



News Release

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Demand Outstrips Resources Department Receives Huge Requests for 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant Dollars

The Michigan Department of Education has received a substantial number of grant applications from local school districts and community agencies for its federally-funded 21st Century Community Learning Center grant program, a fact which the state's top education official lauds as "extremely promising."

In all, the Department of Education received 102 applications from Michigan school districts and community agencies totalling \$93,944,592. The Department was allocated \$11.1 million from the U.S. Department of Education to fund 21st Century Community Learning Centers in Michigan. The request is about 8 ½ times more than the amount of federal resources available.

"I think these requests from Michigan school districts illustrate the overwhelming demand the school community has for these programs," said Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Watkins. "Districts are clamoring to get these programs underway, so they can truly Leave No Child Behind."

Watkins praised school districts and community agencies for the time and effort they put into the grant application process, and also acknowledged several bi-partisan efforts statewide to create similar learning opportunities for children, especially those at-risk.

"From Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick's Mayor's Time program to Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson's efforts toward embracing full-day full service schools for children in need of an outlet, these programs will all be important as we reach out to all children and keep them safe," he said.

Mayor's Time kicks off tomorrow with a 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. event at Cobo Hall in Detroit.

Studies show that some of the most dangerous time for school-aged children is between 3 and 8 p.m. Youth violence, serious crime, and teen pregnancies all skyrocket during this critical time when parents and guardians are not always available to supervise children.

These programs also enhance, develop, and support additional relationships between schools and families. Some children also miss critical opportunities to learn and grow after the school day is completed, and programs such as 21st Century Community Learning Centers, will capitalize on young people's interest and enthusiasm for life.

The State Board of Education's Task Force Report on Integrating Schools and Communities, co-chaired by Board Vice-President Sharon L. Gire and Member Herbert S. Moyer, also promotes the kind of connections that promote student achievement through collaborative thinking, shared resources, and dynamic partnerships.

Further, the State Board is considering adopting standards for Out-of-school Time Programs in Michigan. The proposed standards are on the Department website, www.michigan.gov/mde. Five public hearings will be held in the near future to receive input on the standards.

"These requests for grant funding are a true acknowledgement from Michigan's schools and communities that education does not end when the bell rings to close out the school day," Watkins said.

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