

January 2010

Dear Parents and Guardians:

I am writing to inform you about new guidelines from the U.S. Department of Education regarding the collection of data on race and ethnicity for public school students and staff. The federal government, which requires all states to collect this information, has developed a new way to report ethnicity and race that includes new categories.

The federal government has developed these new categories in order to provide a more accurate picture of the nation's ethnic and racial diversity. This will enable individuals to be identified in ethnic and racial classifications and in more than one racial category when appropriate. In the past, guidelines allowed individuals to be identified in only one racial category.

The student data with the new ethnicity and race categories will be used in the same manner that such information is currently used. For example, the federal government and the state of Colorado use racial and ethnic data in reporting and analyzing aggregated test results, such as Colorado State Assessment Program (CSAP) scores, and aggregated student outcome information, such as graduation rates or dropout rates. These reports help us track changes in student enrollment, performance and outcomes and ensure that all students receive the educational programs and services to which they are entitled.

Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed envelope by March 1, 2010. The race/ethnicity designation that is currently on file for your child has been provided for your convenience. Please note that APS is required to provide an answer to this questionnaire on your behalf if you choose not to provide this information. The federal government believes that in getting aggregate numbers from states and districts, it would be preferable to have complete data this way, than to have missing data.

For more information about the student data reporting categories, please contact Leah Wilkinson at 303-344-2209.

I also want to share how you can learn about your child's school and APS's performance based on Colorado Accreditation Rules and the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Please visit www.aps.k12.co.us/update/ to view CSAP scores, Adequate Yearly Progress, qualifications of teachers, graduation and dropout rates, and ACT scores. If you would like printed versions of this information, please call 303-365-7805.

Sincerely,

John L. Barry
Superintendent of Schools