



Reporting Race/Ethnicity in Iowa

Fact Sheet

The race and ethnicity of Iowa students will be reported in a new way beginning with the 2009-2010 school year.

The purpose is to better reflect the growing diversity of Iowa's population and the nation as a whole. Individuals of multi-racial backgrounds now have more options when identifying themselves on forms and other documents.

Iowa is making this change in accordance to federal government requirements. The U.S. Department of Education (USED) is requiring states to change how they collect and report the race and ethnicity of students and staff. The USED's mandate is aligned with requirements for all federal agencies and with the U.S. Census Bureau's 2000 collection.

The change will help Iowa schools to better serve and support their students.

What Has Changed

BEFORE the 2009-2010 school year, students—or their parents/guardians— chose one of five categories to identify their race/ethnicity. The categories were American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, or White.

NOW, there are seven categories: Hispanic/Latino, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, or Two or More. This fall, Iowa schools asked students to update their information based on the new categories. Students or their parents/guardians were asked the following two-part question:

Is this student Hispanic/Latino? (Choose only one)

- No, not Hispanic/Latino
- Yes, Hispanic/Latino (A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.)

What is the student's race? (Choose one or more)

- American Indian or Alaska Native (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America, including Central America, and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.)
- Asian (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.)
- Black or African American (A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.)
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.)
- White (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.)

What This Means in Iowa

Based on the new race and ethnicity categories recorded this fall, there is an increase (1.09 percent) in Hispanic students in 2009. The percentage of White students decreased 2.25 percent; these students probably moved into the two or more or Hispanic categories. All other categories (except new categories) decreased.

The following chart shows the composition of Iowa students in kindergarten through 12th grade by race and ethnicity based on the previous categories and based on the new categories.

Year	African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	White	Pacific Islander*	Two or More*
Fall 2008	5.78%	0.57%	2.18%	6.88%	84.58%		
*Fall 2009	5.11%	0.51%	1.96%	7.97%	82.33%	0.11%	2.00%

*New reporting category in 2009

Source: Fall BEDS Enrollment, Project EASIER, K-12 students

What This Means for Student Achievement Information

While Iowa does not anticipate large shifts in student outcome results—such as graduation rates and state test results—because of the new race and ethnicity reporting, it does expect some fluctuation.

For example, disparity in academic performance between groups of students—such as White students and some minority groups—may appear to become wider or narrower. These changes may not reflect actual gains or losses in student achievement, but may occur because of the change in race and ethnicity reporting.

In addition, comparisons between the information collected under the previous categories and under the new categories will not be “apples to apples.” Therefore, it will take a few years to determine long-term trends in student information under the new categories.

As in the past, the Iowa Department of Education will report student outcomes in public reports. The new categories will be represented in such state reports as:

- The State Report Card
- The Condition of Education Report
- Adequate Yearly Progress reports
- Annual Progress Report (APR)

For More Information

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