Best Practices For Inputting Names Into Information Systems

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.
NOTE: Naming guidelines may also apply to inputting staff personnel as well.

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 fullest extent possible.

Non-US Students

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.

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

Hispanic Names

The use of two surnames in Hispanic naming conventions may present challenges for some 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.
- Everything between the first name and the last name is the middle name.

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.

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
Allison Rose Jones Mattison	Allison	Rose	Jones Mattison	Non-Hispanic, single middle name, two last names
Joseph Running Foot	Joseph		Running Foot	If student uses two or more words as last name, enter all as last name
Denny James Chasing His Horse"	Denny	James	Chasing His Horse	