

DATA DISAGGREGATION

Opportunities & Challenges

How do we know what exists in data disaggregation practices?

- On May 4, 2012, the U.S. Department of Education issued a Request for Information (RFI), announcing that it is seeking to gather and share information about practices and policies regarding existing education data systems that disaggregate data on sub-groups within the Asian American/Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander (AANHPI) student population. The RFI can be found at: <http://1.usa.gov/AANHPIdata>. The comments received from the RFI form the analysis that is presented below in identifying major opportunities, challenges, and further recommendations for data disaggregation of AANHPI students.

Who responded to the RFI?

- 711 total comments were received from diverse stakeholders.

Where did responses come from?

- Responses came from 35 states, the District of Columbia, two U.S. territories (Guam and American Samoa), the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia.

COMMENTS BY RFI CATEGORY¹

Category	#
Student	331
Individual	124
Local Education Agencies (LEA) (i.e., school districts)	42
Parent/Relative	49
Organization	63
Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) (i.e., universities/colleges)	44
State Education Agencies (SEA)	22
Other	21
Public Elementary/Secondary School	13
State Agency	2
Total	711

What are the major opportunities for data disaggregation?

- Of the comments received, 42 institutions reported collecting disaggregated data. These 42 institutions came from three states (California, Washington, Hawaii), two U.S. territories (Guam and American Samoa), and the Federated States of Micronesia.
- Diverse stakeholders (ranging from LEAs, IHEs, community members and policy makers) spoke to public will for disaggregating data. Comments spoke to the importance and need for data disaggregation in order to understand the educational needs of AANHPI students. Comments came from across the nation, including communities with emerging AANHPI populations such as Amarillo, TX and Charlotte, NC.
- LEAs demonstrated experience in collecting other types of granular data including "Country of Origin" and "Language of Origin/Home Language." While these variables are only proxies for a student's ethnicity, and LEAs do not report this data, the ability for LEAs to collect this data speaks to existing knowledge and experience with collecting granular data. This practice and experience could be leveraged to also collect disaggregated data on race and ethnicity.
- IHEs that received federal funding from the Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISI) Program reported that this was a key source to fund research projects that allowed for collecting disaggregated data, and that it motivated IHEs to analyze and report out on this disaggregated data for AANHPI students.

¹ For the purposes of this chart, three categories include several types of comments: Organization, IHE, and Other. For example, the IHE category includes comments that are identified as Two-Year Institutions, Four-Year Institutions, Private/Public Institute of Higher Education, etc.



What are the major challenges for data disaggregation?

- LEAs, SEAs, and IHEs consistently commented that they do not disaggregate data beyond what is mandated or “required” by the federal government.
- Of the LEAs and IHEs that collected disaggregated data on AANHPI student ethnicities, none reported this data to the state or federal government. An exception is made for the Hawaii Department of Education which produces annual public reports with disaggregated data on student enrollment by ethnicity. However, student outcomes data, e.g., percentage of AANHPI ethnic groups who are meeting reading proficiency levels, are still not disaggregated by AANHPI ethnic groups for state or federal reports.
- Institutions often remarked on the small number of Asian American students within their district or state as a reason why they do not disaggregate data of AANHPI students. However, many of these institutions are located in regions or states that have seen tremendous growth within their AANHPI population. Additionally, for institutions that do disaggregate data, reporting out on small numbers of AANHPI sub-groups remained a challenge.
- The top infrastructure changes that would have to be made to disaggregate data include training staff, revising student enrollment forms, and revising databases.
- While some agencies see data disaggregation as beneficial for students of other races and ethnicities as well, others feel uncertain of how wide to expand race and ethnicity options as data disaggregation for AANHPI students would prompt other race and ethnic groups to also demand a separate category for identification purposes.
- Institutions commented on the challenge of accurately counting multi-racial students under the U.S. Department of Education’s current data guidance to count all multi-racial students under the category of “Two or More Races.” Institutions representing Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students were especially concerned about the risk of undercounting Native Hawaiian students through this policy as a large proportion of these students are multi-racial.
- Institutions that disaggregated data on a wide scale (e.g., all school districts in a state, or all universities from one university system) reported that keeping consistent data disaggregation practices across sites was a challenge. Inconsistent data collection results in incomparable data and prevents institutions from understanding the needs of their AANHPI students.

What models exist for wide scale data disaggregation?

- The states of Hawaii and California provide two examples of wide scale data disaggregation. Hawaii’s Department of Education and California’s education institutions (including California Department of Education, University of California, and California State University college systems) revealed three best practices:
 - Collective decision making processes that other education agencies can utilize to make decisions on data disaggregation on a state-wide level;
 - The combination of legislative and grassroots action for data changes to respond to community needs; and
 - The formation of partnerships between K-12 and higher education data to truly serve the needs of AANHPI students.

HIGHLIGHTING GRASSROOTS & LEGISLATIVE ACTION

“Several factors precipitated the University [of California]’s change in race/ethnicity data collection. During the 2006-07 academic year, members of the Asian Pacific American Coalition undergraduate student group at UCLA launched the ‘Count Me In!’ campaign that was supported by thousands of UC students throughout the system. The campaign sought to encourage the University to break down the general list of AAPI categories into more discrete [A]ANHPI subpopulations. Their request echoed calls from UC faculty for more granular research data. Also, during the 2007-08 legislative session, California passed Assembly Bill 295 (Lieu), which required specific state agencies to add 10 ethnicities to the list of 11 subgroups the U.S. Census was already tracking. The timing of the student-led grassroots campaign and state legislative action aligned with the University’s own analysis for the need to disaggregate data, which ultimately resulted in the revised data collection policy.”¹

-- Judy Sakaki, University of California Office of the President

**For SEARAC’s full findings and policy recommendations,
please refer to the publication,
*Moving Beyond the “Asian” Check Box.***

¹ Request for Information Response. Comment ID: ED-2012-OESE-0009-0708. Accessed June 2013, <http://www.regulations.gov/#/documentDetail;D=ED-2012-OESE-0009-0708>.

