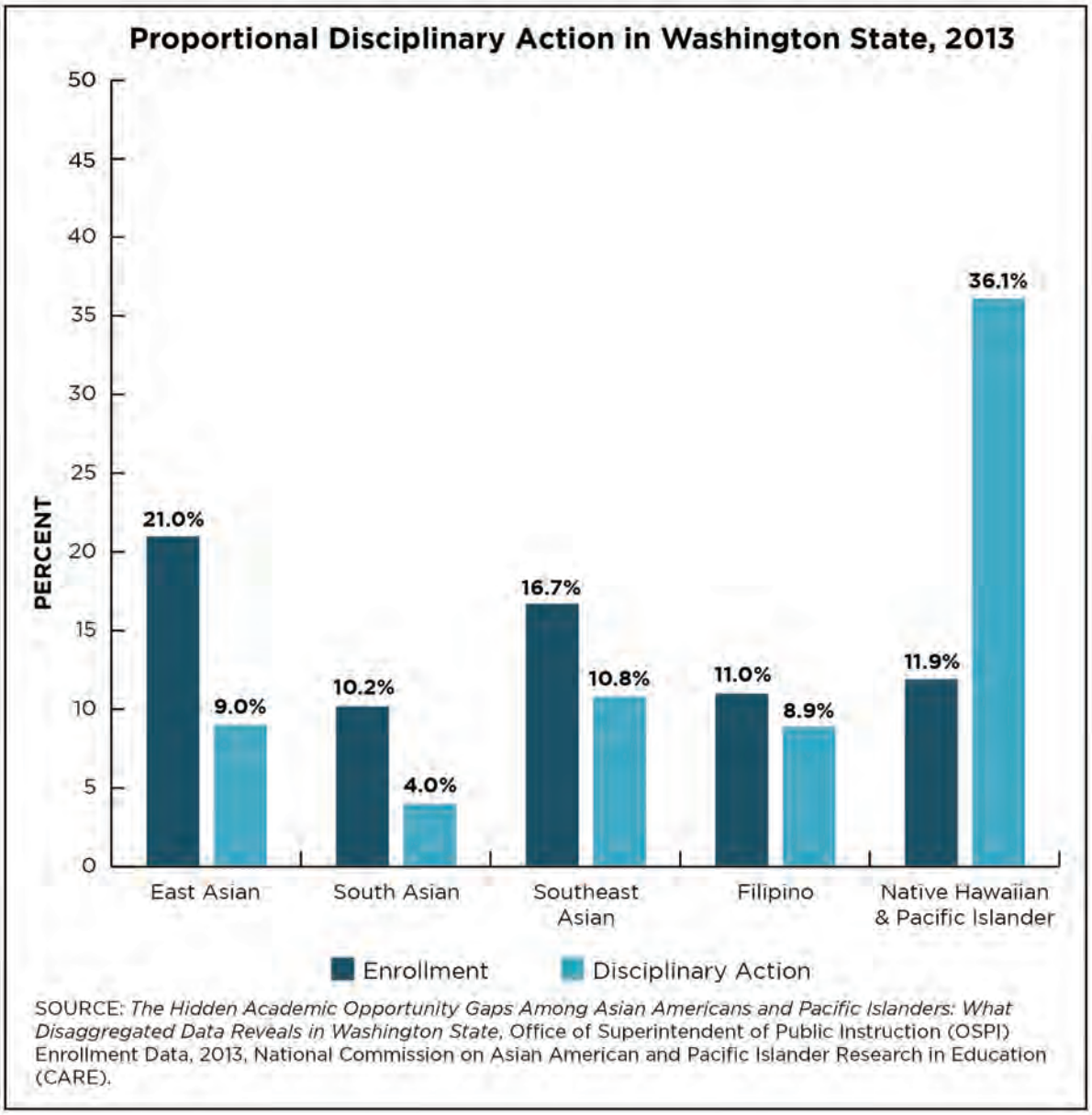


Figure 11. An example from the state of Washington of using subgroups, aggregated into slightly larger public categories, to review disciplinary actions.

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.

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).

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.*

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.

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 12. 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.

The district decided to break the racial/ethnic status request into two questions (see figure 12). 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.

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 13). 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 14). 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.

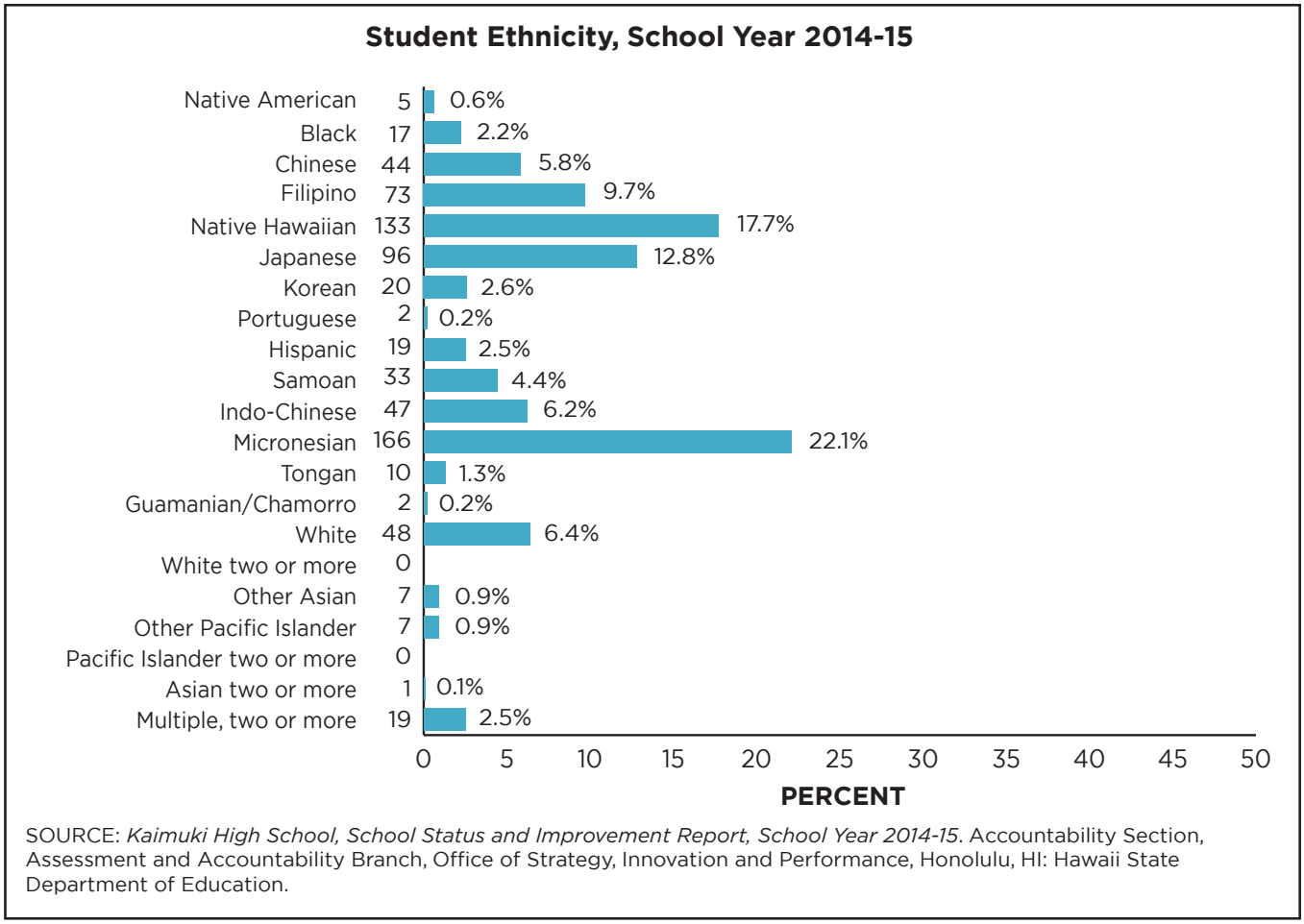
Figure 13. The Hawaii Department of Education serves its schools as their state education agency and their school district simultaneously. It disaggregates its racial/ethnic data more than is required for federal reporting purposes, which helps it serve its diverse student population.

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 14. 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 15. 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 16).

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 16. 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.

Appendix A. Issues to Consider

The direction and implications of disaggregating racial/ethnic data continue to evolve, even as this document is published. Ongoing issues and topics include:

As of publication, there are not yet definitive answers to many of these questions and issues, but it is likely that SEAs and LEAs will need to deal with these topics in the not-so-distant future. As such, they warrant further consideration and discussion.

Visit the website of the National Forum on Education Statistics for updates as they become available.

- *How is the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) relevant to data disaggregation?* As noted in chapter 2, ESSA directs the U.S. Department of Education to provide grants for technical assistance relating to disaggregating the federal category of Asian American and Pacific Islander. The first announcement of the award with application instructions was posted in May 2016.
- *Will there be more state legislation requiring additional subgroups or detailing how racial/ethnic groupings should be defined?* There are several examples of state legislation and district policy shared in chapter 2. As of this publication, there are two states, Minnesota and Washington, that have pending legislation in this area. As these two states move forward in their legislative process, other states could follow.
- *Will there be more district policies on racial/ethnic subgroups?* As with the state legislation, chapter 2 provides some examples of district policy. This may be necessary for those districts that make this change ahead of their state.
- *Will more subgroups be defined and added?* The case studies provided in chapter 3 show subgroups for certain racial/ethnic groups, but not all. As of this publication, Washington has legislation pending (4SHB 1541) that includes a possible expansion of data collection to include more subgroups for White and Black populations. This would seem a logical next step for many agencies where these subgroups exist.
- *Will staff data also become disaggregated by racial/ethnic subgroup?* The state of Hawaii already collects disaggregated information on its staff at the same level as its students, but it does not currently use this information for analysis at the school or classroom level. Other states and districts are likely to do so as well if their demographics or policies suggest that collecting such information is warranted.
- *What are the implications if a student changes racial/ethnic subgroups over time?* With the implementation of electronic enrollment forms, student dashboards, and flexible data systems, we already see student data elements changing between school years and even within a school year. This has important implications for data use that agencies must take into consideration—for example, could a student be in one racial/ethnic subgroup in the fall enrollment count and in another during the spring assessment? In this example, agencies must reconcile such a student's subgroup in order to report high-quality data in which total counts match within and across reports.
- *Can the strategies from this document be used to disaggregate data in other areas?* Yes. This resource can be used as a road map for disaggregating other student data items (e.g., gender). While some of the examples and specifics may be relevant to racial/ethnic subgroups in particular, the main strategies can be used as best practice when considering changing any student data point.

Appendix B. References and Related Resources

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Additional Resources

American Community Survey
https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/

The American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing survey that provides vital information on a yearly basis about our nation and its people. Information from the survey generates data that help determine how more than $400 billion in federal and state funds are distributed each year.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) Data Catalog
http://www.data.gov/aapi/aapi-catalog/

Explore a broad range of data about the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community, including information about socioeconomic status, educational attainment, health, Native Hawaiians, and many other areas.

Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC)
http://ocrdata.ed.gov/

The Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) is a biennial (i.e., every other school year) survey required by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR). Since 1968, the CRDC has collected data on key education and civil rights issues in our nation's public schools for use by OCR in its enforcement and monitoring efforts regarding equal educational opportunity. The CRDC is also a tool for other Department offices and federal agencies, policymakers and researchers, educators and school officials, and the public to analyze student equity and opportunity.

The EDFacts Initiative
http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/index.html

ED*Facts* is a U. S. Department of Education initiative to put performance data at the center of policy, management, and budget decisions for all K12 educational programs. ED*Facts* centralizes performance data supplied by K12 state education agencies (SEAs) with other data assets, such as financial grant information, within the Department to enable better analysis and use in policy development, planning, and management. The purpose of ED*Facts* is to

- place the use of robust, timely performance data at the core of decision and policymaking in education;
- reduce state and district data burden and streamline data practices;
- improve state data capabilities by providing resources and technical assistance; and
- provide data for planning, policy, and management at the federal, state, and local levels.

White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education
http://sites.ed.gov/whiaiane/

The White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education leads the President's Executive Order 13592, signed December 2, 2011, *Improving American Indian and Alaska Native Educational Opportunities and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities*.

The Initiative, located within the U.S. Department of Education, seeks to support activities that will strengthen the nation by expanding education opportunities and improving education outcomes for all American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students. It is committed to furthering tribal self-determination and ensuring AI/AN students, at all levels of education, have an opportunity to learn their Native languages and histories, receive complete and competitive educations, preparing them for college, careers, and productive and satisfying lives.

White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders
https://www.whitehouse.gov/aapi

President Obama reestablished the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in October 2009. The Initiative is working to improve the quality of life for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders across the nation through increased access to and participation in federal programs. The Initiative engages with federal leaders and the community on four crosscutting ideas: data disaggregation, language access, capacity building, and workforce diversity.

White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics
http://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics was originally established by President George H.W. Bush in 1990 to address the educational disparities faced by the Hispanic community. Since then, the call to address these within the Hispanic community has been recognized by Presidents William J. Clinton and George W. Bush and more recently by President Barack Obama through the renewal of the Initiative.

Today, through public/private partnerships and in concert with the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, the Initiative advances a strategic policy and outreach agenda to tackle critical education challenges: improving availability of and access to high quality early learning programs for Hispanic children; dramatically increasing the number of Hispanic high school graduates; and, ensuring more Hispanics students enroll in and, more importantly, complete college. The Initiative's objectives are to increase educational opportunities, improve educational outcomes, and deliver a complete and competitive education for all Hispanics.

Case Studies

Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, AK
http://www.k12northstar.org

Highline Public Schools, WA
http://www.highlineschools.org/

State of Washington
http://www.k12.wa.us/
http://www.k12.wa.us/CEDARS/Training.aspx

Portland Public Schools, OR
http://www.pps.net/

State of Hawaii
http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/

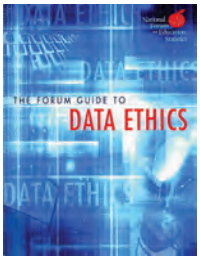
Guam
https://sites.google.com/a/gdoe.net/gdoe/

Springdale School District, AR
http://springdaleschools.org/

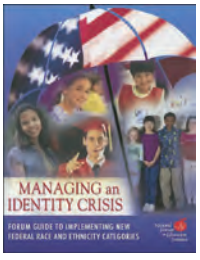
Forum Resources

Forum Guide to Education Data Privacy (2016)
http://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub_2016096.asp
The *Forum Guide to Education Data Privacy* is intended to help state and local education agencies (SEAs and LEAs) as they assist school staff in protecting the confidentiality of student data in instructional and administrative practices. SEAs and LEAs may also find the guide useful in developing privacy programs and related professional development programs. The guide presents case studies that highlight common privacy issues and solutions related to the use of student data, including protecting the confidentiality of student data when using online instructional apps, responding to requests for student contact information, sharing student data within schools, sharing data among community school partners, using student data in presentations and training materials, and using social media.

Forum Guide to Taking Action with Education Data (2013)
http://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub_2013801.asp
The *Forum Guide to Taking Action with Education Data* provides stakeholders with practical information about the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to more effectively access, interpret, and use education data to inform action. The document includes an overview of the evolving nature of data use, basic data use concepts, and a list of skills necessary for effectively using data. The guide recommends a question-driven approach to data use, in which the following questions can help guide readers who need to use data to take action: What do I want to know? What data might be relevant? How will I access relevant data? What skills and tools do I need to analyze the data? What do the data tell me? What are my conclusions? What will I do? What effects did my actions have? What are my next steps? The briefs that accompany the Introduction are written for three key education audiences: educators, school and district leaders, and state program staff.



Forum Guide to Data Ethics (2010)
http://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub_2010801.asp
While laws set the legal parameters that govern data use, ethics establish fundamental principles of "right and wrong" that are critical to the appropriate management and use of education data in the technology age. This guide reflects the experience and judgment of seasoned data managers; while there is no mandate to follow these principles, the authors hope that the contents will prove a useful reference to others in their work.

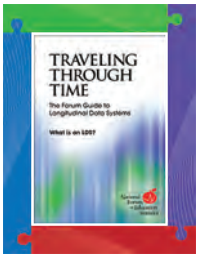


Managing an Identity Crisis: Forum Guide to Implementing New Federal Race and Ethnicity Categories (2008)
http://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub_2008802.asp
This best-practice guide is developed to assist state and local education agencies in their implementation of the new federal race and ethnicity categories—thereby reducing redundant efforts within and across states, improving data comparability, and minimizing reporting burden. It serves as a toolkit from which users may select and adopt strategies that will help them quickly begin the process of implementation in their agencies.

Forum Guide to Building a Culture of Quality Data: A School and District Resource (2005)

http://nces.ed.gov/forum/pub_2005801.asp

This guide was developed by the Forum's Data Quality Task Force to help schools and school districts improve the quality of data they collect and to provide processes for developing a "Culture of Quality Data" by focusing on data entry—getting things right at the source. The quality of data will improve when all staff understand how the data will be used and how data become information. This guide will show how quality data can be achieved in a school or district through the collaborative efforts of all staff.



Traveling Through Time: The Forum Guide to Longitudinal Data Systems, Book I: What is an LDS? (2010)

http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2010/2010805.pdf

By facilitating the collection and use of detailed, high quality student- and staff-level data linked over time, longitudinal data systems (LDSs) hold promise for enhancing both the way education agencies use data to serve students and the way they do business, from the policy level to the school office and into the classroom.