



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT

**FOOD SERVICE**

**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY NO. 5  
SCHOOL YEAR 2015-2016**

**SUBJECT: Guidance for Direct Certification Requirements for Public and Nonpublic Schools participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs**

**DATE: September 18, 2015**

The Direct Certification Report lists students that are automatically certified as eligible for free school meals. Each Local Education Agency (LEA) must notify households with matched students that they are eligible for free school meals and no further application is necessary. If the household wants to decline the free school meals benefit, they must notify the school.

The Direct Certification Report is available for all school districts, including nonpublic schools, through the ***Michigan Student Data System (MSDS)***. The Direct Certification Report matches student enrollment data that LEAs upload to the MSDS with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) participant data, as well as Foster Child data from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). The following information applies to other students living in the same household as the student on the Direct Certification Report:

- **SNAP:** Benefits can be extended to other children in the same household.
- **TANF:** Benefits can be extended to other children in the same household.
- **Foster Child Program:** Benefits cannot be extended to other students in the same household. However, foster children may be included on the family application to increase the number of household members which may increase the likelihood of receiving free or reduced price meal benefits.

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608 WEST ALLEGAN STREET • P.O. BOX 30008 • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909  
[www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde) • (517) 373-3324

### **Frequency of the Direct Certification Report:**

#### **New for school year 2015-2016:**

- The Direct Certification Report will be refreshed two times in October 2015.
  - ✓ At or around the beginning of the month (October 9, 2015)
  - ✓ At or around the end of the month (October 23, 2015)

The Direct Certification Report must be accessed at a minimum of three times during the school year:

- At or around the beginning of the school year.
- Three months after the initial effort.
- Six months after the initial effort.

The Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) will refresh the Direct Certification report monthly. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) encourages schools to pull the Direct Certification Report monthly to ensure all eligible students are receiving proper meal benefits.

Nonpublic schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) cannot access the Direct Certification Report until student enrollment data is uploaded to the MSDS.

### **Direct Certification Information for Public and Nonpublic Schools on the CEPI and MDE websites:**

The CEPI website has the most current Direct Certification information for Public and Nonpublic schools. The website is [The Michigan Center for Educational Performance and Information](http://www.michigan.gov/CEPI) [www.michigan.gov/CEPI](http://www.michigan.gov/CEPI)

*Click on **CEPI Applications** on the left side of the screen.*

There are two drop down menus with the following information:

- **Manuals**
  - Single Sign-On User Guide
- **Help and Training**
  - Verify Your CEPI Authorized Users
  - Application Security Forms
  - Removing a CEPI Application User

Click on **Calendar**.

The **Application Specific Timelines** section contains the **2015-2016 MSDS Direct Certification Timeline**.

Click on **Nonpublic Schools**.

Click on **Direct Certification Report** under the **Michigan Student Data System** section.

There are three drop down menus with the following information:

- **Manuals**
  - ✓ MSDS Nonpublic User Guide
- **Help and Training**
  - ✓ Direct Certification Report FAQs
  - ✓ USDA Memo on Frequency of Direct Certification Activities
  - ✓ Sample Eligibility Notification Letter
  - ✓ September 2009 Extending Categorical Eligibility to Additional Children in a Household
- **Technical Material**
  - ✓ Direct Certification Report Format

The MDE School Nutrition Programs website [The Michigan Department of Education School Nutrition website, www.michigan.gov/schoolnutrition](http://www.michigan.gov/schoolnutrition) includes details about Direct Certification under the Guidance Section. The *Eligibility Guidance for School Meals Manual* is available on the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service website at the following link:

[Eligibility Manual for School Meals Determining and Verifying Eligibility](http://www.fns.usda.gov/2015-edition-eligibility-manual-school-meals)

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/2015-edition-eligibility-manual-school-meals>

Questions regarding the technical MSDS computer applications may be directed to CEPI customer support by e-mail to [cepi@michigan.gov](mailto:cepi@michigan.gov) or phone 517-335-0505 and select option "3".

Questions regarding the NSLP Direct Certification requirement may be directed to the School Nutrition Programs unit by e-mail to [MDE-schoolnutrition@michigan.gov](mailto:MDE-schoolnutrition@michigan.gov) or phone 517-373-3347.

Questions regarding this policy memo may be directed to Lisa Brown-Taylor, MS, RDN, School District Consultant, at [browntaylorl@michigan.gov](mailto:browntaylorl@michigan.gov).