DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE • DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION • DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

August 2008

Dear Public School Administrator:

As a school administrator, you have the vital charge of educating our Nation's students and you are entrusted with the significant responsibility of keeping our students and schools safe. Thank you for your service to America's students.

Effective alert systems are critical to supporting school and community emergency response. Supported by special congressional funding, the Department of Homeland Security has joined with the Departments of Education, Commerce, and Health and Human Services to provide every school in America with a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Public Alert Radio in order to establish a strong national school alerting capacity.

The NOAA Public Alert Radios serve an important public safety purpose. To ensure that all schools have access to this potentially life-saving tool, the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is sending a NOAA Public Alert Radio to your school to strengthen the school community alert and warning systems. In addition to preparing staff, students, and school communities for emergencies, this access to alerts and warnings will provide you with the information you need to respond quickly and appropriately should an incident develop.

NOAA Public Alert Radios are designed to signal different types of alerts to the public for all-hazards situations, ranging from weather and human-caused emergencies to law enforcement alerts, such as child abductions. NOAA Public Alert Radios offer the capability to transmit alerts to a specific city or region, or nationwide depending on the circumstance. Please review the material enclosed with the NOAA Public Alert Radio to learn how to use it effectively as part of your school's alert systems.

NOAA has established a Web site at http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov/ to support this distribution of NOAA Public Alert Radios to all schools. We request that all schools go to this site to register their Alert Radios, confirm receipt, and to get additional information and support.

Aligning the disaster plans of your school and the community is a critical step to being prepared for an emergency. We encourage you to work with your local emergency manager to integrate your school alert systems and disaster plans with your community disaster plans. If you would like assistance with other preparedness, safety education, and training opportunities for your institution, you may wish to contact your local Citizen Corps Council. Citizen Corps is FEMA's community-based program to promote community preparedness and participation. To find your local Council, go to http://www.citizencorps.gov/.

Thank you again for your hard work to educate our Nation's students and your steadfast attention to the safety of your students, personnel and communities during all emergencies.

Sincerely,

Carlos M. Gutierrez Secretary of Commerce	Michael O. Leavitt Secretary of Health and Human Services	Margaret Spellings Secretary of Education	Michael Chertoff Secretary of Homeland Security

Enclosures