

An Overview of the U.S. Department of Education’s Civil Rights Data Collection Data Archives (1968-1998)

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 (Department) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) administers the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), which is a mandatory survey of all public school districts and schools serving students in preschool through grade 12 in the 50 states, Washington, D.C., and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The CRDC measures student access to courses, programs, Internet and devices, instructional and other staff, and resources—as well as school climate factors such as student discipline, use of restraint and seclusion, harassment or bullying, and offenses occurring at schools—that impact educational opportunity for students. The CRDC is a longstanding and important aspect of OCR’s overall strategy for administering and enforcing civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age by schools, school districts and other entities that receive federal financial assistance from the Department.

History of the CRDC

The CRDC, formerly known as the Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Survey, has been administered by the Department, and its predecessor, the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare since 1968. It is one of the oldest education data collections carried out by the federal government.

From 1968 to 2010¹, the civil rights data were collected from a sample of public school districts and their schools, except for the 1976 and 2000 collections, which included data from all public school districts.

Since the 2011-12 school year, the CRDC has included data from all public school districts and their schools in the 50 states and Washington, D.C. that receive federal financial assistance from the Department.

Over time, the CRDC’s collection universe has grown to include long-term secure justice facilities, charter schools, alternative schools, and special education schools that focus primarily on serving students with disabilities.

CRDC Timeline

In the infographic below, we provide a timeline of when certain key data elements were added to the CRDC in relation to the various civil rights era reforms.

Civil Rights Key Events	Impact on the CRDC
<p>Brown v. Board of Education</p> <p>Landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision that ruled that legally mandated racial segregation of children in public schools was unconstitutional.</p>	<p>1954</p> <p>Laid the groundwork for several data elements, including the implementation and tracking of desegregation orders, that were collected in the first CRDC in 1968.</p>
<p>Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964</p> <p>Foundational federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin, among other bases, in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance from the Department.</p>	<p>1964</p>
<p>Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972</p> <p>Key amendment that protects people from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance.</p>	<p>1968</p> <p>Student enrollment data disaggregated by race/ethnicity were collected for the first time.</p>
<p>Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act</p> <p>Foundational law that protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance from the Department.</p>	<p>1971</p> <p>Student enrollment data by English learner (EL) status, previously known as limited English proficiency status, were collected for the first time.</p>
<p>Lau v. Nichols</p> <p>Landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision that decided that where inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national origin-minority group children from effective participation in the educational program offered by a school, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act requires that a school take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency to open its instructional program to these students.</p>	<p>1972</p>
<p>Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA)</p> <p>The act required all public schools accepting federal funds to provide equal access to education for children with physical and mental disabilities.</p>	<p>1973</p> <p>Data on single-sex classes, single-sex schools, and sex-based graduation requirements were collected for the first time.</p>
<p>Reauthorization of EHA</p> <p>The reauthorization of EHA changed the law’s name to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).</p>	<p>1973</p> <p>Student enrollment data disaggregated by disability were collected for the first time.</p>
<p>Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA)</p> <p>The act required all public schools accepting federal funds to provide equal access to education for children with physical and mental disabilities.</p>	<p>1974</p>
<p>Reauthorization of EHA</p> <p>The reauthorization of EHA changed the law’s name to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).</p>	<p>1975</p>
<p>Reauthorization of EHA</p> <p>The reauthorization of EHA changed the law’s name to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).</p>	<p>1976</p> <p>Data on students who received special education services disaggregated by sex and race/ethnicity were collected for the first time.</p>
<p>Reauthorization of EHA</p> <p>The reauthorization of EHA changed the law’s name to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).</p>	<p>1990</p>
<p>Reauthorization of EHA</p> <p>The reauthorization of EHA changed the law’s name to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).</p>	<p>1994</p> <p>Data on students served under Section 504 only and students served under IDEA were collected separately for enrollment and discipline for the first time.</p>

The CRDC Data Archives (1968-1998)

In November 2023, OCR publicly released the CRDC Data Archives containing data collected between 1968 and 1998. School districts and other data submitters reported data on various topics for the 1968-1998 school years, including:

Enrollment and Student Characteristics	Teachers and School Support Staff	Courses and School Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall Student Enrollment Enrollment in Special Education Enrollment in Language Assistance Programs Student Retention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full-time Professional Instructional Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single-sex Academic Classes/Schools Inter-sex Interscholastic Athletics Advanced Placement Courses in Math and Science Gifted & Talented Programs Home Economics Classes
	School Climate	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Discipline 	
	School and School District Characteristics	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of School Campuses Grade Levels Offered 	

The content of the CRDC has changed over time. Several modules and data elements have been added or deleted across the various data collection years. Student enrollment and other data disaggregated by various demographic factors have been collected in different years. In the table below, we show the inclusion of various modules in the surveys over time.

Module	'68	'70	'72	'74	'76	'78	'80	'82	'84	'86	'88	'90	'92	'94	'96	'98
School District Characteristics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
School Characteristics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Enrollment and Student Characteristics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Teachers and School Support Staff	X	X	X													
School Climate (e.g., Student Discipline)			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Courses and School Programs (e.g., Single-sex Classes)					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Note: X represents whether the module referred to in the first column was included in the various years. Data elements collected within each module differ across survey years. For brevity, the table lists major changes on a biennial basis only for the entire period.

Accessing the CRDC Data Archives

The CRDC Data Archives from 1968 to 1998 are available to the public through an archival data download tool. The archival tool organizes the civil rights data by year and provides users with access to the data, survey forms, and other relevant documentation. The tool also includes documentation on key historical CRDC data changes from 1968 to 1998. Users may extract district-level civil rights data. For instructions and information on using the Archival Data Download Tool, please view this page: <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov/archive>.

¹ For the CRDC collections in 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2006, only state and national projections have been released on the website for public use. Detailed district-level files for those years are only available by obtaining a license from the National Center for Education Statistics to access the restricted-use data files.

Additional Data Notes

Important consideration: Past collections and publicly released reports may contain some terms that readers may consider obsolete, offensive, and/or inappropriate. As part of the Department’s goal to be open and transparent with the public, we are providing access to all civil rights data in its original format.

Privacy notice: The Department of Education’s Disclosure Review Board determined that the CRDC files for 1968-1998 are safe for public “re-release” under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99).

For more information on the historical data elements and collection process, review the collection forms linked within each year’s data download section in the tool at <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov>.

If you have difficulty understanding English, you may request language assistance services for Department information that is available to the public. These language assistance services are available free of charge. If you need more information about interpretation or translation services, then please call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327) (TTY: 1-800-877-8339) or e-mail us at: ED.Language.Assistance@ed.gov.

Requests for documents in alternate formats, such as Braille or large print, should be submitted to the Alternate Format Center by calling 202-260-0852 or by contacting the Section 508 Coordinator via e-mail at: om_eeos@ed.gov.