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THE FUTURE OF FAIR ADMISSIONS

ISSUE BRIEF 3: TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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This issue brief is the third of three to be released by Education Reform Now in conjunction with the Supreme Court’s hearing of two cases challenging the legality of race-conscious admission policies. *The Future of Fair Admissions* series identifies areas of the college admissions process that demand reform to provide a fairer pathway to opportunity for all students. Issue Brief One addressed early decision. Issue Brief Two addressed legacy preferences.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To address long-standing racial and ethnic gaps in bachelor's degree attainment that are likely to be exacerbated by a Supreme Court decision expected to bar institutions of higher education (IHEs) from considering race in their admissions processes, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) should expand its collection of admissions data and disaggregate that data by race, ethnicity, gender, and, when possible, socioeconomic status.

It is to the benefit of all Americans to expand access to the opportunities afforded by college, which is why it should concern us all that access to opportunity is still not evenly or fairly distributed across society. If those gaps are to shrink, researchers, institutional leadership, equity advocates, and policymakers will need a better understanding of their causes.

Currently, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) does not collect or publish disaggregated data for applicants or admits (i.e., admitted applicants), which creates a blind spot in understanding the sources of enrollment and graduation gaps. Nor does ED collect any data on legacy preferences or early decision plans, two admissions practices shown to have detrimental effects on diversity at selective colleges.

While increasing transparency in college admissions of colleges and universities has always been important, it will become essential should the Supreme Court ban the consideration of race in the admissions process, as it is expected to do in 2023. If policymakers, researchers, advocates, institutions, and students are to understand the impact of the elimination of race-conscious

admissions practices, they will need richer information about each step in the process. Increasing transparency is more than just a path toward greater accountability for institutions of higher education; it is a powerful signal the Biden administration can send to indicate its commitment to diversity.

The Department of Education should use the authority granted to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to expand the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) survey to include three new Admissions (ADM) components:

1. Racial and ethnic demographic data for applicants and admits, not just enrollments, to track disparities in access throughout the admissions pipeline and not just at its endpoint.
2. Whether an IHE considers an alumni relation in its admissions process and, if it does, the number of applicants, admits, and enrollments that fall under this category, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and, when possible, socioeconomic status, to measure the impact that providing a legacy preference has on access and diversity.
3. Whether an IHE offers an early decision plan as part of its admissions process and, if it does, the number of applicants, admits, and enrollments that fall under this category, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and, when possible, socioeconomic status, to measure the impact that offering early decision has on access and diversity.



INTRODUCTION

Higher education can and should be an engine for social mobility. A college credential and a bachelor's degree in particular lead to higher rates of employment, larger average incomes, and greater rates of enrollment in health insurance plans.¹ It is to the benefit of all Americans to expand access to the opportunities afforded by college, which is why it should concern us all that access to opportunity is still not evenly or fairly distributed across society.

While racial and ethnic gaps in the attainment of a high school diploma have shrunk significantly since 1981, they persist in bachelor's degree attainment. The HS diploma gap between Black and White students has virtually disappeared, but the bachelor's degree gap has remained flat. Between White and Hispanic Americans, the bachelor's degree gap has gotten worse (see Figure 1). If those gaps are to shrink, we need a better understanding of their causes.

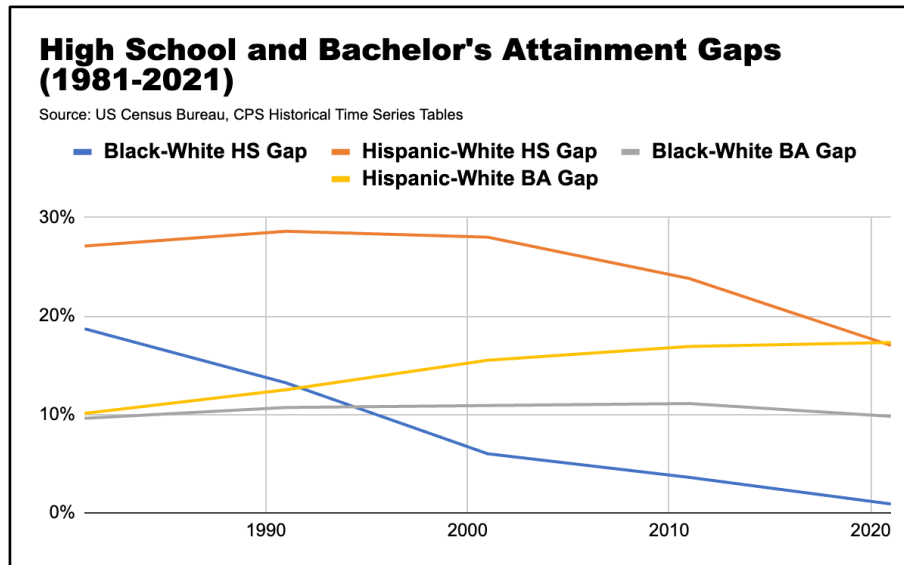


Figure 1

The reasons for college enrollment gaps are multiple and complex. Underrepresented students of color are lost at several points along the higher education access pipeline, from primary and secondary school preparation to application, admission, and enrollment. To close these gaps, policymakers, analysts, researchers, civil rights organizations, and higher education agencies first need to understand where they are created using data disaggregated by race and ethnicity. **Currently, the U.S. Department of Education does not collect or publish disaggregated data for applicants or admits (i.e., admitted applicants), which creates blind spots in understanding the sources of enrollment and graduation gaps.**

Nor does ED collect any data on applicants, admits, or enrollments who have legacy status or who applied through an early decision plan, two admissions practices shown to have detrimental effects on diversity at selective colleges. Legacy status refers to the preferential treatment received by applicants who are related to alumni of a college in the admissions process. Early decision is an admissions plan in which applicants submit an application by November 1 or 15 and receive a decision by mid-December. When they apply, they commit to enrolling if admitted. Adding survey questions about early decision and legacy preferences to ED's annual Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) survey would make it possible for the first time to evaluate the full impact that these admissions practices have on diversity and access.

While increasing transparency in college admissions of colleges and universities has always been important, it will become essential should the Supreme Court ban the consideration of race in admissions processes, as it is expected to do in 2023. On October 31, 2022, the Court heard oral arguments in *Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA) v. University of North Carolina* and *SFFA v. Harvard University*. A decision on the case is expected in June 2023, and most experts predict it will effectively prevent IHEs from taking applicants' race into account when making admissions decisions.

If policymakers, researchers, and advocates are to understand the impact of the elimination of race-conscious admissions practices, they will need richer information about each step in the process. Colleges and universities will also need a better sense of what peer institutions do in response to the likely Supreme Court decisions if they are to redesign their admissions practices in a way that maintains their commitment to diversity. Finally, students and families deserve greater visibility into colleges' admissions processes both to make wiser decisions about where to apply and to demand greater fairness. **Increasing transparency is more than just a path toward greater**

accountability for institutions of higher education; it is a powerful signal that the Biden administration can send to indicate its commitment to diversity and fairness.

PROPOSED CHANGES

The Department of Education should use the authority granted to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to expand the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) to include three new Admissions (ADM) survey components:

1. **Racial and ethnic demographic data for applications and admits, not just enrollments, to track disparities in access throughout the admissions pipeline and not just at its endpoint.**
2. **Whether an IHE considers an alumni relation in its admissions process and, if it does, the number of applications, admits, and enrollments that fall under this category, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and, when possible, socioeconomic status, to measure the impact that providing a legacy preference has on access and diversity.**
3. **Whether an IHE offers an early decision plan as part of its admissions process and, if it does, the number of applications, admits, and enrollments that fall under this category, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and, when possible, socioeconomic status, to measure the impact that offering early decision has on access and diversity.**

BACKGROUND

Applicants and Admits

The IPEDS Admissions component currently collects data on applications, admits, and enrollments for entering first-time, degree/certificate-seeking students in the fall term and only at institutions that do not have an open admissions policy. All three groups are disaggregated by gender, but only enrollments are disaggregated by race and ethnicity as part of the Fall Enrollment component.

There is no national higher education survey that collects and publishes data on the race or ethnicity of applicants or admits. There are, however, states, such as New York, and higher education systems, such as the University of California, that do disaggregate admissions data. Notably, New York publishes this data for public and private institutions. About a quarter of all four-year students attend private not-for-profit colleges, so it is incumbent to collect applicant and admit data for these institutions.²

Early Decision

IPEDS collects no data on early decision applicants, admits, or enrollments. The Common Data Set (CDS) is an annual survey administered by three private organizations. It does collect data on early decision applicants and admits, but it does not include data on enrollments, and it does not disaggregate its early decision data by race or ethnicity. The CDS also lacks the authority ED has to compel accurate responses to its survey. Several highly selective institutions that do offer early decision, including the University of Chicago, NYU, Tufts, Boston College, and Northwestern, choose not to report data for the early decision plans they offer. On numerous occasions in recent years, universities have been caught reporting inaccurate data to the CDS.³ In 2022, for instance, a math professor at Columbia University showed that his home institution had been misreporting to the CDS for several years, the effect of which was to inflate Columbia's ranking in *US News and World Report Best Colleges*.⁴

Legacy Preferences

Until this year, IPEDS collected no data on legacy preferences. Beginning in the fall of 2022, the ADM component will ask institutions whether “legacy status” is an admissions consideration. The CDS does ask universities and colleges whether they consider a “relation to alumni/ae” in their admissions processes, but it collects no other data on legacy preferences.

In 2019, California passed a law requiring every four-year college in the state to report whether it gives the relatives of alumni preferential treatment in the admissions process.⁵ The requirement runs through 2024. Although its passage has coincided with declining legacy admit rates at several institutions, the law is hampered by allowing colleges and universities to determine whether they give the relatives of alumni preferential treatment. That leeway allowed Pitzer College to opt out of reporting data in the second year of the law's existence, even though its CDS report clearly indicated that it provides a legacy preference.⁶

What little data we have on legacy preference has been provided voluntarily on university websites or to college newspapers—a disclosure that's becoming increasingly less common—or through the *SFFA v. Harvard* lawsuit, which exposed a great deal of alarming data about how heavily advantaged legacies are in the admissions process and how

few of these legacies are students of color. Neither voluntary reports nor lawsuits are good or reliable ways to make the role played by legacy preferences more transparent in the admissions process, particularly since most IHEs hide this data away, as if they might be embarrassed were it made public.

NEED

Given ED's mission (see Appendix A) to collect and disseminate data to ensure equal access, to answer policy and research questions, and to help students and families make informed decisions in choosing a college, IPEDS should expand the collection of racial and ethnic categories in the Admissions component to include not just enrollment but also applicants and admits and break out this data for early decision and legacy preferences.

Applicants and Admits

Disaggregated data on applicants and admits are needed because there are many factors that shape who enrolls in a particular university. While disaggregated enrollment data can reveal whether a demographic group is underrepresented at an institution compared with similar institutions, it cannot provide any further insight into why this might be so. It is useful to identify the point(s) in the admissions process that might lead to underrepresentation.

It is possible, for instance, that an institution enrolling a disproportionately low share of students who identify as Hispanic might either receive a disproportionately low number of applications from Hispanics or might disproportionately reject Hispanic applicants. It would be important to know which it is, since they might warrant different responses. Disproportionately low application numbers suggest the need to change recruitment tactics. Disproportionately low admit numbers suggest the need to change admissions file reading practices and reconsider institutional priorities. Disproportionately low enrollment numbers suggest the need to address affordability and campus climate (e.g., how welcome and included students from a wide range of backgrounds and identities feel there).

Legacy Preferences and Early Decision

There has long been a need for more transparency around the use of legacy preferences and early decision in college admissions, particularly at selective institutions where even small advantages can make all the difference in securing a seat in the freshman class. These advantages are especially alarming, since they have nothing to do with academic merit or the potential contributions that students can make to community life at the institution. This shadow admissions system, which largely benefits students who already enjoy great advantages, deserves to be exposed.

The size of a legacy advantage is difficult to determine due to a lack of data, but one study estimated that the benefit of applying as a legacy was equivalent to earning an additional 160 points on the SAT.⁷ A study of 30 highly selective colleges found that legacy applicants were three times more likely to be admitted as equally qualified non-legacy applicants.⁸ The SFFA lawsuit revealed that legacy applicants at Harvard were roughly six times more likely to be admitted than non-legacy and non-athlete applicants were.⁹

Early decision is also associated with greatly enhanced chances of admission. At some Ivy League universities, students who apply early decision are three to four times more likely to be admitted than those who apply for the regular deadline.¹⁰ A study of early decision found that applying through early decision provided a boost equivalent to 100 extra points on the SAT, even after controlling for applicants' qualifications.¹¹ A quarter of the institutions that offer early decision enroll at least half of their freshmen class through early decision.

It is clear that most of the advantages of legacy preferences and early decision go to wealthy, White applicants. Legacy preferences are rooted in a history of ugly discrimination. As Jerome Karabel details in *The Chosen*, legacy preferences arose at elite institutions in the 1920s and 1930s as a way to limit the enrollment of Jewish immigrants whose qualifications outstripped those of long-standing, well-to-do families that Ivy League leadership preferred to see on campus. Legacy preferences continue to favor wealthy, White families who have lived in America for generations and benefited from past racial segregation and discriminatory policies.

- The SFFA lawsuit against Harvard revealed that 77% of legacy admits were White, while just 5% were Black and 9% were Hispanic.¹²
- At the University of Notre Dame, there were five times as many legacies in the Class of 2024 as there were Black students.¹³
- At Harvard, Cornell, Stanford, Penn, and the University of Southern California, the share of freshmen who are legacies is twice the share who identify as Black.¹⁴

Early decision favors students with strong college advising, knowledgeable parents, and the ability to commit to a college or university without considering competing financial aid packages. According to 2021 data from the Common Application, which more than a million students use each year to apply to over 900 colleges:

- Asian American applicants were three times more likely to apply through early decision than Black applicants were.¹⁶
- Applicants from the wealthiest ZIP codes were twice as likely to apply early decision than all other applicants were.¹⁷

The Impending Supreme Court Decision

The likelihood that the Supreme Court will bar colleges and institutions from considering race and ethnicity in the admissions processes in 2023 only increases the need for these proposed changes. If the justices side with SFFA, the decision will almost certainly exacerbate existing racial and ethnic gaps at selective colleges and universities that had considered race in their admissions process.¹⁸ The evidence from states where public universities have already banned race-conscious admission practices overwhelmingly indicates that such bans lead to declines in the share of enrolled students who identify as Black, Hispanic, or Native American.

- Several studies have found immediate declines in the enrollment of Black, Hispanic, and Native American students after the elimination of race-conscious admissions policies, as well as “persistent declines in the share of underrepresented minorities among students admitted to and enrolling in public flagship universities,” even after race-neutral alternatives have been implemented to increase diversity.¹⁹
- After California passed Proposition 209 in 1996, the number of applications to the University of California system from African American, American Indian, and Hispanic high school students dropped immediately, even before the law went into effect.²⁰
- After the elimination of race-conscious admissions in California and Texas, admission rates of Black and Hispanic students fell by 30-50 percent at the states’ most selective universities, and underrepresented minority representation in their entering freshman classes declined.²¹
- Black undergraduate enrollment at the University of Michigan went from 7.03 percent in 2006, the year before a state ban on affirmative action went into effect, to 3.92 percent in 2021, a reduction of 44 percent. During this period, the percentage of college-aged African Americans in Michigan actually increased from 16 to 19 percent.²²
- Five years after Oklahoma banned the consideration of race in admissions, freshman enrollment at the University of Oklahoma dropped by more than 25 percent.²³
- There is some evidence that eliminating the consideration of race and ethnicity in admissions processes may discourage Hispanic and Black students from applying to college at all.²⁴

Because attending a highly selective institution has particularly large returns for underrepresented students, changes in enrollment patterns can have a significant impact on degree completion and lifetime earnings.²⁵ After the passage of Proposition 209 barred the consideration of race in the admissions process of public universities in California, degree attainment declined overall for Black and Hispanic applicants compared to the period just before California’s ban went into effect. Proposition 209 deterred thousands of qualified URM students from applying to any UC campus and led others to enroll in institutions of higher education with lower completion rates and smaller financial returns. **These changes in enrollment led to long-term effects on income, as Black and Hispanic applicants’ average wages in their 20s and 30s declined from the period before Proposition 209. Banning affirmative action in California ultimately increased social and economic inequality in the state.**²⁶

Should the Supreme Court decide in favor of Student for Fair Admissions, it will be essential to measure the national impact of the decision on applicants, admits, and enrollments. If the Department of Education does not expand its IPEDS admissions data collection, the nation will be in an even worse position than the University of California system, because we will not be able to measure the full impact of the elimination of race-conscious admissions.

A Supreme Court decision barring the consideration of race in the college admissions process will also increase the need to include disaggregated data on legacy preferences and early decision in the Admissions component of IPEDS. It will be important to track the effects of both practices, particularly since eliminating them could serve as a race-neutral mechanism to increase enrollment among underrepresented minorities.

VALUE

The proposed changes to IPEDS will benefit a wide range of stakeholders, including policy makers, researchers, policy advocates, civil rights organizations, institutions of higher education, school counselors, students, and state, tribal, and federal agencies, such as the Institute of Education Sciences and the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights. Admissions is already one of the most frequently used IPEDS survey components. Richer admissions data and increased transparency will not only make the admissions component more useful; it will make it more used, because it will:

- enhance the Department of Education’s ability to fulfill the Education Sciences Reform Act’s directive to “collect, report, analyze, and disseminate statistical data related to the condition and progress of postsecondary

education, including *access to and opportunity for postsecondary education* [emphasis added]^{11,27}

- enrich policymakers' and policy advocates' understanding of the sources of racial and ethnic gaps in college enrollment;
- allow researchers to measure the impact of a Supreme Court decision to ban the consideration of race in college admissions, should it happen;
- provide new insights that can drive institutional and public policies directed at closing enrollment gaps and decreasing social and economic inequality;
- help students and their families make informed decisions when choosing a college;
- give institutions of higher education insights into their peers' practices, which could enhance their ability to enroll diverse classes; and
- make it easier to hold colleges accountable when they engage in admissions practices that harm diversity, such as providing a legacy preference or offering early decision.

NEW IPEDS QUESTIONS

1. Expanded demographic data for applicants and admits

The IPEDS Admissions survey component should ask universities and colleges that already report data for entering first-time, degree/certificate-seeking students in the fall term to report the total number for applicants, admits, and enrollments, as they currently do, but also report the numbers for applicants, admits, and enrollments disaggregated by the categories of race, ethnicity, and gender currently collected in the Fall Enrollment component.

2. Legacy preferences

IPEDS should ask universities and colleges that already report data for entering first-time, degree/certificate-seeking students in the fall term whether they consider legacy status in their admissions process and, if so, to report the total number of applicants, admits (i.e., admitted applicants), and enrollments who had legacy status and to disaggregate each category by race, ethnicity, and gender. Enrolled students who are legacies should be disaggregated by whether they received a Pell Grant. This data is not available for applicants and admits.

IPEDS added "legacy status" to the "Admissions Considerations" question of the ADM Component in fall 2022. Legacies are defined as "students who have a familial tie to an institution including parents or relatives who are alumni or a sibling who currently attends." Institutions indicate whether they consider legacy status or not. There are no questions about how many applicants, admits, or enrollments have legacy status.

Based on the implementation of California's legacy reporting requirement, which allowed institutions of higher education to self-determine whether they provided legacies preferential treatment, there is real reason to be concerned with IPEDS' failure to define "consider." It provides too much room for colleges and universities to continue providing a legacy preference without reporting it, since there is no way to audit the response.

The Department of Education could make it possible to audit the response to this survey question and compel greater compliance by creating a more precise definition of what it means to consider legacy status, as outlined below in the questions that should be added to the survey.

A. Whether an institution of higher education considers legacy status in its admissions process

1. That determination should be based on the answer to this question: "Do application files that admissions officers read contain the name(s) of the colleges that any relatives of the applicant attended?"
2. An affirmative answer to this question would identify an institution as one that provides a legacy preference. It is important to note that application files would still be permitted to identify *whether* an applicant's parent(s) earned a bachelor's degree or higher without indicating *where* they earned it, as it is important to identify students who are the first in their family to attend college.
3. Institutions of higher education could still ask where an applicant's relatives attended college for the purpose of institutional research, but that information must be redacted from an application file for the institution to indicate that it does not consider legacy status.

- B. The number of applications from legacies received
- C. The number of legacy applicants admitted
- D. The number of legacy admits enrolled
- E. Data for B, C, and D disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender
- F. Data for D disaggregated by Pell status

3. Early Decision

IPEDS should ask universities and colleges that already report data for entering first-time, degree/certificate-seeking students in the fall term whether they offer an early decision admissions plan and, if so, to report the total number of early decision applicants, admits, and enrollments, and to disaggregate each category by race, ethnicity, and gender. Enrolled students who are admitted through early decision should be disaggregated by whether they received a Pell Grant. This data is not available for applicants and admits. The new questions for the ADM component should include:

- A. Whether an institution of higher education offers an early decision admissions plan
 - 1. An early decision plan is one in which students commit to enrolling if admitted. Early action plans, which do not have this binding commitment, are excluded from this reporting requirement.
- B. The number of early decision applicants
- C. The number of early decision applicants admitted
- D. The number of early decision admits enrolled
- E. Data for B, C, and D disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender
- F. Data for D disaggregated by Pell status

Coverage and Burden

The proposed changes would affect a relatively small portion of the institutions of higher education that complete the annual IPEDS survey, since they would only apply to public and private, not-for-profit four-year institutions that currently report application, admission, and enrollment data for first-time students and do not have an open admissions policy for entering first-time students.

For the vast majority of four-year IHEs, the additional survey questions on legacy preferences and early decision would entail identifying themselves as using neither practice and nothing more. The relatively small number of colleges and universities that identified themselves as considering a “relation to alumni/ae” in the CDS would likely grow even smaller were the Department of Education to require reporting on legacy applicants, admits, and enrollment. Smaller still is the number of colleges and universities that offer early decision (see Table 1).

Type	Number ²⁸	Share of all IHEs that participate in Title IV	Share of all public or private, not-for-profit 4-year IHEs that report admissions numbers to IPEDS
All institutions of higher education (IHEs) that participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs	6047	100%	n/a
All public or private, not-for-profit 4-year IHEs that report admissions numbers to IPEDS	1647	27%	100%
All public or private, not-for-profit 4-year IHEs that report providing a legacy preference to the CDS ²⁹	787	13%	48%
All public or private, not-for profit 4-year IHEs that report offering early decision to the CDS	192	3%	12%

Table 1

A large percentage of the 1,637 institutions that reported admissions data to NCES are very likely already collecting demographic data for applicants and admits for institutional purposes or for extant state and institutional systems that publish demographic data for applicants and admissions.³⁰ Colleges and universities that do not do so could be granted a waiver for the first year of data collection to prepare for the change in reporting.

A much smaller number of institutions of higher education provide legacy preferences and/or early decision, and there is a very high likelihood that they already collect demographic data on these practices for internal purposes, including institutional development, athletic recruiting, and enrollment management.

Furthermore, every institution of higher education has the option of reducing its administrative burden by opting out of providing a legacy preference or early decision. Given the amount of public money used to support students enrolled at these institutions through federal financial aid and tax breaks, as well as the public policy objective to promote greater equity, the marginal increase in administrative burden on most four-year colleges and universities is fully justified.

CONCLUSION

The changes called for in this brief are long overdue. Soon, they will become unavoidable. The likely elimination of the consideration of race in college admissions by a Supreme Court decision will exacerbate the racial and ethnic gaps in college degree attainment and could increase income gaps as well. The Biden administration and the Department of Education can act ahead of a decision, or at least in response to it, to increase transparency in college admissions. Transparency is not a solution to inequity and unfairness, but without it, solutions are much more difficult to find.



APPENDIX

The Department of Education's Mission

Data collection has always been at the core of the Department of Education's mission. When the first Department of Education (later absorbed by the Department of Interior) was established in 1867, it was for the purpose of "collecting such statistics and facts as shall show the condition and progress of education in the several States and territories, and of diffusing such information...as shall aid the people of the United States."³¹ In 1979, the Department of Education (ED) became a separate federal department, and it included the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES), which collects and disseminates data related to education in the United States. In 1985–86, NCES established IPEDS to collect data on a range of topics, including enrollment, completions, finance, and staff at institutions of higher education (IHEs). Because accurate, timely data are essential to carrying out ED's mission, amendments to the Higher Education Act in 1992 made completion of IPEDS survey data mandatory for all institutions that receive federal student financial aid through the programs authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

While the earliest NCES data collections focused on institutional characteristics targeted by institutional researchers who served as the primary consumers of the data collected, the agency increasingly came to recognize its responsibility to provide information to students to aid them in the college choice process, which has led to the creation of sites like College Opportunities Online (COOL), College Navigator, and the College Scorecard. In 2001–2, IPEDS added an Admissions component, reflecting ED's recognition that the data it collects should serve students, families, school counselors, and other stakeholders invested in increasing access to higher education.

IPEDS has also played an important role in civil rights and access. The Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 required that NCES "collect, analyze, cross-tabulate, and report . . . data by gender and race," as well as "collect and disseminate data on access to, and the opportunity for, postsecondary education." The 2002 NCES reauthorization statute mandated that NCES collect and disseminate data by gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and other population characteristics. That same year, the Education Sciences Reform Act established the Institute of Education Sciences, which became the new home of NCES, which was now officially directed to "collect, report, analyze, and disseminate statistical data related to the condition and progress of postsecondary education, including *access to and opportunity for postsecondary education* [emphasis added]."

In 2008–9, IPEDS implemented the Office of Management and Budget's race/ethnicity standards and made them mandatory for institutional reporting in 2011–12. When some institutions objected to the requirement, ED made it clear that "a part of [its] mission is 'ensuring equal access' to education for all students. This includes collecting racial and ethnic data about the educational progress of students from various racial and ethnic groups in our nation's schools." The most recent expansion of IPEDS that helped it carry out this mission was the addition, in 2017–8, of a requirement to collect graduation rates of recipients of Pell Grants "to answer policy and research questions about how students access, progress, and succeed in postsecondary education. . . . Such data would also help consumers make informed decisions in choosing a college."³²

ENDNOTES

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¹⁴ Murphy, Issue Brief 2.

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¹⁸ Ben Backes, "[Do Affirmative Action Bans Lower Minority College Enrollment and Attainment? Evidence from Statewide Bans](#)," *Journal of Human Resources* (Spring 2012). See also, Peter Hinrichs, "[The Effects of Affirmative Action Bans on College Enrollment, Educational Attainment, and the Demographic Composition of Universities](#)," *The Review of Economics and Statistics* (2012).

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- ²⁸ Based on an analysis of IPEDS data for 2021–22.
- ²⁹ Based on an analysis of Common Data Set report answers to question C7, 2020–21.
- ³⁰ See <http://www.nysed.gov/information-reporting-services/higher-education-reports> and <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/about-us/information-center/admissions-residency-and-ethnicity>
- ³¹ [20 USC § 9001](#).
- ³² This brief history of IPEDS and the quotations are drawn from Aida Aliyeva, Christopher A. Cody, and Kathryn Low, [The History and Origins of Survey Items for the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System](#), U.S. Department of Education: National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (2018).





EDUCATION REFORM NOW

Education Reform Now (ERN) is a non-partisan, nonprofit think tank and advocacy organization that promotes increased resources and innovative reforms in K-16 public education, particularly for students of color and students from low-income families. We seek forward progress in public education—at the federal, state, and local level—developing and advocating for new, bold ideas and mutually reinforcing policies in elementary, secondary and post-secondary education.