**Guidance on Race/Ethnicity**

**Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI)**

**Sample Letter to Parents of Returning Students**

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Every school district in Montana is required to report student data to the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) each year. This data includes race and ethnicity categories that are set by the federal government. The OPI does not report individual student data to the federal government, but does report the total number of students in various categories in each school. These reports help track changes in student enrollments and ensure that all students receive the educational programs and services to which they are entitled.

A change has been made to the reporting of race and ethnicity to better reflect the country’s growing diversity. Starting with the 2010-2011 school year, the new standards will require all students to be identified using a new two-part race/ethnicity question. The federal government has established the two-part question to recognize Hispanic ethnicity and race as two separate and distinct concepts. Additionally, the change allows the reporting of multiple races (American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and White).

If you would like to update the race and/or ethnicity data for your student, please complete the enclosed **Race/Ethnicity Reporting Form** and send it to your student's school by XXXX. If the district does not hear back from you, your child will continue to be reported based on previous data. Therefore, if the student is currently reported as American Indian, Asian, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander or White, the student will be designated as **not** Hispanic/Latino. If the student was previously reported as Hispanic (race), the new designation will be Hispanic/Latino ethnicity and White race. If these defaults are not correct, please provide the school with the accurate information by filling out and signing the enclosed form.

Please note that, as current policy requires for purposes of confidentially, race/ethnicity data will only be reported to the federal government in groups. It will never be reported on an individual level, and it will not be reported for an individual student. If you have any questions regarding the changes to the federal and/or state race/ethnicity data reporting, or to check your student's current race/ethnicity data, please contact XXXX.

Sincerely,

XXXX

XXX School District

Enclosure: **Race/Ethnicity Reporting Form**