Reporting on the racial and ethnic identities of Washington public K-12 students

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About the ERDC

The research presented here uses data from the Education Research and Data Center (ERDC), located in the Washington Office of Financial Management. ERDC works with partner agencies to conduct powerful analyses that inform the decision-making of Washington legislators, parents, and education providers. ERDC's data system is a statewide longitudinal data system that includes de-identified data about people's preschool, educational and workforce experiences. This work falls under the ERDC Research Agenda designed in 2023.

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Executive summary

How many Asian students are in the state? What about how many Vietnamese students are in the state? These may seem like simple questions, but they lead to a lot of decisions about how a student's race and ethnicity data is collected and reported. Over the last 15 years, the Washington public education system has collected increasingly more detailed student race and ethnicity data. This report highlights these key changes made across three phases. The changes to *data collection* have necessitated new strategies for *data reporting*. However, this is more complex than it may first appear.

The race and ethnic identities of students can be reported using different methods of counting students. The generally accepted method of counting students *aggregates*, or combines, students into five federal race categories. This draws the criticism that no racial group is a monolith; there are unique characteristics and experiences that are masked using aggregate reporting. Alternatively, *disaggregating* student responses, where we report distinct groups using detailed race and ethnicity data, presents two issues. First, there is a tension between privacy standards and equity best practices. Second, when students have multiple race responses it is not clear how to accurately represent their identity. As educators, policymakers, and researchers continue to identify and address disparities in educational access and outcomes, it will be important to distinguish how students are counted and for what purposes.

To explore the methods for data reporting, ERDC examined K-12 student race and ethnicity data collected from 2011 to 2018. The goal is to create a baseline understanding of *aggregate enrollment totals* (that Washington reports federally) compared to *disaggregated student responses* (that Washington collects but does not widely report). The Education Research and Data Center (ERDC) conducted a descriptive analysis to answer the following question:

What is the *total student enrollment* for Washington public K-12 students using the aggregated federal reporting categories compared to the *total unique student responses* using the detailed race categories?

Key findings from this report include:

- Detailed race and ethnicity data can provide new insights about education outcomes for more distinctive groups, but data about the smallest populations may run into student privacy issues.
- It remains a challenge to accurately represent multiracial student identities in reporting, even with the addition of more detailed race and ethnicity data.
- Useful alternative approaches for reporting detailed race and ethnicity student data in a disaggregated form exist, but challenges can still arise.

How has race and ethnicity data collection evolved?

Federal guidance and education policy dictates how states collect data.

Understanding the historic movements related to race and ethnicity data is important to review in order to understand future changes. Collecting and reporting race and ethnicity data dates to the first census in 1790[1]. However, the methods for counting people in the U.S. regularly changes to reflect the laws and cultural norms of the time (Parker et al., 2015). For example, since 1960, the census has adjusted each federal racial category – except White.

The federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) set federal regulations in 1977 regarding how to collect race and ethnicity data for federally mandated purposes, including education reporting (Statistical Policy Directive No. 15, 1977). Then, OMB revised the categories for race and ethnicity reporting in 1997 (Statistical Policy Directive No. 15, 1997). This revision also promoted the use of a "two-part question" to collect ethnicity separately from race and allowed students to select one or more racial groups. This method is common on many applications and federal documents. The document first asks a respondent if they are of Hispanic/Latino origin[2]. After the respondent makes a selection, they choose to identify with one or more races from a provided list.

Following the 1997 OMB guidance, the U.S. Department of Education issued guidance to states in 2007 on how to collect and report race and ethnicity data on students (Department of Education, 2007). Following suit from the OMB, the department's guidance required states to use the two-part question. While the Department of Education guidance *encouraged* states to collect data on more racial subgroups, the guidance only *required* states to report aggregated racial and ethnic data to the Department of Education in seven categories (see Box 1).

Box 1: What is required for federal reporting?

Federal reporting categories:

- Hispanic/Latino of any race; and, for individuals who are non-Hispanic/Latino only,
- American Indian or Alaska Native,
- Asian,
- Black or African American,
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander,
- White, and
- Two or more races.

[1] For a visualization of the changes in each census since 1790, see https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/race/MREAD_1790_2010.html.

[2] In practice, the Census Bureau often uses the term "Hispanic" or "Hispanic or Latino." However, labels "Hispanic" and "Latino" are not universally embraced by the population that has been labeled, even as they are widely used. Latinx has also emerged in recent years (Lopez, Krogstad, & Passel, 2023).

Student data collection and reporting was heavily impacted when President George W. Bush signed the bipartisan education bill, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), into law in 2002. One outcome of NCLB was that school districts had to collect sufficient data to *disaggregate educational outcomes of students from different racial groups, economic strata, and need areas*. Schools and districts could examine whether students of color were meeting the educational standards to understand achievement gaps- sometimes termed opportunity gaps- between students of color and White students. Following NCLB, federal lawmakers passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which President Barack Obama signed into law in 2015. Under this law, there are public K-12 reporting requirements for states that require schools to report federally identified race categories.

The standards for collecting race and ethnicity data may change again in the coming years. In 2022, OMB convened the Federal Interagency Technical Working Group on Race and Ethnicity Standards. At the time of this report, the working group has not yet released final recommendations, nor have they been adopted by OMB or the Department of Education.[3] However, three preliminary considerations emerged from the group and were open for public comment in spring 2023:

1) Collect race and ethnicity information using one combined question.
2) Add "Middle Eastern or North African" (MENA) as a new minimum category.
3) Require public schools to collect detailed race and ethnicity categories by default.

As our country's population demographics shift, federal guidelines are likely to continue evolving. This will have a cascading effect on how Washington structures our education data systems, collects student data, and reports key outcomes.

Washington is a leader in collecting "detailed" race and ethnicity data for students.

Washington has been at the forefront of collecting detailed race data for students. In this report, *"detailed race and ethnicity data"* means descriptions that go beyond the federal race and ethnicity categories (e.g., Asian, Hispanic/Latino) and describes a student's race in a more detailed level (e.g., Vietnamese, Mexican). Many also refer to this as *"disaggregated race data."* In this report, we prefer to distinguish between detailed and disaggregated to recognize that data can be disaggregated by a multitude of useful student characteristics (e.g., income, geography, etc.).

[3] For an overview of the OMB working group, a description of the recommendations, and additional background information visit: https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/01/27/2023-01635/initial-proposals-for-updating-ombs-race-and-ethnicity-statistical-standards

This section will outline the changes made in Washington to implement detailed race data collection for public K12 students. The state can continue to lead at the national level by determining how student data ought to be reported.

To stay in compliance with federal and state guidelines, OSPI adjusted its data collections as needed. Below are three key stages of how OSPI has collected data over the past 20 years. Box 2 shows the current requirements.

How is data collected and reported in Washington?

Washington state public K-12 schools collect student race and ethnicity data from parents and guardians when a student enrolls and at different points in the school year. Then, schools report the information to school districts, that report student-level data to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). OSPI includes the race and ethnicity data in reporting as required by state and federal laws.

OSPI also provides student-level race and ethnicity data to the Education Research and Data Center (ERDC). This student data is part of the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) files. CEDARS data files are the primary source of public K-12 data in the statewide longitudinal data system, also known as the P20W data system. The state also uses these files for education research and analysis. Through a data sharing agreement, OSPI has provided ERDC with student level data from CEDARS on an annual basis since the 2010 school year.

Box 2: What is now required for schools in Washington?

Detailed race/ethnicity options include:

- 27 choices for Hispanic/Latino
- 100 choices for Black/African American
- 37 choices for White
- 38 choices for American Indian/Alaska Native
- 28 choices for Asian
- 22 choices for Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander

This means rather than seven federal race categories, researchers and analysts now also have 225 race codes and 27 ethnicity codes to analyze when displaying student data.

OSPI's initial collection (CSRS) matched the federal reporting categories (Pre- 2010)

OSPI collected student data through the Core Student Record System (CSRS) from the 2004-2005 academic year through 2008-2009 academic year using the race categories listed in Appendix A. These aligned with the federal reporting categories and included an additional category of "not provided." Data schools collected during this period included Hispanic/Latino as a race option – not as a separate ethnicity question.

OSPI introduced the detailed race and ethnicity data options in CEDARS (Phase 1: 2010-2017)

Starting in 2009-2010, with the roll out of the new Comprehensive Education Data and Reporting System (CEDARS) and in response to the 2007 Department of Education guidance referenced above, OSPI began implementing the two-question data collection and expanded

the list of options to report detailed race and ethnicity. In the first year of implementation, districts could opt in to using the new detailed categories, with the law requiring them to fully implement the categories in the 2010-2011 school year. OSPI provided school districts with an example template[4] for the new collection (see Appendix A) that included detailed race and ethnicity group choices that families could self-identify with.

Under this new collection, districts were instructed, but not required, to use the questions in Appendix A to ask families to report their student's identity by ethnicity and then by race. The updated ethnicity question had nine categories to further categorize the responses of Hispanic or Latino students. This phase of the detailed race and ethnicity data collection had 32 categories for students who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, 16 categories for students who identified as Asian, and nine categories for students who identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. In all, there were 59 race choices. There were no additional detailed race options for students who identified as Black/African American or White. This level of detailed race data should allow us to answer questions like, "How many Vietnamese students are in the state?" However, as the next sections explore, there are additional layers of nuance, particularly for multiracial students, that complicate the analysis of this seemingly simple question.

OSPI expanded the detailed race and ethnicity data options in CEDARS (Phase 2: 2018 to present)

In 2016, RCW 28A.300.042 passed in Washington, outlining guidelines for data collection that would allow for greater "disaggregation of data by subgroups" beyond what the federal 2007 Race and Ethnicity reporting guidelines required. The modifications introduced detailed race options for Black and White students and expanded the number of options for students for AI/AN, Asian, and NH/PI students (see RCW 28A.300.042). This coincided with the Race & Ethnicity Student Data Task Force (2017) recommendations on how to improve student race and ethnicity data collection and reporting at the school, school district, and state levels.

The technical changes in how OSPI collected race and ethnicity data took effect in the CEDARS collection over the 2018-2019 school year. Districts were given four years, through the 2021-22 school year, to fully implement the Phase 2 detailed race and ethnicity data collection.

As of the 2022-23 school year, the Phase 2 data collection includes:

- 100 codes (i.e., detailed race choices) for Black/African American Students
- 37 codes for White students

[4] OSPI provides an example template for the collection of race and ethnicity data, but each district can develop their own method, form, and process for collecting race and ethnicity. OSPI provides guidance and support, but doesn't mandate how it needs to be collected.

- 38 codes for American Indian/Alaska Native students
- 28 codes for Asian students
- 22 codes for Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students.

There are now a total of 252 categories for families to choose from: 225 race options and 27 ethnicity options. For each race category, students can write in their group if it is not listed. The detailed choices of ethnicity categories for students who identify as Hispanic or Latino expanded from eight to 27.

The "two-part" question has implications for data reporting.

In Washington, a student's race/ethnicity is self-declared during the first point of their enrollment in public K-12 education. The parent/guardian enrolling the student is faced with a "two-part" question: 1) Is the student Hispanic/Latino? and 2) What is the student's race?

Once a family member answers this question, it is recorded in a school district student information system (SIS), and it eventually gets sent to the state and used for state and federal reporting. However, the student and family's initial choices of detailed ethnic and race identities may not be reflected in the reporting at the district, state, or national level depending on how the detailed ethnic and race choices are aggregated for different reporting purposes. To illustrate discrepancies in what is reported by students and families and what is used in state and federal reporting, Table 1 provides examples to demonstrate how self-reported racial identities might shift as they are rolled up into state/federally reported race/ethnicity categories.[5]

Table 1: Race and ethnicity responses roll up into federal race categories (2011-2018 options)

Example Student	Hispanic/Latino Ethnicity	Self-Reported Race(s)	Federal Race Category
1	No	Japanese	Asian
2	No	Black/African American	Black
3	Yes	Mexican	Hispanic
4	No	Quinault Tribe	American Indian/ Alaskan Native
5	Yes	Asian Indian; Mexican	Hispanic
6	Yes	Colville Tribe; Central American	Hispanic
7	No	Filipino; Yakama Tribe	Two or more races
8	No	Black/African American; White	Two or more races

[5] Thank you to Dr. Kenneth Olden from the Wapato School district for providing this explanatory table.

The simplest scenario for mapping the self-reported ethnic and racial identities of students to the federal race categories is when they select within a single race category (see students 1-4 from Table 1). Their self-reported race easily "rolls up" into the federal identification. However, the mapping is more complicated for students who identify with any combination of two or more races (see students 5-8).

Students 3, 5, and 6 all identified as having a Hispanic or Latino ethnic identity. However, within the federal reporting structure Hispanic/Latino ethnicity supersedes their racial identities. For Student 5, their identity as an Asian Indian is not captured; their outcomes (i.e., graduation rates, test scores) would not fall into the same grouping as other Asian Indians. Similarly, for Student 6, their tribal affiliation with the Colville Tribe is secondary to their Hispanic ethnicity according to how the data gets reported.

Students 7 and 8 self-reported with two race categories, so they are included in the federal category as "two or more races." However, Student 7 and Student 8 belong to different racial groups and may have differing experiences across their educational journey. Grouping them into a single "two or more races" category has the potential to mask unique "within group" differences, such as the difference in outcomes for an AI/AN and Hispanic multiracial student (Student 7) and a Black and White multiracial student (Student 8). One challenge presented by collecting detailed race and ethnicity data is how to accurately report students who appear in multiple race categories. When a student appears and is counted in multiple categories, this is known as "duplication." This approach can be problematic if we're looking for a *unique count* of students, such as for analyzing student assessment data or deciding teacher assignments. Federal reporting relies on aggregation to prevent duplication (known as de-duplication) by placing students within a unique race category.

As the examples in Table 1 illustrate, a consequence of the aggregated federal categories is that students are placed into one category. In practice, this masks students' multi-faceted, fluid, and intersectional identities. These hypothetical students represent real consequences for students and schools. Reporting structures that systematically overlook certain racial groups could impact the types of resources that students and schools receive to support their unique student populations. The examples also highlight the need to identify and test alternative methods of reporting students' race and ethnic identities now that we have richer data for race and ethnicity data available in Washington.

There is a tension between equity best practices and privacy standards.

Better representation in data collection is a national issue and has been a key topic in community-led advocacy aimed at improving equitable representation. For decades, leaders that represent students of color have called for the education system to collect detailed race data and to report the data in a disaggregated way to highlight differences within federal race groups. Calls for the disaggregation of the Asian federal category to better illustrate different experiences, specifically for Southeast Asian individuals have existed for years (Hune & Takeuchi, 2008; Nguyen et al., 2015). Similarly, leaders have advocated for disaggregated data to better explore different experiences between Black U.S.-origin students and Black immigrant-origin students (Tauriac & Liem, 2012; Pew Research Center, 2022). For American Indian/Alaska Native populations, inclusive lists of options, especially by tribal affiliation, has been lacking in data collections (Urban Indian Health Institute, n.d.; Ponce et al., 2019). This category not only represents the political group of U.S. Native Americans, but it also includes the indigenous peoples of North, Central, and South America. For each federal race group, trying to capture the distinctions within the group could provide valuable insights.

A 2021 White House Executive Order established an Equitable Data Working Group to provide recommendations to increase "data available for measuring equity." This group's top recommendation urges agencies to "make disaggregated data the norm while protecting privacy" (Equitable Data Working Group, 2021). This recommendation illustrates the inherent tension that exists between sharing more detailed data and the risk of identifying individuals in the data. Under the federal Family Educational Rights & Protection Act of 1974 (FERPA) education agencies, districts, and schools cannot display or report data that might accidentally lead to identifying a single student.[6] To avoid accidentally disclosing a student's identity, a Washington state law requires education agencies to suppress data related to education outcomes whenever there are fewer than 10 students belonging to that group (RCW 28A.655.090). To do the suppression, agencies report "N<10" or an asterisk instead of reporting a specific number of students.

From an equity perspective, these privacy policies can be harmful to understanding outcomes for small populations of students. Techniques used for protecting student privacy can have the unintended consequence of "masking", or hiding, the information needed to identify the presence of these student groups. This makes it difficult to understand outcomes for smaller student groups. For example, imagine that there are nine students of a particular race at a school. School officials created intentional interventions to support this group of students and

[6] Under ERDC's privacy principles and FERPA, ERDC does not publicly report outcomes for students groups with less than ten members/responses.

eight of the students graduated. Under this privacy standard, a school could not report this result, rather they would be limited to reporting that there were less than 10 students that graduated.

Suppressing data for small groups is already a common need and practice at the state level (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2023). However, moving away from aggregated group totals (e.g. Asian, Black, multiracial) towards disaggregated counts of students using detailed race data (e.g. Thai, Samoan) *increases* the likelihood of student groups that have "small cell sizes" (the total number of students in the group is less than 10). So, even though the goal of disaggregating race data is intended to help small populations, privacy standards may restrict the ability, particularly at a school level, to display outcomes for small groups.

Researchers reporting data for these students would have to suppress any outcomes or collapse groups, regions, or other categories. This means trying to display more granular student-level data would exclude or mask certain groups of students in final reporting numbers. Collecting detailed race data can benefit students, schools, and state policymakers by providing new insight into student identities and differing education experiences. However, it can also potentially expose these same students to privacy violations and introduces a need to increase privacy standards awareness.

To align the state's requirement to report disaggregated race data with the federal mandate to protect individual privacy, all parties need to better understand the best way to report and visualize detailed race categories. The cultural, political, and systems level landscape for reporting and collecting detailed race and ethnicity data is complex and changes over time.

How can we report student race and ethnicity data?

Because of the nature of ERDC's work and the use of cohorts in longitudinal education research, it is important for ERDC to examine and document the data quality and explore uses of the detailed race and ethnicity data. The remainder of this paper will focus on the data collected under the Phase 1 Detailed Race/Ethnicity Collection in CEDARS from 2011 to 2018.

Students are slowly selecting more race choices in the data collection.

Because changes to the data collection occurred under a phased implementation, we would expect that the number of students who select more categories over time would increase. To understand whether students have been increasingly selecting multiple race categories, we calculated the average number of responses per student.

In this analysis, a 1.00 value means students selected one response, on average. A 2.00 value means that, on average, students selected two ethnicity responses. We found that the average

number of responses to the ethnicity question (e.g., Cuban, South American, Latin American) per Hispanic/Latino enrollment hovered around 1.10 from 2011 to 2018, indicating that on average students selected more than one response to the Hispanic origin/Latino question. Similarly, when we look at how students responded to the race question, the average number of responses for each enrollment stayed consistent, ranging from 1.09 in 2011 to 1.11 in 2018. If we also include the ethnic categories, the responses increase from 1.27 in 2011 to 1.35 in 2018. This increase could be due to changing student demographics *and* how schools adopted the data collection. So, as the number of choices for students increases in data collections following 2018, the average number of responses related to race and ethnicity might also increase. It is worth noting that a very small group of respondents selected all responses. However, this was a small group of outliers and should not affect the average number of responses.

'Maximum representation' might be one solution to represent historically marginalized or excluded student populations.

Gene Kim and Arlyn Arquiza, of the University of Washington Office of Minority Affairs & Diversity (OMAD) generated the concept and practice of "maximum representation" in 2010. They found that traditional data query methods inadvertently excluded some multiracial students from specific events and possible communities within the university. *Maximum representation* recognizes that one student can represent and possess two or more ethnic or racial identities. In practice, this means including students' multiple identities by counting students in each racial category that they identify with. Inherently, this could lead to *duplication*, where one student is counted in multiple groups.

Box 3 illustrates the difference between student answers when we use 'federal reporting techniques' compared to 'maximum representation.' In this image, three students are represented. Student 1 identifies as American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) and Black/African American. Student 2 identifies as AI/AN and Hispanic/Latino. Student 3 identifies as only AI/AN.

Under the federal reporting logic, there would be *de-duplicated* counts of students:

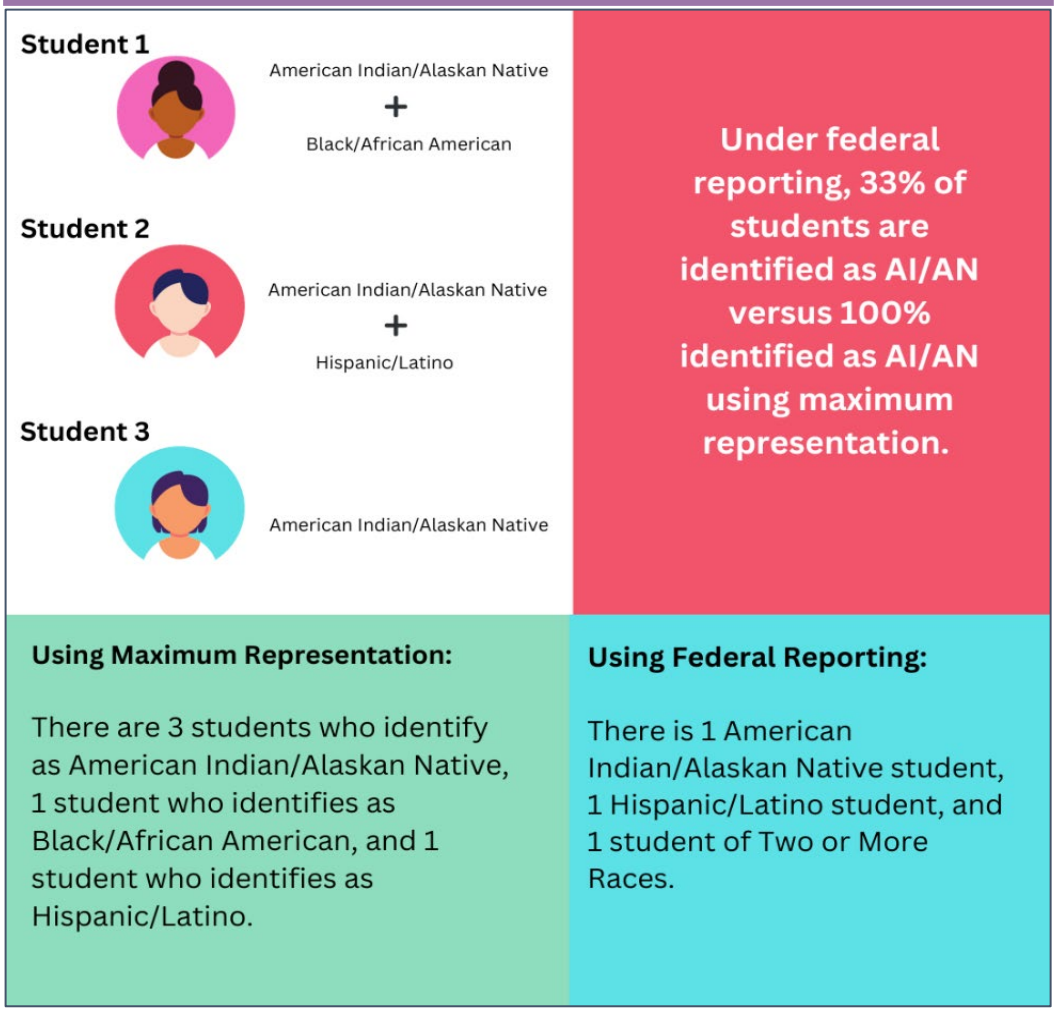
- Student 1 would be classified as being "Two or more races."
- Student 2 would have answered "Yes" to the question, "Are you of Hispanic/Latino origin?" By responding "Yes", their federally reported category would be "Hispanic/Latino."
- Student 3 would be categorized as AI/AN.

Maximum representation considers each response a student makes. So, if we use maximum representation to determine their response, we would get *duplicated* counts of students:

- Student 1 would be considered both AI/AN and Black/African American and counted once in each group. There would not be a "two or more races" category to place them in.
- Student 2 would be included in two groups, both AI/AN and Hispanic/Latino.
- Student 3 would have the same result and would be considered AI/AN.

The difference between these two approaches is that 33% of students in this example are identified as AI/AN when we use federal reporting, and 100% of them are identified as AI/AN when we use maximum representation.

Box 3: Maximum Representation Illustration



What can we learn from the detailed race and ethnicity data?

As mandated by federal law, Washington will continue to report enrollment and outcomes of students using the aggregated federal race codes. However, there is an opportunity to explore the best way to report and display the detailed race and ethnicity data for state-wide reporting. To examine how the federal reporting totals (when students are de-duplicated) would compare to maximum representation totals (when students may be duplicated), we calculated the total student enrollment for years 2011-2018 and then compared it to counts of student responses using maximum representation.

Table 2 displays the **total student enrollment** using the federal reporting categories for all students for school years 2011-2018.[7] The federal reporting categories are comparable to population estimates for ages 5-19 from Washington (Office of Financial Management, 2023) and the U.S. Census Bureau (United States Census Bureau, 2022). The number of students in the final row of the table reflects the actual student enrollment across K-12 Washington schools for that year.

Table 2. Racial and ethnic group *total student enrollment* for Washington K-12, 2011-2018, aggregated by Federal Race Categories

Federal Racial or Ethnic Group	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Hispanic/Latino	212,563	221,513	230,635	241,280	251,594	261,800	269,376	276,694
American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN)	18,921	17,815	17,345	17,469	17,212	16,588	16,313	16,017
Asian	79,108	78,877	79,204	80,234	81,954	84,567	87,867	90,808
Black/African American	53,698	52,125	52,515	52,905	52,886	52,696	53,004	53,129
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (NH/PI)	10,002	10,234	10,578	11,208	11,729	12,220	12,686	13,216
White	681,224	671,010	659,002	654,243	650,021	646,417	644,475	641,683
Multiracial	66,320	73,283	76,471	81,972	86,136	90,966	95,561	100,136
Total Students	**1,121,836**	**1,124,857**	**1,125,750**	**1,139,311**	**1,151,532**	**1,165,254**	**1,179,282**	**1,191,683**

Note: These totals are de-duplicated, meaning each student falls into only one category.

Table 3 displays the total count of **unique student responses** to the questions, "Is your child of Hispanic/Latino origin?" and "What race(s) do you consider your child?" Because a student can

[7] The totals by race/ethnicity reported will not match the Oct. 1 reports produced by OSPI for two reasons: 1) this report covers all enrolled students, not just those present on Oct. 1; and 2) as this table reflects the sum of school districts, some students are counted in more than one district.

choose more than one response to represent their identification with multiple racial categories, the total number of responses in the final row of Table 3 exceeds the total number of students, representing a duplicated count of students.[8] Note that Washington had 1,191,683 public K-12 school students in 2018, not 1,605,271 as Table 3 reports. Table 3 uses the 'maximum representation' of student responses. This is an important distinction to bear in mind when considering the data.

Table 3. Racial and ethnic group *unique student responses* for Washington K-12, 2011-2018, aggregated by Federal Race Categories.

Total Responses by Race/Ethnic Group	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Hispanic/Latino	212,563	221,513	230,635	241,280	251,594	261,800	269,376	276,694
American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN)	75,492	75,247	73,056	72,986	71,333	70,110	69,684	67,938
Asian	113,595	117,273	120,026	124,125	128,681	134,648	140,935	147,192
Black/African American	86,031	88,504	90,206	94,207	96,768	99,856	103,087	107,682
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (NH/PI)	21,520	22,746	23,171	24,451	25,691	27,172	28,392	29,804
White	920,812	925,372	926,190	936,952	946,916	958,261	968,338	975,961
Total Responses	**1,430,013**	**1,450,655**	**1,463,284**	**1,494,001**	**1,520,983**	**1,551,847**	**1,579,812**	**1,605,271**

Note: These total counts include duplicated students across racial groups, but not within racial groups. For example, a student that selected two race responses that fall within the same federal category would only appear once in that category (i.e., Korean and Chinese both fall under the Asian category, but the student would just be counted once in the Asian row). If a student chooses two race responses that fall in different federal categories (i.e., Korean and White) the student would have one response counted in the Asian row and one response in the White row. Multiracial is not included in this table because there are no "multiracial" response options. Rather, a multiracial group is created and used for students who select multiple racial groups.

The changes in the sizes of the racial groups between the two tables are worth examining. A dramatic difference is for AI/AN students, where response counts in Table 3 (67,938 responses) are more than four times the student counts in Table 2 (16,017 students). Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (NH/PI) student response counts in Table 3 (29,804 responses) are more than double the enrollment counts in Table 2 (13,216 students). Asian response counts increased by about 57,000, Black/African American responses increased by 54,000, and White

[8] If a student enrolled in multiple schools or districts in a school year, they likely filled out the race data multiple times yet are only included once in this analysis. If a student indicated they have two race responses that fall within the *same* federal reporting category (e. g., Korean and Chinese both fall under the Asian category), that student would only be included once in the Asian student count in Table 3. However, if a student selected two race responses that fall under *different* federal reporting categories, they are included in both rows in Table 3.

response rates grew by over 334,000. The total number of responses is over 1.6 million, a figure that represents the diversity of our K-12 student population.

Another key difference in the tables is that Table 2 displays an enrollment count for multiracial students. In 2018, that accounted for 100,136 students. There is no multiracial category in Table 3, rather these multiracial students are dispersed across the categories (and because they belong to two categories, they show up as at least 200,000+ responses).

In a way, most reporting decisions are set up so that the ethnicity question "supersedes" or "overwrites" any responses to the race collection. This is demonstrated in Tables 2 and 3, where 'Hispanic/Latino' is the only category where the totals match. This is because in federal reporting (Table 2), a student would default into the Hispanic/Latino category regardless of what other races they reported. Students that may identify as 'White and Hispanic' or 'AI/AN and Hispanic' would be reflected in the federal reporting as "Hispanic/Latino" because ethnicity is treated independently from race.

Key Takeaway: Student racial and ethnic identities are multifaceted and therefore difficult to accurately capture through reporting. Total student enrollment gives an accurate count of the number of students but leads to the possibility of over- and under-representation of certain student groups. Maximum representation can address this issue to better reflect the diversity of students, but it may not produce an accurate figure for use in statistical analysis.

Detailed ethnicity data reflects of the diversity of Hispanic/Latino students.

OSPI recommends that districts collect ethnicity data by asking parents/guardians: "Is your child of Hispanic or Latino origin?" (see Appendix A for sample form). If yes, the parent or guardian must check all responses that apply to that student. If they respond no, the person completing the form moves on to the second question of the form.

Table 4 shows the statewide unique student responses for ethnicity under the Phase 1 collection. Over eight years, the number of Hispanic/Latino responses for each group have steadily increased. While this does allow for increased disaggregation compared to earlier collections, it is unclear how a data user should distinguish between the responses of South American, Latin American, and Other Hispanic/Latino. This was addressed by adding more precise categories in the Phase 2 collection. Additionally, "Other Hispanic/Latino" does not exist in the Phase 2 collection and a write-in option is now available.

Table 4. Ethnicity responses: *unique student responses*, Washington K-12, 2011-2018.

Responses by OSPI detailed ethnicity category	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Mexican/ Mexican American/ Chicano	146,788	156,757	165,150	174,460	182,732	190,843	196,539	201,433
Cuban	1,289	1,490	1,631	1,713	1,855	1,956	2,131	2,263
Dominican	589	684	774	789	869	974	1,125	1,201
Spaniard	5,804	6,320	6,602	6,954	7,285	7,550	7,827	8,090
Puerto Rican	5,093	6,082	6,857	7,464	8,037	8,610	9,160	9,751
Central American	5,053	6,074	6,890	7,751	8,717	9,818	11,062	12,026
South American	3,303	3,951	4,422	4,807	5,277	5,757	6,245	6,816
Latin American	5,949	7,037	7,910	8,651	9,424	10,145	10,853	11,498
Other Hispanic/ Latino	59,439	54,984	52,460	51,561	50,860	49,959	50,010	51,411

Key takeaway: The number of students who select detailed ethnicities has been steadily increasing for all detailed ethnicity categories from 2011 to 2018. This could be due to factors not accounted for in this analysis, including population increases, the ability for students to select multiple categories, or movement from the "other Hispanic/Latino" group into detailed categories. At over 200,000 students, the Mexican/Mexican American/Chicano student group is the largest group for which detailed race or ethnicity data is currently available.

Detailed race data provides new insights and creates new questions.

OSPI recommends districts collect race data through the question: "What race(s) do you consider your child?" (see Appendix A). The parent or guardian is instructed to check all responses that apply. As we mentioned above, there were 59 possible categories for race responses during the 2011-18 data collection time. The 'unique student responses' using the 2011-18 detailed race categories are below.

American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) student responses

As we laid out above, the different techniques for counting and categorizing students yield vastly different results (see Tables 2 and 3). Aggregating students into the federal race categories results in a count of 16,017 AI/AN students in 2018, or 1.34% (16,017/1,191,683) of the student population. Using maximum representation and the detailed race data resulted in 67,938 responses, which means 5.70% (67,938/1,191,683) of the state's student population reported they were 'AI/AN alone' or 'AI/AN in combination with another racial or ethnic group'.

AI/AN students account for **1.34%** of the federally reported student population, **but 5.70%** of the student population reported AI/AN as part of their racial identity under the Phase 1 collection.

Table 5 presents the statewide disaggregated student responses using the detailed race data for AI/AN students. The number of student responses of "Other American Indian" declined by about 13,000 over the period. Student responses to some of the larger groups represented in this table (such as Colville, Lummi, Puyallup, Spokane, and Tulalip) all increased over this time.

Table 5. Race responses: *Unique student responses* for American Indian/Alaska Native, Washington K-12, 2011-2018.

Responses by detailed race category	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Alaska Native	5,210	5,600	5,974	6,253	6,447	6,598	6,716	6,864
Chehalis	470	478	451	451	428	433	433	435
Colville	2,537	2,892	2,939	3,015	3,061	3,119	3,102	3,107
Cowlitz	638	649	651	652	641	635	612	648
Hoh	225	229	207	199	175	160	163	161
Jamestown	273	284	281	267	248	232	226	223
Kalispel	262	287	272	260	252	252	256	272
Lower Elwha	363	378	387	390	381	368	368	384
Lummi	1,264	1,259	1,342	1,404	1,409	1,424	1,459	1,511
Makah	846	847	840	874	874	880	910	921
Muckleshoot	906	927	899	876	755	906	919	955
Nisqually	331	330	356	360	387	395	402	413
Nooksack	502	515	532	563	572	573	577	586
Port Gamble Klallam	381	394	394	384	377	373	370	369
Puyallup	734	804	872	1,170	1,277	1,372	1,405	1,508
Quileute	440	454	438	433	424	409	394	419
Quinault	976	1,027	1,043	1,062	1,046	1,021	1,035	1,076
Samish	222	232	227	207	198	190	185	186
Sauk-Suiattle	172	186	163	152	130	139	139	147
Shoalwater	158	166	150	134	121	114	101	92
Skokomish	406	420	419	410	402	400	403	421
Snoqualmie	303	303	299	283	271	266	259	269
Spokane	1,062	1,328	1,368	1,383	1,375	1,341	1,317	1,292
Squaxin Island	369	390	399	392	392	384	395	400
Stillaguamish	151	162	158	135	135	130	136	139
Suquamish	402	416	401	381	380	373	350	367
Swinomish	370	393	397	377	390	392	401	402
Tulalip	1,265	1,339	1,347	1,329	1,329	1,371	1,394	1,399
Upper Skagit	120	152	155	146	144	172	203	223
Yakama	3,454	3,702	3,757	3,840	3,881	3,827	3,815	3,839
Other WA Indian	3,553	3,403	3,223	3,142	3,024	2,871	2,819	2,867
Other American Indian	55,700	54,284	51,148	49,958	47,682	45,943	45,215	42,941

Key takeaway: Collecting detailed race data has improved Washington's ability to identify more detailed information about some students who identify as AI/AN. However, over half of the responses indicate that students identify with a category not listed in the enrollment form. This indicates that the available options available during this data collection phase were inadequate to capture many students' tribal affiliations. There is a decrease in the "other WA Indian" and "Other American Indian" groups over time with small increases or decreases in specific tribal affiliations. Again, this may be attributable to population changes or changes in data collection and reporting strategies, including the ability for students to select multiple categories, or movement from the "Other American Indian" or "Other Washington Indian" groups into specific tribal affiliations.

Asian student responses

What we see with Asian students is similar to what we saw with AI/AN students; counting Asian student enrollment, using the federal reporting approach versus total student responses yields different results (see Tables 2 and 3). Aggregating students into the federal race categories results in a count of 90,808 Asian students in 2018, or 7.62% of the student population. Using maximum representation and the detailed race data yields 147,192 responses, which means 12.35% of the state's student population reported they were 'Asian only' or 'Asian in combination with another racial or ethnic group.'

Asian students account for **7.62%** of the federally reported student population, **but 12.35%** of the student population reported Asian as part of their racial identity under the Phase 1 collection.

Table 6 presents disaggregated student responses using the detailed race data for Asian students. The number of responses for each choice grew over the eight years of collection. We saw notable increases in student responses for the Asian Indian group, as well as the Cambodian and Pakistani groups (which nearly doubled in count). The number of student responses that schools collected as "Other Asian" declined by about 23,000 over this period. We might be able to partially explain the growth across all the other groups by the decrease in the "other Asian" choice as implementation of this phase of the data collection rolled out at new schools.

Table 6. Race responses: *Unique student responses* for Asian, Washington K-12, 2011-2018.

Responses by detailed race category	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Asian Indian	7,984	9,390	10,722	12,475	14,484	17,090	19,585	21,969
Cambodian	3,450	4,031	4,546	5,102	5,502	5,925	6,412	6,906
Chinese	14,352	16,068	17,429	18,952	20,318	21,922	23,446	24,129
Filipino	19,305	21,880	23,804	25,656	27,328	28,978	30,538	32,420
Hmong	674	728	735	774	818	856	875	928
Indonesian	760	823	903	964	989	1,071	1,197	1,242
Japanese	8,922	9,806	10,346	10,983	11,536	12,035	12,525	13,097
Korean	9,407	10,634	11,476	12,243	12,973	13,588	14,227	14,924
Laotian	1,962	2,216	2,418	2,576	2,754	2,910	3,109	3,228
Malaysian	333	338	348	359	366	385	416	474
Pakistani	919	1,065	1,196	1,336	1,450	1,591	1,724	1,816
Singaporean	236	266	267	273	252	255	261	289
Taiwanese	1,412	1,624	1,760	1,900	2,012	2,136	2,296	2,479
Thai	1,827	2,115	2,349	2,447	2,551	2,731	2,876	3,075
Vietnamese	10,694	11,835	12,951	13,938	14,735	15,403	16,131	16,867
Other Asian	43,248	37,184	31,541	27,206	23,952	21,673	19,894	19,683

Key takeaway: Disaggregating the Asian student population using the detailed race and ethnicity data leads to some of the largest racial groups in the state: namely Filipino, Chinese, and Asian Indian students. Even still, the detailed race data has improved Washington's ability to reflect more, but not all, Asian student identities. For example, some groups, such as Khmer and Lamet are still not included in the choices for students. These students may account for some of the 19,000 students who still selected "Other Asian" as their choice. As data collection continues, OSPI could look for trends from the student's write-in option to suggest new categories. This would move students from an "other" category into more representative options.

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders (NH/PI) student responses

For NH/PI students, unique student responses more than doubled the enrollment totals (see Tables 2 and 3). Aggregating students into the federal race categories results in a count of 13,216 NH/PI students in 2018, or 1.11% of the student population. Using maximum representation and the detailed race data yields 29,804 responses, which means 2.50% of the state's student population reported they were 'NH/PI alone' or 'NH/PI in combination with another racial or ethnic group'.

NH/PI students account for **1.11%** of the federally reported student population, **but 2.50%** of the student population reported NH/PI as part of their racial identity under the Phase 1 collection.

Table 7 presents statewide unique student responses using the detailed race data for NHPI students. Many of the groups listed in the OSPI Phase 1 data collection are experiencing growth. Melanesian student population, however, is the smallest group and has declined over the period. The number of student responses collected as "Other Pacific Islander" declined by only about 1,500 over the period and remains the largest category.

Table 7. Race responses: *Unique student responses* for Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Washington K-12, 2011-2018.

Responses by detailed race category	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Native Hawaiian	3,739	4,132	4,359	4,636	4,957	5,270	5,553	5,783
Fijian	754	839	842	878	891	921	928	990
Guamanian Chamorro	2,828	3,373	3,680	4,076	4,341	4,659	4,773	5,073
Mariana Islander	394	440	470	532	540	587	629	646
Melanesian	146	149	128	105	85	91	83	98
Micronesian	1,169	1,539	1,836	2,132	2,406	2,636	2,892	3,152
Samoan	3,975	4,688	5,175	5,778	6,278	6,751	7,158	7,779
Tongan	641	753	784	849	885	974	1,058	1,158
Other Pacific Islander	10,573	9,830	8,844	8,470	8,359	8,566	8,690	9,085

Key takeaway: Unlike 'Other Asian' and 'Other American Indian', 'Other Pacific Islander' has not shown a continuous decline over the eight years of this data collection. In fact, this category steadily increased from 2015 to 2018. This indicates there might be more choices for inclusion on enrollment forms that would better reflect the Washington population and student identities. However, more choices would lead to increasingly small group sizes that will make data analysis and reporting challenging, particularly within this federal race category that is already quite small in Washington.

Black/African American student responses

There were no detailed race categories available for Black/African American students to select from during the Phase 1 collection. The total enrollment for Black/African American students remained consistent over this period, from 53,698 in 2011 to 53,129 in 2018 (see Table 2). However, the number of student responses increased over this period by 25% (86,031 to 107,682) (see Table 3). This number includes students that identify as Black/African American alone or in combination with another race or ethnicity.

Black/African American students account for 4.6% of the federally reported student population, **but 9.04%** of the student population reported Black/ African American as part of their racial identity under the Phase 1 collection.

Table 8 displays the number of Black students that are categorized as "Two or more races" or "Hispanic/Latino" in the aggregated federal reporting. In 2018, the difference between total enrollment (Table 2) and unique student responses is 54,553 responses. Out of these 54,553 responses, 40,198 responses (73.7%) belonged to students classified as "Two or more races" in the federal reporting. Additionally, 14,355 (26.3%) of responses belonged to students who were included in the Hispanic category for federal purposes.

Table 8. Race responses: Black/African American *student responses*, 2011-2018.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Black/ African American Responses	86,031	88,504	90,206	94,207	96,768	99,856	103,087	107,682
Black + Hispanic/Latino	6,170	7,171	7,705	8,653	9,398	10,430	11,439	14,355
Black + other Race(s) + Not Hispanic/Latino	26,163	29,208	29,986	32,649	34,484	36,730	38,644	40,198

White student responses

There were no detailed categories available for White students to select during the Phase 1 collection. Even though 681,224 students in 2018 were included in the enrollment reporting using the federal categories, the overall number of students who identify as White is even larger, closer to 975,000. This number includes students that identify as White alone or in combination with another race or ethnicity.

Table 9 displays the number of White students that are categorized as "Two or more races" or "Hispanic/Latino" in the federal race data collection. The difference between total enrollment (Table 2) and unique student responses for 2018 is 334,278 responses. Out of these 334,278

responses, 91,864 responses (27.5%) belonged to students classified as "Two or more races" in the federal reporting. Additionally, 242,414 (72.5%) of responses belonged to students that were included in the Hispanic category for federal purposes.

Table 9. Race responses: White *student responses*, 2011-2018.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
All White Responses	920,812	925,372	926,190	936,952	946,916	958,261	968,338	975,961
White + Hispanic/Latino	178,478	186,813	196,538	207,193	217,690	228,234	235,935	242,414
White + other race(s) + Not Hispanic/Latino	61,110	67,549	70,650	75,516	79,205	83,610	87,928	91,864

Conclusion and recommendations

This paper provides an overview of collecting student race and ethnicity data by the Washington public K12 sector and analyzed the phase of data collection that OSPI performed between 2011-2018. We found three primary conclusions.

1. Detailed race and ethnicity data can provide new insights about education outcomes for more distinctive groups, but data about the smallest populations may run into student privacy issues.

For most of the race and ethnicity groups identified in the Phase 1 collection, the group sizes should be large enough for ERDC, OSPI, and researchers to report information using the detailed race and ethnicity categories. Additionally, the data will provide a richness we currently don't see in the federal rollup categories where the growth of the multiracial category tells us little about the combinations of the various racial/ethnic groups.

There are some instances where extra caution should be exercised to make sure that cell sizes remain larger than 10. For example, cell sizes tend to decrease when we apply additional layers or filters of disaggregation in addition to race, such as gender, grade level, or program participation. This may be more of a concern at the school district level than at a state level. All parties should evaluate privacy concerns before giving the totals for ethnic and racial subgroups to researchers or the public, at both the state and school district level.

2. It remains a challenge to accurately represent multiracial student identities in reporting, even with the addition of more detailed race and ethnicity data.

Our analysis shows that federal reporting standards result in lower counts of students that identify with each racial group when compared to maximum representation counts. This is particularly severe for AI/AN students, where federal reporting would estimate that about 1% of students in Washington are AI/AN, but more than 6% of students reported being AI/AN as at least part of their identity. When disaggregating or aggregating data by racial group, analysts and researchers must consider the approach used and how multiracial and multiethnic students are captured in the data. Creating a dataset with binary flags for each subgroup category could provide the most flexible system for ERDC and external researchers to construct various meaningful aggregations that support their research goals.

3. Useful alternative approaches for reporting detailed race and ethnicity student data exist, but challenges using them can still arise.

Maximum representation is one technique we can use to report detailed race and ethnicity data. However, this technique will result in counts that are greater than the student population because it counts student *responses,* and students can respond with more than one race or ethnicity. Often, however, when we examine outcomes such as college-going rates or student assessments, analyses consider the total number of students who achieve a certain outcome – not the total number of responses. We need more evaluation to determine best practices for using maximum representation with student outcome information.

Maximum representation might not apply to reporting or analysis when a district needs exact student counts. However, it offers a better understanding of students who do not fit into one racial identity box and shows that far more students may identify as students of color than previously realized through other data reporting structures.

Another version of a maximum representation technique would categorize students who indicate only one race, students who indicate a race and Hispanic ethnicity, and students who indicate a race and a second race. For example, for AI/AN students, these categories might look like:

- AI/AN only
- AI/AN + Hispanic/Latino
- AI/AN + other race(s) + Not Hispanic/Latino

This technique is useful when researchers want to assess student data for a particular group such as a study of enrollments and outcomes for AI/AN students. However, like federal reporting approaches, this technique can mask a student's complete identity because it would not utilize the detailed race data. For example, students who identify as AI/AN and Black will be combined

with students who identify as AI/AN and Asian or any other race, though experiences might be different. In both cases, these students' full racial identity will be masked in reporting. O

Now that the Phase 2 Detailed Race/Ethnicity data collection is underway, it is important to continue evaluating whether agencies and researchers are reporting student-level data to best meet the needs of students and districts. Researchers should consult with community-based groups that represent the communities behind the data. This will take into consideration the unique experiences and cultural distinctions of students and their families.

The Washington State Legislature has provided funding for the state's ethnic commissions and the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs to report on student education outcomes. In these reports, the commissions will have the opportunity to dig into the data from the Phase 1 and the Phase 2 collections if they choose to do so. The Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC) could provide guidance about "do's and don'ts" of reporting detailed race and ethnicity data. The education field could benefit from recommendations regarding appropriate and preferred language when talking about student groups, best practices in data visualizations, and how to ensure that this data collection and future reporting illuminates supportive and positive interventions, rather than underrepresents or masks students.

Appendix A

Figure 2-B – OSPI Phase I Disaggregation: Race/Ethnicity Codes, 2009-10 to 2018-19

Sample Ethnicity and Race Data Collection Form 01/28/10

QUESTION 1. Is your child of Hispanic or Latino origin? (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ NOT HISPANIC/LATINO
- ☐ CUBAN
- ☐ DOMINICAN
- ☐ SPANIARD
- ☐ PUERTO RICAN
- ☐ MEXICAN/ MEXICAN AMERICAN/ CHICANO
- ☐ CENTRAL AMERICAN
- ☐ SOUTH AMERICAN
- ☐ LATIN AMERICAN
- ☐ OTHER HISPANIC/LATINO

QUESTION 2. What race(s) do you consider your child? (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ AFRICAN AMERICAN/ BLACK
- ☐ WHITE
- ☐ ASIAN INDIAN
- ☐ CAMBODIAN
- ☐ CHINESE
- ☐ FILIPINO
- ☐ HMONG
- ☐ INDONESIAN
- ☐ JAPANESE
- ☐ KOREAN
- ☐ LAOTIAN
- ☐ MALAYSIAN
- ☐ PAKISTANI
- ☐ SINGAPOREAN
- ☐ TAIWANESE
- ☐ THAI
- ☐ VIETNAMESE
- ☐ OTHER ASIAN
- ☐ NATIVE HAWAIIAN
- ☐ FIJIAN
- ☐ GUAMANIAN þr CHAMORRO
- ☐ MARIANA ISLANDER
- ☐ MELANESIAN
- ☐ MICRONESIAN
- ☐ SAMOAN
- ☐ TONGAN
- ☐ OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER
- ☐ ALASKA NATIVE
- ☐ CHEHALIS
- ☐ COLVILLE
- ☐ COWLITZ
- ☐ HOH
- ☐ JAMESTOWN
- ☐ KALISPEL
- ☐ LOWER ELWHA
- ☐ LUMMI
- ☐ MAKAH
- ☐ MUCKLESHOOT
- ☐ NISQUALLY
- ☐ NOOKSACK
- ☐ PORT GAMBLE KLALLAM
- ☐ PUYALLUP
- ☐ QUILEUTE
- ☐ QUINAULT
- ☐ SAMISH
- ☐ SAUK-SUIATTLE
- ☐ SHOALWATER
- ☐ SKOKOMISH
- ☐ SNOQUALMIE
- ☐ SPOKANE
- ☐ SQUAXIN ISLAND
- ☐ STILLAGUAMISH
- ☐ SUQUAMISH
- ☐ SWINOMISH
- ☐ TULALIP
- ☐ UPPER SKAGIT
- ☐ YAKAMA
- ☐ OTHER WASHINGTON INDIAN
- ☐ OTHER AMERICAN INDIAN

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