

Dear Parents and Guardians,

There are new guidelines from the U.S. Department of Education regarding the required collection of data on race and ethnicity for public school students. The Federal Government, which requires collecting this information, has developed a new way to report ethnicity and race that includes new categories.

The Federal Government has developed these new categories in order to provide a more accurate picture of the nation's ethnic and racial diversity. This will enable individuals to be identified in ethnic and racial classifications in more than one racial category. In the past, forms allowed individuals to be identified in only one racial category.

Currently, Prince Edward County Public Schools asks families to provide information on student's race and ethnicity at the time of enrollment. Beginning in May 2010, Prince Edward will ask the families of newly enrolled students AND of all currently enrolled students to complete a brief form to update information on their children's ethnicity and race.

The data with the new ethnicity and race categories will be used in the same manner that such information is currently used. For example, the federal government uses racial and ethnic data in reporting and analyzing test results such as the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL). The new categories will replace all existing categories for use in all state and federal data collections that include data on ethnicity or race.

At this time we are considering having students from grade 3 to 12 to self-identify their ethnicity or race during homeroom or first class period. Parents or guardians of students in pre-K to grade 2 will receive a form to identify their children's ethnicity or race and return it to their children's teacher. This form will look very similar to the recent U.S. census form.

Please contact your child's principal if you have further questions about this new process.

Sincerely,

Dr. David Smith
Division Superintendent