


Office of the Superintendent of Schools  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rockville, Maryland

May 15, 2008

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jerry D. Weast, Superintendent of Schools 

Subject: Update #2 on New Federal Race Code Guidelines

Attached is a copy of "Update #2" on the new federal guidelines for reporting ethnicity and race. This document outlines the new race and ethnicity categories as well as how those categories are defined and is the second in a series of informational flyers that is being distributed to parents and staff. Translated versions of this update have been provided to all schools.

I have also attached a copy of Mr. Larry Bowers' memorandum to principals and directors that discusses the impact of these changes on Adequate Yearly Progress calculations. Staff consults regularly with the Maryland State Department of Education to clarify these issues and the information in this memorandum is the most recent clarification that we have received.

I will continue to keep you informed on this matter.

JDW:mh

Attachments

Copy to:  
Executive Staff  
Ms. Cullison  
Ms. Cuttita  
Dr. Newman  
Dr. de Winter

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
New Federal Guidelines for Reporting Ethnicity  
and Race Data for MCPS Staff and Students

**Update #2  
(May 2008)**



This is the second in a series of updates explaining changes mandated by the federal government in the way that public school systems collect data on ethnicity and race for students and staff.

***Background***

The federal government announced in 1993 that it was undertaking a complete review of the categories used to collect data on race and ethnicity of the nation's population. Many people felt that the categories, which had been in use for more than 20 years, did not adequately reflect the increasing diversity of the nation's population. The government uses racial and ethnic data for many purposes, such as ensuring equal access in housing, education, and employment.

A federal committee that included representatives from more than 30 government agencies was established to help with the review and to ensure that data collection was consistent throughout the government. In 1997, the government published the committee's recommendations for how the categories and process should be revised and received feedback from thousands of individuals on the proposed changes.

In 2007, the U. S. Department of Education issued its final guidelines requiring state education departments to implement the new racial and ethnic categories for public school students and staff.

***What changes have been made?***

There are four major changes in the way that ethnicity and race data will be collected—

- There is now a two-part question on ethnicity and race. This allows individuals to report their heritage more accurately.
- The term "Hispanic" has been changed to "Hispanic or Latino"
- The racial category "Asian or Pacific Islander" has been separated into two new categories—"Asian" and "Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander"
- Individuals will be able to select one or more races from the five racial groups

***What are the ethnicity and race categories?***

The first part of the two-part question asks whether or not the respondent is Hispanic/Latino. The second part asks the respondent to select one or more races from the following five racial groups:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White

***How are the new ethnicity and race categories defined?***

**Ethnicity**

- Hispanic or Latino. A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

**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 a 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 are the next steps?***

Beginning in the fall of 2008, families of all students will be asked to complete a brief form to update the reporting of their children's race and ethnicity. Information about collecting staff data will be provided at a later date.

***Where can I find more information?***

Update #1 and #2 are available on the MCPS Web site at [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/ethnicityrace](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/ethnicityrace) along with additional information about the new reporting requirements.



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Office of the Chief Operating Officer  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rockville, Maryland

May 15, 2008

MEMORANDUM

To: All Principals and Directors

From: Larry A. Bowers, Chief Operating Officer 

Subject: Distribution of Update #2 on New Federal Race Code Guidelines

Attached are copies of "Update #2" on the new federal guidelines for reporting ethnicity and race. Translated versions of the update also are included. This document outlines the new race and ethnicity categories as well as how those categories are defined. Please send the update to families via backpack distribution and provide a copy to all staff at your school.

During the quad-cluster meetings at the April 16, 2008, Administrative and Supervisory Meeting, there were inquiries about the impact of these changes on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculations. Since that time, central office staff has sought clarification on those questions from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

The federal government has not yet given guidelines on how the new race codes will be used to calculate AYP; however, AYP data based on the new race codes will not be reported to the federal government until the 2010–2011 school year. MSDE is requiring local school systems to report data using both the existing race codes and the new race codes for the 2009–2010 school year. MCPS must collect data from students during the 2008–2009 school year in order to meet that timeline.

MSDE has advised us that the availability of data in both formats during the 2009–2010 school year will enable school systems to analyze AYP results using the "new" racial category subgroups in advance of the official reporting to the federal government. This also will allow schools to benefit from the safe harbor calculation, which requires two consecutive years of data for the 2010-2011 school year, the first year the new race codes are officially used.

Thank you for your assistance with implementing this new federal requirement. I will continue to keep you informed as I obtain additional details. If you have any questions about the *New Federal Race Code Guidelines*, please contact Ms. Stephanie Williams, acting director, Department of Reporting and Regulatory Accountability, at 301-517-5062. For additional copies of "Update #2," please contact Ms. Molly Hong, communications assistant, Department of Communications, at 301-279-3399.

LAB:mh  
Attachments  
Copy to:  
Executive Staff  
Ms. Hong  
Local PTA Presidents