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Dismal Adequate Yearly Progress Figures Reveal Need for More Choice in Public Education

LANSING – Recently released report cards on the progress of Michigan’s non-charter public schools revealed the increasing need for the state to address the lack of choice in public education, the Michigan Catholic Conference (MCC) announced today. Some 29 percent of school buildings in the state failed to meet adequate yearly progress requirements as described by the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

“The overwhelming percentage of non-charter public schools who failed to make adequate yearly progress further exemplifies the need for more choice in statewide public education,” said MCC Vice-President for Public Policy Paul A. Long. “While approximately 75 percent of Catholic children attend public schools, it is evident that the state is doing a disservice to Michigan’s students and families by depriving them uplifting opportunities and a real choice toward educating our children.”

Last Friday the Department of Education revealed its first Education Yes! report cards to the public. Those report cards revealed that 896 of the 3,054 non-charter public school buildings in Michigan failed to make adequate yearly progress as called for in the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The report cards also exposed over 110 schools across the state that must restructure because they failed to meet adequate yearly progress for five consecutive years.

Even more astounding, as reported today in *Michigan Information and Research Services*, were the 20 schools failing to make adequate yearly progress that received the governor’s Golden Apple award in 2002, and one school who was a three-time winner of the “Governor’s Cup.”

“We must eliminate any and all barriers that restrict the ability of parents to give their children the best education possible,” said Long. “Along with addressing the need for real choice in public schools, the state must also seriously evaluate religious discriminatory language that exists in the Michigan Constitution pertaining to education.”

The Michigan Catholic Conference is the public policy voice for the Catholic Church in this state.