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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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TO: Intermediate and Local School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Authorizers and Directors

FROM: Sally Vaughn, Ph.D. *Sally*
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Director, Center for Educational Performance and Information

DATE: September 18, 2008

SUBJECT: New Standards for Collecting and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data

The U.S. Department of Education (USED) has released new guidance on maintaining, collecting, and reporting racial and ethnic data on students and staff. A copy of the guidance from the USED can be accessed from the USED website at <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/other/2007-4/101907c.pdf>. In order to comply with the guidance, some Michigan school districts will need to change how race and ethnicity data are collected and reported. The implementation of this guidance will bring education data collecting and reporting into alignment with the U.S. Census and other federal agencies.

The new guidance separates an individual's race and ethnicity into two distinct categories. The guidance mandates the collection of racial and ethnic data using a two-part question. The first part asks whether the respondent is Hispanic/Latino. The second part asks whether the respondent is from one or more races, using the following five racial groups: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and White. The required implementation date for the guidance is the start of the 2010-2011 school year.

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) are currently clarifying these requirements with USED and examining how Michigan may implement the new guidance with minimal impact to school districts.

In the next few months, you will receive a follow-up letter with more detailed information concerning how Michigan will implement the guidance. Please watch for this important communication item.

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

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