

# APPENDIX C

## *Parent/Guardian Packet*

Appendix C consists of documents that districts may use as templates for communicating the changes to parents, guardians and students.

## Sample Letter to Parent/Guardian

(school info here)

Spring, 2010

Dear Parent or Guardian

Beginning in Spring 2010 there are some changes that we want to let you know about.

Each year, every school district in Oregon is required to report the race and ethnicity of each of its students to the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). ODE reports school level data---not individual student data--to the federal government. These reports:

- track changes in student enrollments
- help ensure that every child receives the educational programs and services to which they are entitled

The federal government has new requirements on how school districts collect, store, and report race and ethnicity data on students and staff. There are no changes to individual privacy and protected rights, only the collection categories and reporting categories are changing. Beginning in the Spring of 2010 we are asking all students and staff to self-identify themselves based on the new guidelines. The intent of data collection is to enable our district is to best meet the needs of all students and support universal high achievement.

The following is a basic overview of the new format. We understand there may be concerns for various reasons and are committed to answering all of your questions. Please refer to the FAQ for more information and to *(the administration at your building or district specified person)* if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Please note that this is **not** a data collection form and is offered **for informational purposes only**.

**Beginning in Spring 2010 there are now TWO questions that every person will be asked, and both questions must be answered in order for a staff or student record to be considered complete by the Oregon Department of Education.**

**Question # 1:**

Are you Latino or Hispanic? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

*All persons descended from a Spanish-speaking country of origin in North, Central or South America, regardless of race or original language, should answer yes. All persons answering YES to this first question will be reported as a Latino student or staff member, regardless of their answer to the race question below, which **all** are required to answer.*

**Question #2:**

Please choose one **or** more race:

- American Indian or Alaska Native  
*A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North, Central or South America, including Mexico, 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*
  
- Black or African American  
*A person having origins in any of the original peoples 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*

In order for these new guidelines to best reflect the identities of our communities it is important to understand the way the new categories work. Those answering “yes” to the Latino question will be reported in the Latino category regardless of their answer to the race question. Please be thoughtful about your identity and/or the identity of your child when choosing the appropriate category. *With the exception of Latinos, all those who choose more than one race will be reported as “multi-racial” in our data systems, even though it is not a self-reported category option.*

If we do not receive self-identification from a parent, guardian or student, federal law requires that the district designate a staff person to choose one or more categories based on prior knowledge and observation; this practice is known as Observer Identification. We firmly believe **self-identification** is preferable, but are required to implement **Observer Identification** as a last resort to complete a record.

**This is an example of an actual district letter to parents.**

**Eugene School District 4J**  
 200 North Monroe Street  
 Eugene, OR 97402-4295  
 541-790-7700  
*www.4j.lane.edu*

**SCHOOL DISTRICT UPDATING ALL STUDENT RECORDS**

March 31, 2010

**Dear Parent or Guardian,**

Each year, every school district in Oregon is required to report the race and ethnicity of each of its students to the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). The state reports school-level data — but not individual student information — to the federal government.

**What is changing?**

Starting this spring, there are new federal requirements about how race and ethnicity data is recorded. Every school district in the United States is required to use the new categories to collect and report the race and ethnicity of students and staff. The new categories are explained on the reverse side of this letter.

**What do I need to do?**

Your student's records need to be updated using the new race and ethnicity information form. All families are being asked to update each of their students' records by April 30, 2010.

**Why is this important?**

Our schools receive some federal funding based on this information. Race and ethnicity data also is used by the district in developing programs to serve our diverse student population, for civil rights compliance, and more.

**What is staying the same?**

There are no changes to the laws protecting your privacy and your other rights. This information will not be reported to any federal agency in a way that identifies you or your child. It will not be used to check immigration status. It will not be used to discriminate against students or staff under any circumstances.

**Please return the enclosed form to  
 the main office of your school by April 30.**

This data is required by federal law.  
 If you miss the April 30 deadline, please  
 return the form as soon as possible.

**Thank you!**

한글 판 정보가 교무실에 비치되어 있습니다. • Esta información está disponible en español en la oficina de su escuela.

**This is an example of an actual district letter to parents.****How to complete the Race & Ethnicity Information Form**

There are new federal requirements for collecting and reporting race and ethnicity data. There are now TWO questions that must be answered for every student and staff member.

In order for these new guidelines to best reflect the identities of our communities, it is important to understand the way the new categories work. Please be thoughtful about the most accurate way to report your identity and/or the identity of your child when choosing the appropriate categories.

**What are the new categories?**

**\*\* Note: Please respond on the enclosed Race & Ethnicity Information Form. Do not respond on this page. \*\***

**Question #1: ETHNICITY** Are you Latino or Hispanic? **YES or NO**

*All persons answering YES to this first question will be recorded as Latino/Hispanic, regardless of their answer to Question #2. All persons of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin — descended from Central or South American, Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Dominican, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race — should answer YES. All persons are required to answer Question #2 even if they answered YES to Question #1.*

**Question #2: RACE** Select at least one of the following racial categories on your student's form. All persons who choose more than one category will be reported as multiracial.

- **American Indian or Alaska Native**

- **U.S.:** *A person having origins in any of the indigenous peoples of the continental United States or Alaska.*

- **Latin America and Canada:** *A person having origins in any of the indigenous peoples of Canada, Mexico, Central America, South America, or the Caribbean.*

- **Asian:** *A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent.*

- **Black or African American:** *A person having origins in any of the original peoples 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 are the major changes?**

**Race and Ethnicity Information Required:** All students and staff must answer both Question #1 and Question #2. A "declined to report" response is no longer allowed by federal reporting requirements.

**Latino/Hispanic Students:** One of the major changes is the recognition that members of Hispanic/Latino populations can be of different races. Individuals may identify as Hispanic and White, or Latino and Central American Indian, or Hispanic and Black and Pacific Islander, or any other combination. The federal government considers "Hispanic/Latino" to be an ethnicity, not a race; this is why Hispanic/Latino is not listed as a race identification category. If you answer YES to Question #1, you will be counted as Hispanic/Latino.

**Multiracial Students:** You may have noticed that there is no "multiracial" category you can select. The new categories allow individuals to self-identify with more than one racial or ethnic category. Everyone who chooses more than one race in Question #2 will be reported as multiracial in our data systems.

**Where can I learn more?**

If you have questions, please visit [www.4j.lane.edu/communications/recordsupdate](http://www.4j.lane.edu/communications/recordsupdate) or call your school office.

**This is an example of a district’s actual data collection / enrollment / registration form.**

## Race & Ethnicity Information Form

Beginning in 2010, new federal regulations require that all U.S. schools gather statistical data on students’ race and ethnicity using new categories. In order for the data to best reflect the identities of our communities, it is important that parents and guardians be thoughtful about their families’ ethnic and racial identity when choosing the appropriate categories for their children. Both questions below **must** be answered to complete all student records.

*Please complete one form for each of your students, answering both Question #1 and #2, and return the form(s) to the school office. Thank you.*

### Student Information

**School:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Parent Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Question #1 (required): ETHNICITY — Are you Hispanic or Latino?**     Yes     No

*All persons of Latino, Hispanic or Spanish origin (descended from a Central or South American, Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Dominican, or other Spanish-speaking country of origin, regardless of race or original language) should answer “Yes.” All persons answering “Yes” to this first question will be recorded as Hispanic/Latino. Continue to Question #2.*

**Question #2 (required): RACE — Please mark all that apply.**

*You must mark at least one category. Those who choose more than one category will be reported as multiracial.*

➤ **American Indian or Alaska Native:**

**U.S.** A person having origins in any of the indigenous peoples of the continental U.S. or Alaska. **Tribal affiliation, if known:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Latin America and Canada** A person having origins in any of the indigenous peoples of Canada, Mexico, Central America, South America, or the Caribbean.

**Asian** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent.

**Black or African American** A person having origins in any of the original peoples 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.

\_\_\_\_\_

*Signature of Parent or Guardian* *Date*

# Frequently Asked Questions

## *Families and Students*

### **1. Why do you need this information?**

The demographics of our society have changed significantly in the last few decades. We (school district or state) are required by the Federal government to use the new categories. All states and school districts are required to do the same.

There are good reasons in addition to meeting federal requirements, though. We routinely report aggregate information to the federal government for funding and evaluation purposes, as well as civil rights compliance. We also use racial and ethnic data to evaluate our placement and program needs, providing the best services for all students. This is a trend that education and human service agencies will follow.

### **2. Is everyone being asked to identify?**

The U.S. Department of Education encourages schools and agencies to allow all students and staff the opportunity to re-identify their race and ethnicity under the new standards. Although this is not a requirement, it is the hope of the district to re-align all our staff and students under the new standards to ensure our data integrity.

### **3. Will the information we provide be used to check our immigration status?**

No. This information will be maintained in your employment or student records and is protected by Federal law. 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.

### **4. Will the school release my student's race and ethnicity to other parties?**

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.

### **5. Is anyone being required to choose their race or ethnicity?**

No one is required to answer these questions, but providing the information yourself means the district will not be forced to choose for you. Under the Federal Guidelines, we are required to provide an answer on your behalf if you choose not to provide such information about your student(s).

The federal government requires school districts to Observer Identify all those who choose not to self-identify. We firmly believe that self-identification is the most beneficial option and are prepared to provide as much information and support to families and individuals to encourage self-identification.

### **6. I am Latino/Hispanic. Why do I have to answer more questions?**

One of the major changes is the recognition that members of Latino/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. For reporting purposes all individuals answering yes to the Latino question will be reported as Latino regardless of the racial category or categories they choose.

**7. What is Observer Identification?**

If a family, student or guardian has questions, concerns or any other issue with the new guidelines after receiving all the print information there will be a trained administrator in each building to assist with the self-identification process.

If self-identification is still not willingly obtained, the administrator will use whatever means they have available to them to make a designation and complete the record. This is referred to as Observer Identification and is seen as a very last-resort option in order for districts to comply with federal regulations to submit a complete record. Federal law requires Observer Identification in the absence of self-identification.

**8. How do I know I or my student won't be discriminated against?**

Under no circumstances could this happen. The entire intent of the data collection is to ensure the most equitable distribution of resources and support excellence for all students. State and local laws are in place to ensure that racial and ethnic data will not be reported elsewhere in a way that any individual may be identified.

The state and districts follow FERPA (Federal Education Records and Privacy Act ) rules and regulations to safeguard the privacy of student records. 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. All privacy laws and rules are still in effect for all students and staff.

**9. I see that Multi-racial is NOT a self-identification option, yet it is a reported category in all disaggregated student data, what does this mean?**

Individuals do not have the option of self-identifying simply as multi-racial, but they are considered multiracial if they choose more than one race. Districts report ALL students and staff who choose more than one race as multiracial ONLY, and all data disaggregated by race and ethnicity will report them in a multi-racial category.

**10. If we are a multi-racial family or individual but have a primary cultural identity associated with one category, how should we respond?**

The choice on how to self-identify is an individual choice. Indicating a primary cultural/racial identity may help us as a district maintain consistent data, make better educational alignments and obtain appropriate funding levels for specific programs.

*If you have further questions, please contact the office at your building; they will direct you to the appropriate administrator who will assist you.*