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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 18, 2021

TO: Maryland Colleges and Universities
Emily A.A. Dow, Assistant Secretary, MHEC
Barbara Schmertz, Director of Research and Policy Analysis, MHEC
Ross Goldstein, Executive Director, MLDS Center
Ann Kellogg, Director of Reporting Services, MHEC/MLDSC
Molly Abend, Data Management Coordinator, MLDS Center

FROM: Parris Jackson, Director of Information Technology, MHEC

SUBJECT: Discontinuance of State Assigned Student Identifier (SASID) in
MHEC MAC2 Data Collections

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform Maryland's public and state-aided private institutions of higher education and data sharing partners that the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) will no longer collect SASID ([DD9](#)) in any of the MAC2 data collections. This change is effective immediately; however, institutions may continue to include SASID in the file through all data collections in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. By 2022-2023, this field will be blank.

SASID Collection History

The SASID was added to MHEC's data collections in 2013. One of the reasons for inclusion of SASID in MHEC's data collections was to facilitate linking records from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) with those from MHEC after data are transferred to the Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center (MLDSC). MSDE assigns a SASID to all public K-12 students rather than collects social security numbers. MSDE maintains SASID in a secure master database, the Unique Student Identifier System (USIS). Maryland's higher education institutions are allowed to access USIS and search for State Assigned Student Identifiers (SASIDs) prior to submission of data collection files to MHEC.

Discontinuation of SASID Collection at Maryland Colleges and Universities

Effective immediately, Maryland's public and state-aided private institutions of higher education are no longer required to provide SASID in any MAC2 data collections. This decision was made after determining that the SASID provided limited research utility to MHEC and distracted campuses from providing more universal identifiers. In addition, due to recent updates in the USIS, SASID match rates with institutional files have been

significantly reduced. Students enrolled in Maryland postsecondary institutions are not exclusively from Maryland public K-12 schools. College students may have attended a Maryland private K-12 school, an out-of-state K-12 school or were enrolled in Maryland public K-12 prior to SASID implementation (2008). As such, the SASID is not a universal unique identifier that can be used in research. There are additional challenges campuses face in collecting SASID, such as an assumption that a student knows their SASID or accessing the USIS.

The decision to discontinue SASID collection was made in consultation with the MLDSC. It was determined by MLDSC that the SASID provides minimal benefit to identity resolution and record linking. Correct complete names, demographic string, social security numbers, and local campus IDs are more useful in identity resolution and record linking. Eliminating the SASID from its collections allows Maryland's public and state-aided private institutions of higher education to focus on data quality related to names, demographic string, social security numbers, and local campus IDs within and across data collections. As a future plan, MHEC is considering expanding demographic data to all of its data collections to improve the utility of the collections as a whole.

MAC2 Submission Guidance

Maryland's public and state-aided private institutions of higher education are no longer required to submit SASID in any collection. SASID ([DD9](#)) allows blanks and institutions should leave this field blank in all data submissions. Data may continue to be submitted in this field in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, but those data will not be validated. Effective with the 2022-2023 collection cycle this field must be blank. If the field is not blank, edit checks will result in fatal errors, which will alert the institutions that the field must be blank to allow the file to be loaded.

MLDSC Data Loading Guidance

MHEC recommends that, effective with the 2020-2021 collection cycle, MLDS discontinue loading data present in SASID.