

# K–12 Guide to Matching Student Data Without Social Security Numbers

Starting July 2018, as part of our continuing commitment to student privacy, the College Board will stop including student Social Security numbers in Advanced Placement<sup>®</sup> data files. In order to support K–12 schools, districts, and state offices that may rely on using Social Security numbers for matching and data processes, we have developed the following frequently asked questions. For other questions, please contact us at [k12ssn@collegeboard.org](mailto:k12ssn@collegeboard.org).

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: Will other information useful for matching still be included in the data files?**

A: First name, last name, middle initial, date of birth, student address, gender, and high school Attending Institution (AI) will be provided in AP<sup>®</sup> files. Additionally, many schools, districts and states issue and utilize unique student identifiers in lieu of Social Security numbers. You can ask students to include their student identifier on their AP answer sheet, and it will then be included in your AP data file.

**Q: My school/district/state uses Social Security number as a unique identifier. How can I match student records without it?**

A: You may match student records based on a combination of other data elements such as date of birth and student address. These matching processes are typically part of a data ingestion process and can use an off-the-shelf or custom algorithm.

Many schools, districts, and states also leverage state, district, or school-issued student identifiers in lieu of using Social Security numbers. Your software providers and/or IT team may have experience working on data matching using a student identifier plus other data elements instead of social security numbers.

When having an initial conversation with your software or IT teams, consider discussing the use of other fields to match records such as:

1. Last name, first name, or some piece of both (many processes use the first several letters)
2. Address information
3. Birth date
4. State, district, or school-issued student identifier
5. Gender
6. High school AI

Note that any process you undertake may result in some duplicate records. To address this issue, you can consider a merge/purge option (more information below), or direct data entry by a staff member.

**Q: How do I resolve situations where a student may use a common nickname (example: Rob vs Robert)?**

A: You can maintain a first name equivalency table as part of your matching process. This can be developed by your software provider, your IT teams, and/or internally by your own staff.

**Q: How can we execute a successful merge/purge?**

A: Software solutions for a merge/purge are common for student information systems and can be either stand-alone or part of a packaged product. Most of these contain at least one algorithm for matching records in one file with another. These algorithms vary in complexity and reliability and may also vary in price. Many are customizable and can include address data cleansing functions that use CASS, or National Change of Address (NCOA), which may also enhance the match rate.

**Q: Will the data layout files change?**

A: In an effort to minimize impact to your systems and processes, the Social Security number field will remain in the file layout so that your data file layout remains the same, but the field will be blank starting in July 2018. We will provide more information about your data layouts as we approach the date of the changes in July 2018.

**Q: Have you notified third-party software vendors?**

A: The College Board is reaching out directly to the following vendors. If you do not see your vendor in the list, please reach out to them to make sure they are aware of the upcoming change.

- ACS Technologies HeadMaster
- Aequitas Solutions
- Aeries
- Alma
- Chalkable
- Data Director (Houghton Mifflin)
- Edvance
- Fedena
- Genesis (NJ)
- Genius SIS
- Gradelink
- Hobsons Naviance
- Illuminate
- IMG iPass
- Impero
- Infinite Campus
- MI-STAR (Aequitas)
- MMS
- MSP (My Student Progress)
- MySchool
- Orbund
- Powerschool
- PraxiSchool
- Prologic Technology Systems (PTS)
- Rediker Administrator's PLUS
- Renweb
- SchoolAdmin
- School Logic/SRB Education Solutions
- Senior Systems
- Skyward
- Specialized Data Systems (SDS) School Office
- SunGard
- Surfside
- Thinkwave
- TIES
- TS School
- Tyler Technologies
- Versifit Edvantage

For further assistance, please reach out to us at [k12ssn@collegeboard.org](mailto:k12ssn@collegeboard.org).