

Ron Thiele, Superintendent

Dear Issaquah School District Parents and Guardians,

Subject: Your action needed! Message from the Superintendent

Each year, school districts in Washington are legally required to report student ethnicity and race data to the state's Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Because federal and state lawmakers recently changed the reporting categories for this data, we need to completely update our records system. To help us best comply with the law, I am asking all families to please take a moment to select the appropriate ethnicity and race information for their student(s).

The revised reporting categories are meant to better reflect students' diversity by providing more options. For example, if your family is Asian, you will now be able to list your child as Chinese, Japanese, or belonging to one or more of the other Asian groups. If your family is Native American, you will be able to list your child's tribal affiliation. If one parent identifies with one race and the other parent with another, you will be able to check both races for your child.

There are two mandatory questions under the new reporting system. First, all students must be identified as either Hispanic/Latino or not Hispanic/Latino. Second, all students must be identified by at least one racial category. Some families-especially those that select Hispanic/Latino origin-may not initially recognize an appropriate race category. In such a situation, please be aware that lawmakers intended the "White" racial category to encompass students who identify themselves as being of Hispanic, Latino, or European origin. I apologize if this seems unintuitive, however as a district, we have no leeway to alter any of the categories.

The District has begun the process by using existing student demographic records to automatically select a default for your student under the new reporting system. The default is the broadest corresponding ethnic and racial category. For example, a student currently on record as "Hispanic" has been entered with the default "Other Hispanic/Latino" and "White" in the new system; a student currently on record as "Pacific Islander" has been entered with the default "Not Hispanic/Latino" and "Other Pacific Islander;" etc. If your family does not take the opportunity to choose more specific ethnicity and race categories, the District-selected default will be reported to the state beginning in September.

The state uses ethnicity and racial reports to track changes in enrollment demographics and various outcomes (such as graduation rates) to ensure that all students receive the educational programs and services to which they are entitled. The state never uses demographic information at the individual-student level.

For more information about the ethnicity and race reporting categories or how the state uses the data, visit OSPI's Web site (<http://www.k12.wa.us/CEDARS/CEDARSDataFormQA.aspx>) or contact Andrea Meld at (360) 725-6438.

Board of Directors

Harlan Gallinger • Marnie Maraldo • Anne Moore • Sydne Mullings • Suzanne Weaver

For logistical help updating your student's ethnicity and race information in the Issaquah School District, contact the registrar at your school.

Thank you for your help as we assist the federal and state government in this important effort to best serve all of our students.

Sincerely,

Ron Thiele, Superintendent
Issaquah School District