Iowa Testing Programs

Bar Code Label Ordering Procedures, updated for 2019-20

The bar code validation service from Iowa Testing Programs (ITP) is used to obtain adhesive bar code labels, which school personnel place on student answer documents. Using bar code labels provides for more accurate student demographic information for each test taker and assists in generating accurate and consistent reports and growth predictors available for free with eITP (available on Online Tools).

We recommend submitting student data files approximately one month prior to testing. This allows enough time under normal circumstances so that student data can be validated, and the labels can be generated, delivered, and affixed on student answer documents before tests are administered. Some districts choose to place their label order after testing has completed, in which case students will have to write in some personally identifiable information to facilitate school staff affixing labels after testing.

Creating Your Bar Code File

When creating your bar code data file, make use of your student information system application (JMC, PowerSchool, etc.) to extract a file containing the students you are submitting. All information systems approved by the Iowa DE have a function in the system to create a file for Iowa testing bar code file input. The function is located within the Iowa tab. Bar code files generated using this approach should yield a delimited text file (.txt) which can be submitted to ITP.

If your information system does not have this function, another method is to manually create the file. You can use the "Bar Code Template" file available in the Bar Coding Documents section of ITP's website. Both methods should result in a file of records containing 32 fields (columns), some of which may be left blank. If you need help coding any field, please consult the "Coding for Disaggregation of Scores" document available on the same page as the template. These documents have been updated for the 2018-19 school year. After you create your bar code file, save it on your computer or server in a folder you remember where it is.

Tips for File and Field Information

A district should send in one data file for all students who will be testing at about the same time. You can use your spreadsheet application to edit your student information or you can send us the text file itself if you don't need to do any editing prior to submission.

a. The first row of the file should contain a header row with the name of each of the 32 fields. All 32 fields must be in your file, even if some fields do not contain coding. Make sure your file does not contain any empty rows, i.e., breaks in the list of students.

b. Submit a file that contains only records for students/grades being tested, not all students in the district.

c. In the bar code file, the Building Name, Grade, and Class Name fields, respectively, are used solely to sort labels when printing. In reports, Building, Class/Teacher and Grade are all taken from the Grade/Building/Class header sheets used when submitting documents for scoring. The Building Name and Class Name fields in the bar code file may be blank if you so choose.

d. We can process only one file per order. If you upload multiple files to an order, we'll try to ascertain whether the files should be combined or only the most recently submitted file should be processed. If you have multiple active orders at the same time and submit files to more than one, the orders/files may be combined by ITP.

e. Names should not contain special foreign characters (e.g. ñ).

f. No fields should contain commas (e.g., Last Name such as 'Smith, Jr.' or Teacher Name such as 'Jones, Tad'). However, student names may have dashes (e.g. Jane Smith-Jones) or apostrophes (e.g. John O'Brien).

g. Full Academic Year (FAY) coding will not be populated in the bar code file generated by your SIS.

Sending Your File to ITP

Our bar code validation service is integrated with ITP Online Tools. If you ordered labels last year, your login and password still exist on our site and can be used to access Online Tools. If you haven't been responsible for ordering bar code labels in the past, the Superintendent (or someone designated by them to have the District Master user role), will need to create an account for you that will enable you to sign in to the Online Tools website.

1. Once you are logged in to the Online Tools website, click on the "Bar Coding" link available in the menu at the left. You will be taken to a page that lists all your school's bar code label orders created in the current school year, click "Begin new bar code order" to set up a new order.

   NOTE: If you do not see the "Bar Coding" link on your left-side menu, your account may not have been assigned the correct permissions by the person who created it. Please contact that person for assistance.

2. After you click "Begin new bar code order", you will be on a page with a series of tabs (District Contacts, Test, Test Date, etc.) to enter information that will set up your order. Once the information is entered for each tab, click the "Save" tab for a summary of what you entered. If any required information was omitted, you will be asked to go back and enter it. If everything looks good, click the "Save" button at the bottom of the summary in the Save tab. You will be given a green "Successful" box and next you should click the link to go to the File Management Center of your order. At this point you have created the bar code order; the next step is to upload a bar code file to the order.

3. In the "Upload a file" section of the file management page [indicated by the red arrow A in the figure below], click "Browse…" (this may appear as "Choose File" on some browsers), then locate your bar code file. Files must be in the form of an Excel spreadsheet (.xls or .xlsx), a comma-separated values file (.csv), or a tab-delimited text (.txt) file. When you have found your file on your computer/server, click on the file name and click "Open" to select it. The file name will appear in the "Upload a file" text box. To submit this bar code file for validation, click "Upload." If you have trouble with this process, you can contact ITP for assistance via the "Contact ITP" button located under "Tools" [B in the figure] near the top on the right-hand side of the screen.

4. When your file has successfully uploaded, a pop-up box with "File upload complete" will appear and the submitted file will be listed with reddish/pink shading under "View a file" [C in the figure] indicating it is a District Upload, and showing the date and time the file was uploaded.

5. ITP will run validation software on your file and send an email to the Contacts with validation results. If any errors were found during validation, an Excel file containing identifiers for those records will be made available in your bar code order. If no errors were found during ITP's validation process, you can skip ahead to step 10.

Making Corrections

If you receive an email stating that errors were found in your bar code file, it is time to revisit your order. Log in to the Online Tools website and click on the Bar Coding link. Click on the

folder icon for the order you wish to address and you will be taken to the file management page. You should see 2 files uploaded by ITP (indicated by green shading), an Excel file and a PDF file. The PDF file is an overall summary of your bar code file, with counts by grade, demographics, etc. The Excel file contains a list of student records with errors and the corresponding errors flagged by validation. Note that each error has its own row, so if a student record has multiple validation errors, they will be listed on several rows. Click the icon in the "View" column to open the file.

<u>Tips for Making Corrections to Bar Code File Data</u>

There are 2 ways to submit corrections, you can make changes on your end and resubmit the entire file with corrections applied, or use the Excel file ITP uploaded to your order and we'll apply corrections to the bar code file on our end.

6. To use the Excel file provided by ITP: Review the errors listed in the Excel file and enter corrections in the column "Correction For Field", column H in Excel.
   - If a validation error listed is actually correct, type an "X" under "Correction For Field" to indicate it is correct.
   - A blank field is a valid value for certain data fields in the bar code file. If the correction for an error is a blank field, type "blank" under "Correction For Field".
   - If the student record with an error is a student no longer at your school, you can type "delete" under "Correction For Field" for that error and we will remove that student record from the bar code file.

7. When you have finished applying corrections in the Excel file, save it to a familiar place on your computer or server and close it.

8. Next you should upload that Excel file to your bar code order. Click the Browse button ("Choose File" on a Mac), locate and select the Excel corrections file you edited and saved on your computer, and click Open. Then click the Upload button. If the file submission was successful, you will see a message to that effect and a new red-shaded row will appear in the "View a file" section of your bar code order.

9. ITP will apply your corrections and send an email with new validation results.

10. If no validation errors were flagged in your bar code file, ITP will upload a PDF file to your order containing a summary of your bar code file, and send an email to the contacts listed in your order. From there we ask you to please verify the counts in the summary for various demographic categories match with your counts. Once you are satisfied the order summary is correct, click on "Mark Summary File as OK" in the upper right "Tools" section of the yellow sidebar [B] to let ITP know that you verify the bar code file is accurate. If the counts in the summary do not match with what you expected, you should generate a new bar code file and resubmit the entire file to your order. You can

also feel free to contact ITP using the "Contact ITP" button in the "Tools" section [B] and we'll work together to find out why the counts are off.

11. After you have clicked to mark the summary okay, ITP will forward the finished bar code file to the printer and send an email to the Contacts in your order to let you know when the labels should arrive.

After You Receive Your Bar Code Labels

12. The set of printed bar code labels will be shipped to the person you listed in the "Shipping" tab when the bar code order was created.

13. You can place the bar code labels on answer documents prior to testing, making sure the label on the document matches the student receiving it. Or you can place the bar code labels on answer documents after testing is completed, making sure to match the bar code label with the corresponding student answer sheet. If you place labels after testing make sure to have students put their name and/or other identifying information on the answer document so the bar code label can be matched correctly.

14. For new students who were not included in your original bar code file, any students that for whom a bar code label was not ordered, or for students whose demographics changed after the original order, you will need to place a follow-up order by following the same procedures outlined above. Submit a file containing only students for whom you need a label, do not resubmit all students testing.

15. After score reports are received, if you think any scoring and/or reporting errors have occurred because of incomplete or incorrect coding in your bar code file, use the data on the CD-ROM to check student information. The student data on the CD-ROM should match the data provided in the bar code data file.