

Series: 2008-2009
Circular Letter: C-9

To: Superintendents of Schools

From: Mark K. McQuillan, Commissioner of Education

Date: April 8, 2009

Subject: Racial Statistics

Enclosed please find a summary of the racial statistics for each school under the jurisdiction of your local or regional board of education. The statistics are based upon enrollment numbers for each district as of October 1, 2008. Each district should use this information to analyze any disparity in racial and ethnic diversity that may exist among its schools. Failure to manage significant disparity could result in one or more schools being found to be racially imbalanced.

Racial imbalance exists when the proportion of minority students for any school exceeds twenty-five percentage points more than the comparable proportion for the school district. The comparable proportion for the school district is determined by comparing the total number of racial minorities in a school to the district-wide total pupil enrollment in the same grades. Impending racial imbalance exists when the proportion for a school falls outside a range from fifteen percentage points less to fifteen percentage points more than the comparable proportion for the school district. If a school is identified as racially imbalanced, the board of education must file a plan to correct the imbalance with the State Board of Education. A school is diverse and exempt from the requirement of filing a plan to correct racial imbalance if the school district has a minority population of more than fifty percent and the school has a minority population of between twenty-five and seventy-five percent. Boards of education should strive to maintain balanced schools so that each child has the advantage of attending a school that is as diverse as possible.

Many districts have only one school, one school per grade configuration, or very small minority populations in all schools. In these cases, it is unlikely that the racial imbalance laws and regulations will apply to such schools. However, this does not mean that racial diversity and isolation are not matters for concern. Connecticut law requires all school districts to take action to provide opportunities for their students to interact with students and teachers from other racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds. These opportunities may include participation in the following programs: interdistrict magnet schools; charter schools; after-school, Saturday and summer programs and sister-school projects; interdistrict and intradistrict public school choice programs; and many other experiences to increase awareness of the diversity of individuals and cultures. This is particularly

important for districts with small minority populations where interaction might otherwise not take place.

I hope this information is helpful to you. If you have any questions, please contact Attorney Laura L. Anastasio, Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs, at (860) 713-6512.

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Enclosure