



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

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GOVERNOR

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT

FOOD SERVICE

**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY NO. 7
SCHOOL YEAR 2014-2015**

SUBJECT: Guidance for Direct Certification Requirements for National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs

DATE: August 25, 2014

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 Human Services (DHS). 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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Frequency of the Direct Certification Report:

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.

Additional Information about Direct Certification for Public and Nonpublic Schools

The CEPI website has the most updated information and forms for Direct Certification.

http://www.michigan.gov/cepi/0,4546,7-113-986_50502_53828---,00.html

- Direct Certification Report Format and Timeline
- Eligibility Notification Letter
- FAQs and USDA Memo for Direct Certification Activities
- Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Information

The MDE School Nutrition website includes details about Direct Certification under the Guidance Section. www.michigan.gov/schoolnutrition

- *Eligibility Guidance for School Meals Manual*

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/EliMan.pdf>

Direct Certification for Nonpublic Schools

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. *The Nonpublic Schools Security Agreement for Direct Certification* must be completed and approved prior to uploading student data. A copy of the security form along with *The Direct Certification Report User's Guide-Nonpublic Schools* is available on the CEPI website:

http://www.michigan.gov/cepi/0,4546,7-113-986_50502_53828---,00.html

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The direct links are:

Direct Certification Report User's Guide- Nonpublic Schools

http://www.michigan.gov/cepi/0,4546,7-113-986_50502_53828---,00.html

Nonpublic Schools Security Agreement (Direct Certification)

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/cepi/MSDS_nonpub_security_agreement_411289_7.doc?20131028132518

For more information on how to obtain a *Single Sign On Account* (SSO) and subscribe to applications, please reference the SSO user's guide located at http://mi.gov/cepi/0,1607,7-113-986_50502---,00.html in the "Security" section of the page.

A PowerPoint for nonpublic schools with step by step directions for accessing the MSDS, uploading student data, and retrieving the direct certification report is available at

http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-43092_50144-194535--,00.html

The *Direct Certification Presentation-Nonpublic Schools* PowerPoint is located in the Related Documents section at the bottom of the page.

Questions regarding the technical MSDS computer applications may be directed to CEPI customer support by e-mail to 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 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.