

# Eanes ISD

## Selecting a new Race and Ethnicity using new Federal codes

### I. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### About New Ethnicity and Race Data Collection

##### Overview:

Starting in the 2009-2010 school year all Texas schools are required by law to use new categories for collecting and reporting student and staff ethnicity and race information. This requirement has been issued by the United States Department of Education (USDE) and is designed to provide a more accurate picture of the nation's ethnic and racial diversity by using the same categories for identifying people's ethnicity and race that were used in the 2000 Census. This information is used for funding and evaluation purposes, as well as civil rights compliance. Valid and reliable data are also important to helping school districts track changes in student enrollment and to ensure that all students receive the quality services and educational programs they need.

##### 1. Haven't we provided this information before? Why are you asking for it again?

For the 2009-2010 school year only, Districts are required to submit student and staff ethnicity and race using both the prior federal codes and the new federal codes.

At the beginning of the school year parents were given an opportunity to choose a race/ethnicity for their child(ren) through the registration and enrollment process, using the prior Federal race and ethnicity codes.

This year the federal government is implementing the new race and ethnicity codes as well. During October each staff member and parent will be given the opportunity to select a race and ethnicity using the new Federal codes.

Collecting this data using the new Federal race and ethnicity guidelines will allow everyone the opportunity to identify themselves more accurately by using a specific two-part question format. This will allow you to select an ethnic group **AND one or more** racial groups. In the past, enrollment forms only allowed you to select one group.

##### 2. When will I need to provide Eanes ISD with this information?

As a result of the new federal requirement, ethnicity and race information will need to be collected immediately.

*Staff:* This information will be collected via the employee access system if you are an employee who is paid on a monthly basis. If you do not have an employee access account or do not typically have access to a computer, this information can be collected from you on a paper form.

*Parents:* For the first year only, this information will be collected using two different methods. The first was included in the on-line registration process at the beginning of the school year. The second will be collected through Family Access during the month of October or can be selected using a paper form. The form is located in the front office of each campus.

- The **first ethnicity data collection during the on-line registration process** is the prior race/ethnicity codes that have been used by the District in the past.
- The **second race and ethnicity data collection** is a new federal two-part questionnaire called *Student Ethnicity and Race Questionnaire* that will be collected through Family Access during the month of October.

##### 3. Will this information be kept confidential?

Yes. Individual student/staff records are maintained in a confidential manner and are protected under the Federal Education Records and Privacy Act (FERPA). The new ethnicity and race standards have no effect on FERPA's protection of student/staff records. Only the total number of students/staff in each category of each school is reported to the federal government to ensure schools are receiving the proper educational programs and services they need.

##### 4. What happens if I refuse to provide an ethnicity and race?

We strongly recommend that you comply with this federal law. **If you don't provide an ethnicity and race, the District is required by law to use the existing student/staff records that are currently on file or choose an**

**ethnicity and race on your behalf.** Parents may access the Family Access system to check the race/ethnicity codes that are currently on file for your child. Staff may access the Employee Access system to check the race/ethnicity codes that are currently on file for themselves.

### **5. What are the categories being used for ethnicity and race and how were these decided?**

The new ethnicity and race categories have been carefully formed and defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). All public school districts are required to use these same categories in order for the government to collect and maintain data that is uniform and as useful as possible. The seven categories include:

#### *Ethnicity:*

- Hispanic/Latino (A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race)
- Or
- Not Hispanic/Latino

#### *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 community attachment or tribal affiliation)
- **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)

### **6. What is the difference between ethnicity and race?**

Ethnicity is a term that represents social groups with a shared history, sense of identity, geography and cultural roots, which may occur despite racial differences. Race refers to a human population considered distinct based on real or imagined physical characteristics, such as skin color or facial characteristics.

### **7. How should I identify my child or myself if he/she is of mixed origin?**

You are required to select only one category for ethnicity, but you may select more than one race. **Both parts of the questionnaire must be answered.**

For example: If you select "Hispanic/Latino" as an ethnicity and you or your child were born in North or South America, you may be identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, as well as any other racial categories that apply to your background. However, regardless of how many other races you choose, you or your child will still be categorized as Hispanic/Latino if you select Hispanic/Latino for ethnicity.

If you select "Not Hispanic/Latino," you or your child will be categorized in one and only one of the six remaining groups:

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

### **8. Why do Hispanics/Latinos need to identify a race?**

The federal government recognizes that people of Hispanic/Latino origin may be of any race and would like to provide these populations with the opportunity to better describe themselves according to their culture and heritage.

### **9. If I want more information, whom can I contact?**

For more information about this federal requirement and the new student/staff data reporting categories, please visit the Texas Education Agency website at <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/peims/standards/0910/appf.doc>. You may also reference the Eanes ISD Additional Information document for more details about selecting a new race and/or ethnicity.