

IMPACT ON RACE AND ETHNICITY IDENTIFICATION CHANGES ON IOWA'S SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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In 1997, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) revised the standard of classifying race and ethnicity for federal data. These new standards separated race and ethnicity and also allow respondents to choose more than one race. States must report using the new guidelines by the 2010-2011 school year. Iowa implemented the changes for the 2009-2010 school year, re-identifying all students in the fall of 2009.

The Department of Education changed race and ethnicity code standards to reflect population changes over the years. The new standards are also consistent with census data and other national data sets, align with other agencies already using the new standards (such as health agencies), and are required for federal education eligibility and accountability reporting (such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)).

Formerly, Iowa's race and ethnicity codes consisted of:

- White, not of Hispanic origin (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.)
- Black or African American, not of Hispanic origin (A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.)
- Asian or Pacific Islander (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, or the Indian subcontinent. This includes for example, China, India, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands, and Samoa.)
- American Indian or Alaskan Native (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North American and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.)

Students could not be identified as more than one race or ethnicity under this classifying standard.

The new standards implemented in the fall of 2009 are composed of a two-part question, as follows:

- Ethnicity (must indicate yes or no):
 - Hispanic or Latino (A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.)
 - Not Hispanic or Latino

- Race (must indicate at least one race, can indicate more than one race):
 - 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.)

Students must be identified as either Hispanic or not Hispanic for the ethnicity question. In addition, students must also be identified as at least one race in the second race question. The two-part question should be answered through self-identification by a parent/guardian. If a student and/or parent/guardian refuse to identify the race and ethnicity of the student, observer identification is used as a last resort. This leads to the highest accuracy in identification possible. Collecting information about the ethnic and race detail allows for more granular examination of group differences.

Data are collected using the two-part question, but reported using seven Federal reporting categories:

- Hispanic or Latino
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or more races

All students identified as Hispanic in question one regarding ethnicity of the two-part question are reported as Hispanic. Students identified as not Hispanic in question one regarding ethnicity of the two-part question are the race chosen in question two. If a student is identified as not Hispanic and chose more than one race in question two, the student is placed in a reporting category called 'Two or more races' (this category is not an option on the two-part question). If a student is identified as Hispanic and chose more than one race in question two, the student is still placed in the Hispanic reporting category, as all students identifying as Hispanic in question one are reported as Hispanic, regardless of race in question two.

With the change in how Iowa students are identified by race and ethnicity, it can be expected that the composition of racial and ethnic groups in Iowa would change. The last year of the old race and ethnicity codes (2008-2009 school year) and first year of the new codes (2009-2010 school year) are compared.

Table 1—Composition of Iowa Students in Grades K-12 by Race and Ethnicity

	African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	White	Pacific Islander*	Two or More*
Fall 2009	5.78%	0.57%	2.18%	6.88%	84.58%		
Fall 2009	5.11%	0.51%	1.96%	7.97%	83.33%	0.11%	2.00%

Source: Fall BEDS Enrollment, Project EASIER, K-12 students.
 *New reporting category in 2009.

There is a substantial increase (1.09 percent) in Hispanic students in 2009, as all students who identified as Hispanic were placed into this reporting category regardless of race. 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.

Table 2—Percent of Low SES/Not Low SES Students by Race and Ethnicity**

		African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	White	Pacific Islander*	Two or More*	Total†
Low SES	Fall 2008	12.48%	1.05%	2.07%	14.84%	69.56%			100.00%
	Fall 2009	10.63%	0.86%	1.85%	16.38%	66.95%	0.18%	3.14%	99.99%
Not Low SES	Fall 2008	2.25%	0.32%	2.24%	2.69%	92.50%			100.00%
	Fall 2009	1.81%	0.31%	2.03%	2.94%	91.53%	0.07%	1.31%	100.00%

Source: Fall BEDS Enrollment, Project EASIER, K-12 students.
 *New reporting category in 2009.
 **Socioeconomic status is measured by free or reduced-priced lunch receipt.
 †May not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Table 2 reflects what is happening in Table 1. In this table, White students are moving to the Hispanic or Two or more categories regardless of free or reduced lunch receipt. In fact, all race and ethnicity categories increase or decrease similarly to Table 1 regardless of SES.

Table 3—Percent of Students in Race and Ethnicity Categories by SES**

		All Students	African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	White	Pacific Islander*	Two or More*
Fall 2008	Low SES	34.52%	74.54%	63.32%	32.79%	74.38%	28.39%		
	Not Low SES	65.48%	25.46%	36.68%	67.21%	25.62%	71.61%		
Fall 2009	Low SES	37.42%	77.81%	62.82%	35.36%	76.92%	30.43%	60.00%	58.81%
	Not Low SES	62.58%	22.19%	37.18%	64.64%	23.08%	69.57%	40.00%	41.19%

Source: Fall BEDS Enrollment, Project EASIER, K-12 students.
 *New reporting category in 2009.
 **Socioeconomic status is measured by free or reduced-priced lunch receipt.

Under the new race and ethnicity codes, African Americans and Hispanics continue to have the highest proportion of low socioeconomic status (SES) students (eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch). The American Indian, Pacific Islander, and two or more categories have about 60 percent of students with low SES. White and Asian have the lowest percentage of low SES students across both years.

Table 4—Percent of Students Attending Urban/Non-urban School Districts (Enrollment of 7,500+) by Race and Ethnicity

		African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	White	Pacific Islander*	Two or More*	Total†
Urban	Fall 2008	14.17%	0.96%	3.73%	10.59%	70.55%			100.00%
	Fall 2009	12.92%	0.79%	3.48%	12.27%	67.26%	0.14%	3.13%	99.99%
Non-Urban	Fall 2008	2.51%	0.42%	1.57%	5.44%	90.05%			99.99%
	Fall 2009	1.99%	0.41%	1.35%	6.25%	88.35%	0.10%	1.54%	99.99%

Source: Fall BEDS Enrollment, Project EASIER, K-12 students.
 *New reporting category in 2009.
 †May not equal 100 percent due to rounding

Just as with SES, all race and ethnicity categories increase or decrease similarly to all students (Table 1) regardless of urban/non-urban enrollment.

Table 5—Percent of Students in Race and Ethnicity Categories by Urban/Non-urban District Attendance

		All Students	African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	White	Pacific Islander*	Two or More*
Fall 2008	Urban	28.04%	68.70%	46.99%	48.02%	43.14%	23.38%		
	Non-Urban	71.96%	31.30%	53.01%	51.98%	56.86%	76.62%		
Fall 2009	Urban	28.54%	72.14%	43.71%	50.68%	43.94%	23.32%	35.32%	44.82%
	Non-Urban	71.46%	27.86%	56.29%	49.32%	56.06%	76.68%	64.11%	55.18%

Source: Fall BEDS Enrollment, Project EASIER, K-12 students.
 *New reporting category in 2009.

Nine out of ten students in non-urban districts continue to be White. Urban districts in Iowa have more racial and ethnic diversity than non-urban districts. In 2009 with the new reporting standards, African Americans and Asians were more likely to live in urban districts, while American Indians were more likely to live in non-urban districts.

Table 6—Composition of Grades by Race and Ethnicity

		African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	White	Pacific Islander*	Two or More*	Total†
Kindergarten	Fall 2008	6.19%	0.50%	2.40%	8.31%	82.60%			100.00%
	Fall 2009	5.69%	0.47%	2.12%	9.89%	79.09%	0.14%	2.60%	100.00%
4th Grade	Fall 2008	6.23%	0.59%	2.21%	7.55%	83.42%			100.00%
	Fall 2009	5.36%	0.48%	2.16%	9.05%	80.74%	0.14%	2.07%	100.00%
8th Grade	Fall 2008	5.57%	0.60%	2.05%	6.51%	85.28%			100.01%
	Fall 2009	4.70%	0.56%	1.84%	7.59%	83.19%	0.10%	2.03%	100.01%
12th Grade	Fall 2008	4.50%	0.55%	1.95%	4.81%	88.19%			100.00%
	Fall 2009	4.41%	0.55%	1.84%	5.69%	86.15%	0.10%	1.26%	100.00%

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

*New reporting category in 2009.

†May not equal 100 percent due to rounding

Iowa’s school districts continue to see an increase in racial and ethnic diversity. As students get younger, the percentage of White students that compose each grade level gets smaller while minority groups grow. American Indians are the only minority racial group that is not showing any growth in Iowa. Hispanics are growing the fastest, followed by Two or more and African Americans.

Of particular interest is how this new race and ethnicity coding standard will affect the achievement of students in each race and ethnicity category. To explore this issue, the 2008-2009 tests of full academic year¹ students in public school districts (which have the 2008-2009, or old, race codes assigned to them) are matched using unique student identifiers to the student’s re-identified race and ethnicity code in the fall of 2009. Students no longer enrolled in Iowa schools in the fall of 2009 were not included in the analysis. Grades three through eight (as of 2008-2009), were only included in the analysis as the brightest eleventh grade students may graduate early and not be present in the fall of 2009, biasing the sample.

¹Students enrolled in a district from a testing period one year to a testing period the next year.

Districts are only held accountable for full academic year students under No Child Left Behind legislation.

Table 7—Percent of Students Proficient² in Reading

Grade in 2008-2009	African American		American Indian		Asian		Hispanic		White		Pacific Islander	Two or More
	Old Code	New Code	Old Code	New Code	Old Code	New Code	Old Code	New Code	Old Code	New Code	New Code	New Code
3	54.01%	51.41%	63.95%	63.20%	78.31%	70.00%	59.20%	59.69%	80.06%	80.25%	70.00%	72.95%
4	60.03%	57.19%	67.22%	71.63%	83.88%	60.00%	66.49%	67.23%	83.93%	84.26%	60.00%	74.50%
5	56.06%	52.20%	63.28%	63.91%	80.82%	67.86%	62.48%	63.84%	83.44%	83.70%	67.86%	73.54%
6	44.40%	42.13%	55.00%	57.86%	74.39%	58.62%	47.78%	49.03%	73.21%	73.39%	58.62%	61.26%
7	48.16%	46.96%	55.74%	52.83%	78.28%	50.00%	51.72%	53.06%	75.94%	76.24%	50.00%	66.13%
8	49.61%	46.95%	64.57%	68.18%	78.19%	63.64%	51.75%	53.18%	77.36%	77.55%	63.64%	69.60%

Source: AYP Files, Project EASIER.

Table 8—Percent of Students Proficient² in Mathematics

Grade in 2008-2009	African American		American Indian		Asian		Hispanic		White		Pacific Islander	Two or More
	Old Code	New Code	Old Code	New Code	Old Code	New Code	Old Code	New Code	Old Code	New Code	New Code	New Code
3	50.19%	47.36%	57.93%	59.68%	81.34%	82.19%	60.20%	60.24%	80.38%	80.67%	65.00%	71.41%
4	58.30%	54.97%	60.00%	65.71%	82.08%	83.01%	65.28%	66.08%	84.23%	84.54%	62.07%	73.38%
5	53.28%	51.05%	63.48%	65.41%	84.65%	83.63%	62.85%	63.65%	83.06%	83.29%	71.43%	73.27%
6	44.91%	41.91%	59.50%	55.35%	81.83%	82.15%	56.93%	57.79%	78.27%	78.59%	68.97%	65.15%
7	54.26%	52.13%	62.30%	58.49%	86.90%	88.70%	62.89%	64.25%	82.05%	82.44%	62.50%	70.47%
8	47.44%	46.11%	63.58%	65.34%	82.58%	83.79%	58.30%	59.56%	80.01%	80.27%	60.61%	66.54%

Source: AYP Files; Project EASIER

With the new classifications, the percent of students proficient increased for Whites and Hispanics in grades three through eight in both reading and math. Percent proficient decreased for all grades in reading and math among African American students. The Asian group experienced mostly increases in proficiencies with the new standards, while American Indians saw mixed results.

It appears the most disadvantaged students remain in the African American race and ethnicity group, the African American group saw a decrease in population as its student moved to the Two or more category. The new Two or more race and ethnicity category is composed of approximately 48 percent of student who were reported as African American the previous year (2008-2009). Yet, the Two or more category has a much higher percent proficient at all grade levels and subjects than African Americans. With the new race and ethnicity reporting standards, Iowa school districts will need to work hard to close the achievement gaps for African Americans students.

²National Percentile Rank of 41 or higher on Iowa Test of Basic Skills, used for accountability purposes.

After splitting off from the Asian category, Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders look to be more disadvantaged than their White and Asian counterparts. There is a definite achievement gap between Pacific Islanders and Asians/Whites. The percent of Hispanic students proficient increased as more students are being included in the category. The inclusion of these students in the Hispanic category will appear to close the Hispanic-White achievement gap.

The 2009-2010 school year brings a change in numbers related to race and ethnicity. However, the changes in numbers are a reflection of a change in reporting, not a drastic change in student population. These new race and ethnicity code standards allow the Iowa Department of Education to describe the diverse population of our state more accurately.

REFERENCES

National Forum of Education Statistic, Race/Ethnicity Data Implementation Task Force. (2008). *Managing an Identity Crisis: Forum Guide to Implementing New Federal Race and Ethnicity Categories* (NFES 2008-802). National Center of Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, D.C.