MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 14, 2008

TO: Directors, Local Departments of Social Services

FROM: Cathy F. Mols, Executive Director, Social Services Administration

RE: Verification of School Attendance/Enrollment and Immunization Records for Children receiving Adoption Subsidy

Effective immediately, local departments are required to receive verification of school attendance/enrollment for all children receiving a federal or state adoption subsidy. At the time of the annual redetermination, local departments will inform families of the new policy requiring the school verification when sending out the application to continue the subsidy. If the family does not provide the required verification for school attendance/enrollment or immunization record, the local department will be required to follow up with the family to ensure the child is receiving appropriate services. All local department applications for continuing the adoption subsidy must include information to determine the following:

- Parent currently legally responsible for the child.
- Parent currently provides financial support for the child.
- Child currently attending/enrolled in school. Third party documentation is required which includes: current report card, authorization letter for home schooling, or enrollment verification from school system.
- For non-school age children; Child has up to date immunization records. Provide documentation of immunizations.
- If the Child will reach his/her 18th birthday within the next 12 months:
  - Federal adoption subsidies - it must be determined that the child has a mental or physical disability that warrants the continuation of the adoption subsidy beyond the child’s 18th birthday.
  - State adoption subsidies - it must be determined that the child will be enrolled in an educational or vocational training program subsequent to his/her 18th birthday.

Additionally, on October 7, 2008, President Bush signed HR 6893: Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. The Social Services Administration is reviewing the legislation to determine the impact on current Maryland policies and will be developing policy in the next few months to accommodate the changes. If you have questions about the new policy, please contact Deborah Ramelmeier, Director for the Office of Child Welfare Practice and Policy at 410-767-7506 or via email at dramelme@dhr.state.md.us.