



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

THOMAS D. WATKINS, JR.
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

September 3, 2003

TO: Local and Intermediate School Superintendents and Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Thomas D. Watkins, Jr.

SUBJECT: Immediate Response Required to Guarantee Continuance of Federal Funding

The purpose of this notice is to provide you with information regarding the submission procedure for certifying your district's compliance with Section 9524 of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB).

On February 7, 2003, the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) released a guidance document covering Section 9524 of NCLB, constitutionally protected prayer in public elementary and secondary schools. It requires that each local or intermediate school district or public school academy, as a condition of receiving funds under any portion of the NCLB, annually certify, in writing to the state agency, that it has no policy that prevents, or otherwise denies participation in, constitutionally protected prayer in public schools. Complete details are provided in the guidance that can be found on the Michigan Department of Education's (MDE) website at www.michigan.gov/mde. Click on the "No Child Left Behind" button on the right. Scroll down to the "What's New" section and click on "Prayer in Schools."

All districts submitted required certification for 2002-03. **The due date for submitting the certification for 2003-04 is October 1, 2003.** The process will be easier than in the past. Michigan Electronic Grants System (MEGS) Authorized (Level 5) Officials need only to go into MEGS and affirm compliance. Steps include:

- Authorized Officials (Level 5) log into MEGS.
- On the Main Menu, in the Additional Functions Section, click on the link "School Prayer Certification."
- Verify the statement on constitutionally protected prayer by using the "I Agree" button.
- Print off a copy for the district record.

MDE is required by November 1, 2003, to provide the USDOE a list of all districts not providing MDE with this certification. A district's failure to submit the required certification may result in the district's loss of funding under NCLB. Grant programs covered by Section 9524 include Title I, Reading First, Charter Schools, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and many others.

The MEGS submission outlined above will meet the requirements of the statute. Your immediate attention to this matter is requested. Questions regarding this process may be directed to Grants Coordination and Administration at 517-373-1806. Thank you for complying with the announced time line for the collection of the 2003-04 certification.

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