

## ***Frequently Asked Questions***

### **Q: What if my current information does not need to be changed?**

A: The ethnicity and race codes have changed significantly; and therefore, everyone needs to review the form and re-identify the ethnicity and a race of each student and employee. The revised standards afford respondents the opportunity to select one or more races when reporting information about their ethnicity.

### **Q: What happens if I do not choose to identify a race or ethnicity for the student?**

A: In this case, the federal government requires that the identification of race and ethnicity be determined through “observer identification.” If the parent/guardian and secondary student refuse, school personnel will identify the race and ethnicity of the student.

### **Q: What are the new racial and ethnic classifications?**

A: The new federal data collection strategies require that race and Hispanic origin be considered as two separate and distinct concepts. Therefore, Hispanic-origin data are to be collected separately from that of race. Thus each respondent is required to answer two questions to determine a respondent’s race and ethnicity.

The first question asks if the student/employee is of Hispanic or Latino descent. Hispanic/Latino means a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture, regardless of race.

The second question asks respondents to identify their race(s) by selecting **one or more** races from the five racial groups:

American Indian or Alaska native  
Asian  
Black or African American  
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander  
White

Regardless of the designation in the first question, all respondents should have a race or races selected in answer to the second question.

### **Q: Why do you need this information?**

A: The demographics of our society have changed significantly in the last few decades. These changes will allow our students and staff to more accurately describe who they are. The Clark County School District is required by the Federal government to use the new categories. All states and school districts are required to do the same.

School districts routinely report aggregate information to the federal government for funding and evaluation purposes, as well as civil rights compliance. Racial and ethnic data are also used to evaluate our placement and program needs, as we strive to provide the best services for all students.

**Q: Is the federal government checking my immigration status?**

A: No. The race and ethnic information will be maintained in your employment or student records. 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 here.

**Q: Will the school release race or ethnicity information to other parties?**

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

**Q: I am Hispanic. Why do I have to answer more questions?**

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

**Q: How do I know I won't be discriminated against after I've told you I belong to a minority group?**

A: This is exactly why we need to maintain better racial and ethnic data about our students and staff. We are required to maintain this information about each individual in his or her record in case a civil right investigation surfaces. Again, state and local guidelines are in place to ensure that racial and ethnic data will not be reported elsewhere in a way that you may be identified. The state and districts follow FERPA rules and regulations to safeguard the privacy of student records (see question above). For employment records, none of the equal employment opportunity rules has changed. Your race and ethnicity will not be used to determine your employment status or condition.

**Q: You can't make me do it, can you?**

A: No, we can't; but providing the information would be beneficial for you or your child. We are required to provide an answer on your behalf if you choose not to provide such information. The federal government believes that in getting aggregate numbers from states and districts, it would be preferable to have complete data this way, rather than having missing data.

Frequently asked questions (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008802.pdf>)