



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Joseph B. Morton
State Superintendent
of Education

Alabama
State Board
of Education

August 31, 2005

Governor Bob Riley
President

MEMORANDUM

Randy McKinney
District I
President Pro Tem

TO: County and City Superintendents of Education

Betty Peters
District II

FROM: Joseph B. Morton
State Superintendent of Education

Stephanie W. Bell
District III

RE: Hurricane Katrina

Dr. Ethel H. Hall
District IV
Vice President
Emerita

I know everyone has the victims of Hurricane Katrina in their hearts and prayers. The devastation has been almost too severe to comprehend, and the recovery will likely be ongoing for years.

Ella B. Bell
District V

As we assess the damage in Alabama, we further are thankful for the fact that it could have been much worse. After speaking with Drs. Harold Dodge and Faron Hollinger, Superintendents of Education in Mobile and Baldwin Counties, respectively, again, we realize how fortunate Alabama was in comparison to Mississippi and Louisiana. It appears that Baldwin County will reopen on Thursday, September 1, and Dr. Dodge is close to making a final determination on reopening since his district received much more severe damage than Baldwin. We are still assessing damages from systems further north that border Mississippi.

David F. Byers, Jr.
District VI

Sandra Ray
District VII
Vice President

Many schools in Alabama will be faced with new students enrolling from Mississippi and Louisiana as their parents/guardians seek to find housing close to relatives or friends. In speaking with Dr. Susan Rucker, Assistant State Superintendent in Mississippi, this morning, she informed me that today's estimate is that 35,000 Mississippi students have no schools to attend – the schools are either too severely damaged to reopen or they are gone as a result of the hurricane. I also spoke with Dr. Cecil Picard, Superintendent of Education in Louisiana, and you may receive students from Louisiana since areas in and around New Orleans could be uninhabitable for weeks, months, or even longer. Additionally, I have spoken with the Assistant Secretary of Education in Washington, D.C., Dr. Henry Johnson, and he has been very understanding and willing to work through solutions to today's challenges.

Dr. Mary Jane Caylor
District VIII

Joseph B. Morton
Secretary and
Executive Officer

County and City Superintendents of Education
Page 2
August 31, 2005

I urge each of you to work with your principals and do everything possible to welcome these refugees to your schools should they come to enroll. I am waiving usual and customary requirements for students who transfer into Alabama's public schools from other states, systems within the state, or home schooled/private school students in or from outside Alabama due to circumstances caused by Hurricane Katrina. Many of the people escaped with literally the clothes on their backs and have no humanly way possible to produce birth certificates, immunization records, school records, information for qualifying for the Child Nutrition Program, etc. Additionally, you may be approached by displaced teachers and other school employees seeking employment. Again, we can work out details in the weeks and months ahead. Now is the time to come to the aid of our neighbors.

I know I can count on each of you for your complete cooperation in this time of crisis. To aid and assist you and your staff as questions arise, I have appointed a four-member team from the Department of Education. The members are Craig Pouncey, Assistant State Superintendent, (334) 242-9755, cpouncey@alsde.edu; Perry Taylor, State School Architect, (334) 242-9731, ptaylor@alsde.edu; Perry Fulton, Administrator, Child Nutrition Programs, (334) 242-1988, pfulton@alsde.edu; and Maggie Rivers, Director of Federal Programs, (334) 242-8199, mr@alsde.edu. Please contact any of these people for additional information or as questions arise.

For your information, attached is a memorandum from the United States Department of Agriculture pertaining to children in areas devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

JBM/AS

Attachment

FY05-1040