

Reporting Race and Ethnicity: Questions and Answers

Why is this change being made?

In 1993, the federal government began holding hearings to redefine racial and ethnic classifications. The new reporting structure is the result of these meetings.

What's the difference between ethnicity and race?

The federal government defines ethnicity as it relates to a person or to a large group of people who share a national, racial, linguistic or religious heritage. The federal government uses the word "race" to refer to the countries of origin. Hispanic/Latino is considered an ethnicity, not a race category.

Can I select more than one race?

Yes, you can choose as many race categories as apply.

Why is Hispanic/Latino singled out as an ethnicity?

People of Hispanic/Latino origin may be of any race. The federal government would like to give Hispanic/Latino populations the opportunity to better identify themselves.

How will this information be used?

The state Department of Education will use this information to ensure that students receive the educational services to which they are entitled, to analyze needs of students within the school community, and to obtain more funding for educational services as appropriate. It will not be reported to any federal agency in a way that identifies you or your child. No one will check for immigration status from the information you give.

This seems complicated, especially for those families who answer "Yes" in the Ethnicity section. Can you give an example?

If you consider your child Hispanic/Latino with family origins in Central America, you would answer "Yes" in the Ethnicity section, and you might check "Black," "White" and/or others under Race.

Is anyone going to ask for proof of the ethnicity and race(s) I select for my child?

No. However, if you do not answer, in the future the federal government will require school district "observers" to complete the racial and ethnic data.

nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008802.pdf

Key definitions

Ethnicity

Relating to a person or to a large group of people who share a national, racial, linguistic or religious heritage.

• Hispanic or Latino

Persons of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

Race

• American Indian or Alaska Native

Persons having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintain a tribal affiliation or community attachment.

• Asian

Persons having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.

• Black or African American

Persons having origins in any of the original peoples of the Black racial groups of Africa.

• Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

Persons having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa or other Pacific Islands.

• White

Persons having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East or North Africa.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics