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TO: Intermediate and Local School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Authorizers and Administrators

FROM: Sally Vaughn, Ph.D. *Sally*
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DATE: December 8, 2009

SUBJECT: Maintaining, Collecting and Reporting Race and Ethnicity Data

On September 18, 2008, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) sent a joint memo to the school districts informing them of the U.S. Department of Education's (USED) guidance on maintaining, collecting and reporting race and ethnicity data about students and staff members. A copy of the guidance can be accessed from the USED website at <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/other/2007-4/101907c.pdf>. The state of Michigan is mandated to implement the guidance beginning with the 2010-2011 school year. Implementation of this guidance will bring education data into alignment with the U.S. Census Bureau and other federal agencies.

In order to comply, some Michigan school districts will need to change how race and ethnicity data are collected, maintained and reported for students and staff members. The guidance requires three key components:

1. A two-part question must be used to select ethnicity and then single or multiple races. Local collection systems must have the ability to select and store both ethnicity and multiple-race data.
2. Both parts of the race and ethnicity question should be self-identified by the parent/guardian or educational staff member; however, school districts should continue the policy of observer identification if the respondent refuses to answer either part. While the guidance does not mandate it, USED recommends that school districts allow all students and educational staff members the opportunity to re-identify using the two-part question.
3. School districts must retain an individual's original response for a period of three years unless litigation, a claim or other legal action has started, in which case the records must be maintained until the completion of the action.

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Reporting requirements for race and ethnicity data will not change in the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) or the Registry of Educational Personnel (REP). Race and ethnicity will continue to be reported within the current six-position field in each system, even though the districts will be utilizing the two-part question for gathering the information from students and staff members.

CEPI has prepared several documents to assist school districts, parents, staff members and vendors in implementing the new federal guidelines. These documents include a summary of the new federal race and ethnicity guidelines, a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation, sample parent and educational staff member letters, a sample enrollment form, a parent brochure explaining the changes, and a frequently asked questions (FAQs) document. All of these materials are available on the home page of the CEPI website [www.michigan.gov/cepi], in the What's New section.

We appreciate your attention to this important change. If you have questions about these materials, please contact the CEPI customer support team via e-mail at CEPI@michigan.gov or by calling (517) 335-0505, option 3.

As always, thank you for your continued collaboration with CEPI and MDE.