

Illinois State Board of Education  
New U.S. Department of Education Race and Ethnicity Data Standards

**SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS REGARDING RE-IDENTIFICATION**

Dear Parent or Guardian:

In fall 2007, the U.S. Department of Education issued new guidance on the collection and reporting of race and ethnicity data for public school students and staff. The guidance implements new federal race and ethnicity categories that were developed to obtain a more accurate picture of the nation's diversity. The new data collection process requires respondents to answer a two-part question, indicating ethnicity first and then one or more of five races. (In the past, individuals were allowed to choose only one race or ethnicity category.)

***The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) will use the new categories starting with data to be reported for the 2010-11 school year.*** This requires school districts to re-identify race and ethnicity for all students—and the identification is to be done by parents or guardians. If a student's parents or guardians decline to indicate race and/or ethnicity, observer identification by school district staff is required.

The new race and ethnicity data will be used in the same manner as previously collected data, e.g., in reporting and analyzing test results by race and ethnicity. The information will not be used to check immigration status, and the confidentiality of individual student information will be protected.

Enclosed is a sheet that provides additional information about the data collection and reporting changes. Also enclosed is the form that parents or guardians need to complete to identify race and ethnicity for their children. Please complete one form per child, and be sure to answer both parts of the two-part question. (Remember that school district staff is required to provide any missing information by observer identification.) Return the completed form to your child's school by [INSERT DATE].

Thank you for your cooperation in providing the needed data. Please direct any questions you may have to [INSERT CONTACT INFORMATION].

Sincerely,

[INSERT NAME/TITLE]