



♥ Ensuring a Place at the Table for Every Family

February 11, 2022

Submitted via www.regulations.gov

Stephanie Valentine
PRA Coordinator
Strategic Collections and Clearance
Governance and Strategy Division
Office of the Chief Data Officer
Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW, LBJ, Room 6W201
Washington, DC 20202-8240

Dear Ms. Valentine:

On behalf of the National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment (National PLACE), we wish to thank the US Department of Education (the Department) for its continued efforts to ensure equity for all students through the collection and publication of the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC). National PLACE and our 70 local, state and national member organizations are committed to ensuring that families and family-led organizations are at the table when decisions regarding children and families are being made, and that our voices meaningfully influence those decisions. We write in response to the notice published in the Federal Register on December 13, 2021, regarding a proposed Civil Rights Data Collection Information Collection Request (ICR) for the 2021-22 school year.

In addition to our own comments, below, National PLACE endorses the comments of the Education Task Force of the Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights and the Education Task Force of the Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities; National PLACE is an active member of the Education Task Forces of both of these civil rights coalitions. Our specific comments focus on the importance of these data for families and family-led organizations to enable us to advocate on behalf of individual children and children/students more broadly.

The CRDC provides families crucial information needed to make informed choices about their children's education. Parents need the information presented in the CRDC's user-friendly interface to gauge which schools are likely to be the best fit for their family, as well as to work with other parents, family-led organizations, educators, and advocates to make decisions about needed areas of improvement on which to focus their school improvement efforts. Through regular review of CRDC data, parents, parent-led organizations, advocates, and other members of the public, including the media, can examine trends among schools. They can identify which schools are more likely to provide equal educational opportunities, and which face continuing challenges. The Department collects data that permits stakeholders, most importantly, parents and parent-led organizations, to make evidence-based comparisons about quantifiable measures of school climate and resource equity, including restraint and seclusion, school discipline, academic proficiency, harassment and bullying, and others.

The CRDC data is critically important to the Department's statutory responsibility to hold schools, districts, and states accountable for compliance with our civil rights laws. The Department's own reports about the activities of the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), including the CRDC, demonstrate the continuing need for robust collection and dissemination of this data. CRDC data continues to indicate very real and continuing challenges in our nation's public school system. There are still significant disparities in out-of-school suspensions among students of color and students with disabilities.¹ English learners, students with disabilities, and students of color are more likely to be retained one or more grades in high school.² Students of color are more likely to attend schools with higher concentrations of inexperienced teachers.³ The continued collection and publication of data on these and other topics will tell parents, parent-led organizations, and the general public whether schools are correcting these or not and whether they are facing new disturbing trends.

For these reasons, we are pleased that the Department continues the CRDC with its full support. We note our following recommendations:

- Continue to collect and report universal data on all schools on an annual basis
- Include information specific to the COVID-19 public health crisis including information about instructional time, method(s) of instruction, and school/district support for remote learning
- Retain all of the following items:
 - School finance items
 - Teacher experience, teacher absenteeism, and teacher retention
 - Support services state data
 - All early childhood items
 - Advanced placement test-taking items
 - Participation in credit recovery programs
 - Single sex interscholastic athletics in high school sports

¹ U.S. Dep't of Educ., 2013-2014 Civil Rights Data Collection: A First Look (Oct. 28, 2016), at 3.

² *Id.* at 7.

³ *Id.* at 9.

- With regard to discipline:
 - Require reporting of “informal” removals from school
 - Require reporting about referrals to and outcomes for “threat assessment”
Require reporting about the use of force by school-based law enforcement
 - Include additional restraint and seclusion items
- Expand the disaggregation of data about the bases on which students are subjected to bullying and harassment, and the form of harassment, including bullying, harassment and sexual assault by staff, but exercise caution with regard to disaggregation of experiences of bullying and harassment based on religion
- With specific regard to students with disabilities:
 - Disaggregate by both IDEA and 504-status for any item that is disaggregated by disability status
 - Include and disaggregate the experiences of children with disabilities placed by school districts in nonpublic schools
 - Retain the number of emerging bilingual (ELL) students enrolled in Language Instructional Educational Programs by disability status including IDEA- and 504-eligibility status
 - Retain the count of children with disabilities in preschool who are served only under Section 504
- Disaggregate by:
 - Race and ethnicity data by the American Community Survey categories;
 - Nonbinary where available and support implementation of this new measure
 - Pregnant or parental status
- Provide information regarding district, school, and state level Civil Rights Coordinators
- Include disaggregated and cross-tabulated number of teachers at the school level by race and gender
- Clarify how other data, such as that included in the National Center for Education Statistics, are integrated into the CRDC
- Use the CRDC’s user-friendly interface to make data available from other ED data sets
- Improve the efficiency and timeliness of data reporting
- Encourage states to support districts with reporting accurate, reliable and timely data.

In conclusion, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the CRDC. For any questions or for additional information about this letter and its recommendations, please contact Diana Autin, Executive Director of the National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment (National PLACE), at dautin@parentsatthetable.org.

Sincerely:



Diana MTK Autin

On behalf of National PLACE