

Guidelines for Reporting and Interpreting Student Data

Part 1. Reporting and Interpreting Student Data

Scope and Purpose

These guidelines apply when data gathered on individual students are reported to schools, other agencies or institutions, or the general public. They apply both to collective (summarized) and disaggregated data. Their purpose is both to insure the confidentiality of student data and to promote valid interpretation of data, especially disaggregated data.

Rationale

The use of student data raises issues concerning students' privacy rights and the confidentiality of certain information (e.g., individuals' test scores). These issues supersede other questions when they come into play. Student data may be used **only** when its use will not violate individuals' privacy rights or reveal confidential information about them.

Erroneous conclusions can be drawn from improper interpretation of subgroups' results, especially if the school's tested population or the subgroup is non-representative or too small to be fairly representative of the school or the subgroup population.

Part 2. Reporting and Interpreting Collective Data

Definition

Data subject to these guidelines include all student data that are subject to privacy restrictions under federal law and that are reported to schools, other agencies or institutions, or the general public. These include, but are not limited to, achievement test scores, grades, standards-based scores from the Hawaii Assessment Program, attendance, and enrollment status (e.g., drop-outs).

Student performance data used for school accountability are **samples** taken from the school population from which we infer overall school performance. Because the data come from samples, a minimum sample is required for valid inferences about the school as a whole. Professionals in data analysis have determined that minimum sample size to be **30**.

Reporting

To Schools: Collective student performance data will be reported to the schools. If there are fewer than **30** students in a school's subject population, the data will be marked for use by school professional staff only. If any data are provided to school professional staff or other persons under assurance of confidentiality, all personnel receiving such data shall be fully informed of the data's confidential nature and properly instructed on the protection of such data, including proper storage, restriction of access, etc.

To Other Agencies and the Public: Collective student performance data will be reported to other agencies or the public if there are **30** or more students in a school's subject population. If not, the report will note that there were too few students to provide valid report data.

Part 3. Reporting and Interpreting Disaggregated Data

Definition

Data subject to these guidelines include all disaggregated student performance data that are reported to schools, other agencies or institutions, or the general public. Disaggregation is the display of data like test scores separately for relevant groups, such as boys and girls or ethnic groups. Disaggregating student performance data addresses the question: "Are all students meeting challenging standards?" Its purpose is to identify groups of students who may not be fully benefitting from the state's educational program to assist them in meeting the state's standards. In the use of disaggregation to promote equity in schools, it is imperative to maintain the confidentiality of student information and to prevent misinterpretation and misuse of disaggregated data.

Recognizing the value of disaggregated test data, the U. S. Department of Education requires statewide disaggregated test data in state Title I reports. The disaggregation categories include: gender, ethnicity, poverty status, special education status, English proficiency, and migrant status.

These guidelines apply to disaggregated data that are intended to be made public, or **may be** made public. If there is any question concerning the public availability of any data, the data are to be treated as if they will be made public.

Reporting

To Schools: Disaggregated data on the performance of students in schools will be reported to the schools. Disaggregated data sent to schools will be marked for use by schools professional staff only. If any cell size is less than 10, the data will be accompanied by explicit cautions about interpretations from small cell sizes.

To Other Agencies and the Public: Disaggregated data may be reported to other agencies and the public so long as there is no issue relating to privacy or the revelation of confidential information. However, disaggregation that could reveal protected information, such as special education status, must be treated with care. The categories of information that should be assumed to raise issues of confidentiality are: special education status, limited English proficiency status, eligibility for free or reduced cost lunch, and Section 504 eligibility.

(1) Student performance data disaggregated by a characteristic such as ethnicity may be reported to other agencies or the public, provided that the **cell size** is at least **10**; otherwise, the disaggregation for cell sizes that do not meet this criterion shall not be reported.

(2) Estimates of subpopulation parameters (e.g., means and standard deviations) or statistical parametric tests (e.g., t-test and ANOVA) based on disaggregated student performance data may only be reported to other agencies or the public **only if** the size of the **subgroup** for which such calculations are made is at least **30**.

Any dissemination of disaggregated student performance data shall be accompanied by explanatory notes for the proper interpretation and use of the data. The notes are to be provided by the office considered to be the source of the data.