

IMPLEMENTING MAXIMUM REPRESENTATION

Recommendations for inclusive data collection in schools



Maximum Representation is a set of policies and practices schools can use to recognize student tribal affiliation, race, and/or ethnicity throughout their data collection and reporting processes. Washington STEM is partnering with the Office of Native Education (ONE) within OSPI and other Native education leaders to explore how these practices can be applied to correct the longstanding undercount and misclassification of Native students and other groups.

SYSTEMIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

- **Increase Native representation, particularly from local tribal nations, among school teachers, staff, and leadership.** Research shows that a diverse teaching workforce benefits all students.
- **Increase Native representation on advisory boards** to facilitate conversations about Native student needs with school leadership.
- **Educate school staff, in particular registrars and those who manage student records, as well as teachers and leadership about tribal sovereignty and government-to-government relationships.** Include information about available Native education programs and resources.
- **Educate school staff about the difference between race and tribal affiliation.** These are often erroneously conflated with one another. Whereas race signals a group based on physical traits, tribal affiliation is a political identity linked to citizenship/membership in a tribal nation.
- **Minimize harm towards Native students.** This includes changing school names to prohibit stereotypes and inaccurate Native representations, as well as holding students accountable for discrimination.
- **Create partnerships with local nonprofits supporting Native students.**

Applying Maximum Representation practices may help to correct the longstanding undercount and misclassification of Native students and other groups.

Partnering with the Office of Native Education

These recommendations were developed with ONE, Federal Way Public Schools, and the parents and caregivers in the Native American Parent Advisory Committee (NAPAC) in Federal Way Public Schools.

DATA COLLECTION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

During enrollment:

- **Provide additional information** that explains the meaning and potential impact of questions on the Student Ethnicity and Race form and ED 506 form.
- **If a Native student's tribal affiliation is not listed on the form:** While the student may not qualify for federal funding, schools may add the students to listservs for Native education programs and resources. Note: schools don't decide whether or not a student is Native.
- **If a Native student does not have legal documentation to prove tribal affiliation(s):** While the student might not qualify for Title VI funding, other sources of federal funding, such as Title III, only require self-identification.

After enrollment:

- **Inform caregivers and students that they can request edits to forms at any time;** create regular opportunities for families to update forms, such as at parent-teacher conferences.
- **Follow up with students when tribal nations update their citizenship requirements** or when a student's siblings or cousins change their tribal affiliations.
- **If a Native student chooses not to identify as Native on school forms:** Teachers can provide Native education resources when appropriate, and districts can promote Native education programs and events to teachers, staff, and students.

More resources

[Maximum Representation at School Districts](#) (knowledge paper)
[Maximum Representation in Washington State](#) (knowledge paper)
[A Call for Inclusive Data Reporting](#) (blog)
Indigenous Education State Leaders Network - [Indigenous Student Identification Map](#)
[Best Practices for American Indian and Alaska Native Data Collection](#)

