



## Naming Guidelines

### Best Practices for Inputting Student Names Into Information Systems

#### Idaho Department of Education

### **Overview**

This document is in response to questions from Idaho Schools regarding the proper collection of student names during the enrollment process. School districts operating in the State of Idaho are bound by Idaho Rule and Idaho Code regarding the gathering of student names. School districts must use a legal document to identify a student and enter that student name into any legally binding record keeping system; such as a Student Information System. Name information within the school district record keeping system may not be different than the legal document.

Idaho School Districts should ensure that all student data fields are input into record keeping systems and reporting documents consistently. Such as:

- last names
- first names
- middle names
- birth date

Consistency in naming is critical to maintain accurate records and reporting as students migrate across school districts, charter schools, and other states.

### **General**

Please use the following guidelines:

- Use the name exactly as it appears on the legal documentation
- Do not add hyphens or other characters if they do not appear on the legal documentation
- Do not include nick names or “also known as” names in legal name fields

Names should come from a legal document. Examples of legal documents are:

- Birth Certificate
- Court Document
- Marriage Certificate
- State Driver’s License
- State Issued ID
- Tribal Identification
- Certified Degree of Indian blood (CDIB)

The full legal name should be used to the extent possible.

Revised March 9, 2010.

#### **Caution**

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Naming Guidelines  
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Idaho Department of Education

Name submissions for non U.S. citizens must be consistent with official travel documents. Use the name exactly as it appears on the documentation. Do not add hyphens or other characters if they do not appear on the documentation.

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#### **Homeless Students**

The person gathering information from homeless students may not have a legal document from which to retrieve a name. Therefore they will have to use the name as presented by the homeless student or their guardian, in compliance with any applicable Rules or Codes.

#### **Name Changes**

If a name change occurs, the guardian must present a court document with the new name prior to changes in any record keeping system (i.e. a legally separated guardian cannot change the name of the student without a legal document signifying a name change).

Examples of acceptable documents for name change include:

- Marriage Document
- Divorce Decree
- Certificate of Naturalization (with new name)
- Court order for new name change
- Adoption papers
- New Birth Certificate (post adoption)
- Tribal Enrollment Verification

Please ensure accuracy of the previous name of the student before changing their name and associated records. In most cases you will want to verify documentation of both the old name and the new name to ensure an accurate name change.

#### **Last Name**

The last name field cannot be blank.

- If the student's legal last name is explicitly defined and contains more than one name separated by a space, enter those names, but do not hyphenate unless hyphens are present on the legal document.
- For Hispanic students please review the section specific to Hispanic names.

#### **First Name**

If the student's legal first name is explicitly defined and contains more than one name separated by a space, enter those names, but do not hyphenate unless hyphens are present.

#### **Middle Name**

If the student has a middle name it should be included in the student record.

- Middle initials should not be input if the student has a middle name
- The middle name may be blank if the student has no middle name



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### **Hispanic Names**

The use of two surnames in Hispanic naming conventions present challenges for Information systems and the Data Quality within them. It is important for persons gathering student names to understand Hispanic name norms. This is particularly challenging because many Mexican legal documents do not identify first, middle, and last name. Additionally migrant students may “Americanize” their names to fit common usage in the U.S., in conflict with their legal documents. A quick reminder, the legal document identifies the name. If a student wishes to use a name other than that listed on their legal documents, they must get new legal documentation with the name they desire.

Hispanics refer to the first name by just *name*, and the middle name is referred as *second name* instead of middle. In Spanish-speaking countries, people typically have one or more forenames and two surnames, the first surname inherited from the father and the second surname from the mother. Legally and traditionally the first surname is the father's first surname (*apellido paterno*, paternal surname), the second the mother's first surname (*apellido materno*, maternal surname). The two surnames are also referred to as first apellido and the second apellido. If the father is either unknown or is not involved, the newborn will take both surnames of the mother, therefore it is important to capture both name elements to avoid any inadvertent offense.

As an example, Maria Enriqueta Escandon Rodriguez is the daughter of Mr. Escandon and Mrs. Rodriguez, or more formally the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Escandon Rodriguez. And if you send a letter to the family, you address it to the Escandon Rodriguez Family.

Although a person’s name may reflect heritage, we cannot assume that names are necessarily indicators of heritage.

### **Non-Hispanic Multiple Name, Non-designated First Middle Last Name Guidelines**

If the legal document does not explicitly define first, middle and last name and has multiple names in one name field, the maximum possible name data should be included using the following guidelines:

- All non-space characters from the left end of the document name string up to the first space, moving to the right, is the first name. Note that legally stated hyphens do not count as spaces.
- All non-space characters from the right end of the document’s name string up to the first space, moving to the left, is the last name. Note that legally stated hyphens do not count as spaces. If the last name has an obvious space in it (i.e. Von Tripp), include both parts of the last name. Many Hispanics will have two surnames, similar to Von Tripp.
- When a suffix is present, include the suffix, but do not include the first spaces to its left as an exclusion of the last name (i.e. Von Tripp Jr.), where Von Tripp is still the last name. If the suffix is abbreviated, include a period to indicate the abbreviation.

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Naming Guidelines  
Best Practices for Inputting Student Names Into Information Systems  
Idaho Department of Education

- Everything between the first name and the last name is the middle name.

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Naming Guidelines  
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Idaho Department of Education

**Native American/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian Names**

A name giving ceremony responds to the cultural and community need to welcome a child into the family or for a coming of age for a native person. The ceremony does have some legal significance: a naming certificate signed by witnesses ( i.e. celebrant, parents, tribal officials, and elders) would be accepted by the courts as sufficient evidence to rectify a ‘non-record of birth’ situation or to rectify a wrongful entry in the records. No birth certificate is required to be produced to have a naming ceremony.

Examples are on following page.

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**Table 1-Examples:** These examples are fictitious

| Legal Document Specified Name       |         |                  |                    | Notes   |
|-------------------------------------|---------|------------------|--------------------|---|
| Non Designated Name                 | First   | Middle           | Last               |   |
| Juanita Carlita Perea Ponce         | Juanita | Carlita          | Perea Ponce        | Two last names, no middle name, see Hispanic section for details      |
| Gabriel García Marquez              | Gabriel |                  | García Marquez     |   |
| Arancha Sanchez Vicario             | Arancha |                  | Sanchez Vicario    |   |
| Maria Enriqueta Escandon Rodriguez  | Maria   | Enriqueta        | Escandon Rodriguez |   |
| Jose de Jesus Martinez Alva         | Jose    | De Jesus         | Martinez Alva      |   |
| Maria Del Buen consejo Cortez Nunez | Maria   | Del Buen Consejo | Cortez Nunez       |   |
| Allison Rose Jones Mattison         | Allison | Rose Jones       | Mattison           | Non Hispanic, break last name at first space                          |
| Joseph Running Foot                 | Joseph  |                  | Running Foot       | If student uses two words as last name, enter both words as last name |
| Denny James Chasing His Horse”      | Denny   | James            | Chasing His Horse  |   |

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