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MEMORANDUM

TO: Exceptional Student Education Directors

FROM: Monica Verra-Tirado *MVT*

DATE: November 16, 2016

**SUBJECT: FLORIDA & VIRGIN ISLANDS DEAF-BLIND COLLABORATIVE
DEAF-BLIND CENSUS**

Rule 6A-6.03022(5), Florida Administrative Code, *Education Eligibility for Students with Dual Sensory Impairments*, requires school districts to report information on all students identified as dual sensory impaired to the state's registry. To assist you in fulfilling this requirement, the Florida and Virgin Islands Deaf-Blind Collaborative (previously Florida Outreach Project-FOP) is conducting its annual census. The Florida and Virgin Islands Deaf-Blind Collaborative needs to record the number of youth (ages 0-22) with "deaf-blindness" (both vision and hearing losses) being served in the state of Florida, as of December 1, 2016.

Beginning on January 17, 2017, the Florida and Virgin Islands Deaf-Blind Collaborative will be sending pre-populated forms on the students in your district who are already included in the Florida registry. You are encouraged to review the pre-populated forms to ensure that the information in the Florida registry is correct.

Currently, the Florida registry has recorded 555 children and young adults with both vision and hearing losses being served in the state. The individual records vary widely in completeness and correctness of information. Incomplete and incorrect information prevents the Florida and Virgin Islands Deaf-Blind Collaborative from serving these individuals, families, and educational teams effectively. In order to improve the quality of the information recorded in the Florida registry, we ask that school and district professionals give particular attention to the accuracy of current school placement and residential address information when reporting to the December 1, 2016 deaf-blind census.

Monica Verra-Tirado, Ed.D., Chief
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

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Reporting an accurate number of students with combined hearing and vision losses and providing complete and correct information on these students are very important during the collection of December 1, 2016, deaf-blind census data. Complete and accurate reporting will enable the Florida and Virgin Islands Deaf-Blind Collaborative to provide families, schools, and school districts with the highly specialized support required to meet the needs of students who are deaf-blind. Attached is your census packet.

Census information must be returned to the Florida and Virgin Islands Deaf-Blind Collaborative, by mail or fax, no later than **February 28, 2017**. Please include current placement/setting information for each student and current contact information for schools, teachers and service providers.

Once the Florida and Virgin Islands Deaf-Blind Collaborative receives your data, each student will be assigned a numerical code to protect his or her identity. De-identified data will be compiled and sent to the National Center on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB). NCDB will report the data to the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

If you have any questions about completing the census, or if your staff needs assistance with identifying students who should be included in the registry, please contact Shelly Voelker, Ed.D., family & information specialist, at the Florida and Virgin Islands Deaf-Blind Collaborative. Shelly can be reached by telephone at 352-273-7534 or toll free at 800-667-4052. She can also be reached via email at shellyv@ufl.edu.

If you have any questions about the information in this memo, please contact Victoria Gaitanis, program specialist, Florida Department of Education, by telephone at 850-245-0475 or via email at Victoria.Gaitanis@fldoe.org.

MVT/lg

Attachment

cc: Victoria Gaitanis
Shelly Voelker