NOVEMBER 2023

Civil Rights Data Quality from Start to Finish

2020-21 Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC)

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights

About the Civil Rights Data Collection

The U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) administers the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), which is a mandatory survey of all public schools and school districts in the 50 states, Washington, D.C., and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The CRDC gathers information about student access to educational programs, activities, and staff, and school climate factors, such as student discipline and harassment or bullying incidents, from public schools serving students in preschool through 12th grade. For the 2020-21 school year, the CRDC includes data from more than 17,000 school districts and 97,000 schools nationwide. For more information about the CRDC or to download the full CRDC public-use data file, please visit https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov.

Data Quality Matters

Data quality generally refers to the trustworthiness of the data and includes the consideration of timeliness, accuracy, relevance, completeness, and consistency. OCR, ED, other federal agencies, state educational agencies, school districts, and many other organizations use the CRDC to inform decisions that will ensure students have equal access to educational programs or activities.

Steps OCR Takes to Ensure Good Data Quality

OCR relies on school districts and other data submitters to ensure that correct data are submitted on time.[1] To support school districts' timely submission of accurate data, OCR takes steps before, during, and after the submission process to support the collection of quality data. Specifically, OCR engages in the following activities:

Before the Collection Starts

1. Prior to creating new CRDC survey forms, OCR gathers feedback from members of the public through listening sessions and information collection requests.
2. OCR makes survey forms and technical assistance documents available on the CRDC Resource Center website (https://crdc.communities.ed.gov/#program) for school districts and other data submitters to prepare for the upcoming collection.
3. OCR communicates timelines, due dates, submission requirements, and additional important information to data submitters.

During the Data Collection

1. Data submitters self-report, and must certify all data as correct.
2. OCR implements real-time data quality checks in the submission system that help data submitters to correct potential errors. For more information about real-time data quality checks, please see the 2020-21 CRDC business rule inventory document on the CRDC Resource Center website.
3. The CRDC Partner Support Center (PSC) provides support to school districts in multiple ways, including:
   - One-on-one Help Desk support via email and/or phone.
   - Accessible resources such as technical assistance documents and training videos.
   - For the 2020-21 CRDC, the PSC engaged in the following activities with data submitters:

10,000+ Email Reminders Sent

24,000+ Responses to Emails Sent

16,000+ Phone Calls Received

35 Training Videos Created

50 Trainings Provided

70+ Technical Assistance Documents Provided

4. OCR monitors data submissions to ensure all school districts submit data before the deadline and evaluates data for errors and quality.
5. When a school or school district is unable to provide CRDC data, OCR requires corrective action for future compliance that can include the development of an action plan to ensure that accurate and complete data are submitted for the next collection cycle or enforcement.

After the Collection

1. OCR conducts analyses on submitted data and reaches out to select school districts to correct potentially erroneous data.
2. OCR applies data quality suppressions in the CRDC's public-use data file to mask potentially erroneous data.

   Prior to its release, the public-use data file for the CRDC undergoes data quality suppression, which is standard methodology used to improve both the reliability and usability of data. This process applies data quality checks to identify data that appear to be erroneous or of poor quality. OCR implemented data quality suppressions as a small-scale pilot for the 2017-18 CRDC and more broadly for the 2020-21 CRDC.
3. OCR also applies privacy protections on data in the CRDC public-use data file to prevent the identification of students.

Data quality continues to evolve and improve with each CRDC in an ongoing process to ensure the best data are available to the public.

> OCR releases a restricted-use data file, which is available to researchers with a restricted-use data license obtained through ED's National Center for Education Statistics. The restricted-use data file does not have data quality suppressions or privacy protections. For more information on obtaining a restricted-use data license, please visit https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/licenses.asp.
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> Data collected for the first time are optional for school districts to report. The response rates for optional data elements are generally very low. For data quality purposes, optional data are not released in the public-use data file but can be found in the restricted-use data file.

[1] *The CRDC is a district-level collection. Some states submit some or all data on behalf of their school districts, but school districts are required to certify the data. There is one exception: Florida is the only state that certifies data for all of its school districts.*

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For requests for documents in alternate formats, such as Braille or large print, please contact the U.S. Department of Education at (202) 260-0852 or om_eeos@ed.gov.

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