



U. S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20035

Dr. Kenneth James  
Superintendent  
Arkansas Department of Education  
#4 Capitol Mill  
Little Rock, AR 72201

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DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

SEP 20 2004

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Dear Dr. James:

As a new school year begins, we write to advise you of a recurrent issue that we have encountered involving extra-curricular activities: the allocating of awards or honors on the basis of race. We have found, for example, that some school districts have racially separate Homecoming Queens and Kings, Most Popular Student, Most Friendly, as well as other superlatives. We have also found that school districts have assisted in facilitating racially-separate proms. Indeed, our attorneys have been made aware of several examples of these types of activities as recently as last year.

These practices are inconsistent with federal law. The Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice and the Department of Education will act promptly to remedy such violations where they occur, through litigation if necessary.

This letter does not suggest that these or similar practices are currently ongoing in school districts in your state. We write only to request your assistance in letting school officials in your state know that such practices are inconsistent with federal law and should not be tolerated.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation and assistance. If you should have any questions or are in need of assistance in dealing with this issue in any district, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Marcus  
Delegated the Authority of  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education

R. Alexander Acosta  
Assistant Attorney General  
Civil Rights Division  
U.S. Department of Justice

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