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Dr. Eric J. Smith
Commissioner of Education



January 20, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: District School Superintendents

FROM: Dr. Eric J. Smith 

SUBJECT: School Enrollment for Displaced Haitians

In the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti, displaced Haitians have begun to arrive in Florida. With their arrival, it is expected that children of school age will be enrolling in Florida's public schools. To plan for the accommodation of these students, it will be necessary for the Department to begin a collection of counts of students new to Florida schools as a result of this disaster.

Beginning this afternoon, staff from Education Information and Accountability Services will call your district asking for a count of students who have recently come from Haiti and enrolled in your district as a result of the disaster. It is expected that a daily count will be made to provide planning information for all of the organizations that may be affected as a result of the influx of new students. While most of the new enrollees are likely to be in the southern part of Florida, it is possible that some of the new students may relocate throughout the state. The Department plans to continue this count through mid-February, at which time it will evaluate the need to collect further counts and notify districts accordingly.

Effective with the February FTE Count via the Automated Student Data Base, the data element currently called "Hurricane Affected Student" will be renamed "Hurricane/Earthquake Affected Student." This element will form the basis for official reports regarding students new to Florida schools as a result of the earthquake. Two new codes (E and Q) have been added to describe the action as a result of the earthquake. These codes are:

- Y Yes, this student moved to this district this school year due to a hurricane.
- E Yes, this student moved to this district this school year due to an earthquake.
- W Yes, this student changed schools within this district this school year due to a hurricane.
- Q Yes, this student changed schools within this district this school year due to an earthquake.
- Z No, this student did not move to this district and did not change schools within this district this school year due to a hurricane/earthquake.

Special attention should be paid to the reporting format Prior School Status/Student Attendance for the February reporting period. The elements dealing with entry codes and prior school locations will likely form the basis for decisions during the next few months. Please provide a reminder to all of your school-based data staff regarding the critical nature of these items.

Additionally, districts should follow all applicable federal and state laws regarding admittance of students and requirements for immunizations.

If you have questions, please contact Lavan Dukes at 850/245-9917 or lavan.dukes@fldoe.org. Your assistance during this effort is appreciated.

EJS/ld

cc: District Finance Officers
District MIS Directors
District FTE Administrators