
MEMORANDUM No. 2014-017

TO: District Superintendents
FROM: Tamra Jackson, Supervisor, Support Services and Resources Division
Child Nutrition Section
DATE: February 10, 2014
SUBJECT: New School Meal Eligibility Provision

NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR SCHOOL MEAL ELIGIBILITY

The Wyoming Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs Section would like to inform you of a new opportunity for school meals eligibility. The Community Eligibility Provision is an option for high poverty schools. It will significantly increase student participation in school lunch and school breakfast programs funded by the United States Department of Agriculture as all students in designated schools eat a free lunch and breakfast. This option is guaranteed for a period of four school years.

This provision can be determined at a local school level, a group of schools or at a Local Education Agency (district) level. Any school, group of schools, or LEA level with an enrollment consisting of at least forty (40) percent of directly certified students may take part in this new option. Directly certified students are those students who are foster children, receive SNAP and FDPIR benefits or have a homeless and runaway determination.

Instead of applications, schools use claiming percentages based on the number of identified students for reimbursement in the school. Identified students are those certified for free meals through direct certification. LEAs and/or schools must have an identified student percentage of at least 40 percent directly certified.

Because a school's direct certification percentage does not fully represent its share of students who qualify for free or reduced price meals, the federal rule is that schools multiply that

percentage by 1.6 to obtain the percentage of their meals (capped at 100 percent) for which they will claim federal reimbursement at the free rate. LEAs multiply the identified student percentage that is directly certified by a factor of 1.6 to arrive at the free claiming percentage. The difference between the free claiming percentage and 100 percent results in the paid claiming percentage.

An Example of the calculation: If the Local Education Agency or school has 50 percent of the students that are directly certified, 50 is taken times 1.6 which equals 80 percent. In this case, 80 percent of the students would be reimbursed at the free rate and the other 20 percent would be reimbursed at the paid rate. Any food service costs that are not covered by the federal reimbursement must be covered by non-federal sources. If at least 62.5 percent of students are identified directly certified, all meals would be reimbursed at the free rate.

Your responsibility is to determine if any school or group of schools which qualify for the Community Eligibility Provision. This can be done by taking the enrollment of the school or group of schools and matching it with the foster and SNAP students listed on the Direct Certification website for the current school year plus adding any children who have FDPIR benefits, non-custodial TANF benefits and those who have a homeless or runaway determination. Any schools or groups of schools that meet the 40 percent qualify for the provision. Examples of qualified schools, group of schools and LEA follow:

- (School) School one has 42 percent of its enrollment that is directly certified for Free Lunch. The school would qualify.
- (Group of Schools) School one has 37 percent (enrollment of 200-74 directly certified), school two has 36 percent (enrollment of 250-90 directly certified) and school three has 60 percent (enrollment of 100-60 directly certified). Total enrollment of the three schools is 550 and the total number of students directly certified is 224 for a percentage of 40.7. All three schools would qualify for the provision.
- (LEA) A district has 48 percent of its enrollment that is directly certified. All schools in the LEA would qualify.
- I know that you are aware that many United States Department of Education programs use the data provided by the free and reduced price meal applications to determine eligibility for the individual schools. The Wyoming Department of Education Federal Programs Division will provide guidance to any district choosing this provision.

By April 15 of each year, you must submit the Community Eligibility Provision Interest Form and documentation showing that a district, school(s) or a group of schools has:

- An identified Direct Certification percentage of at least 40 percent
- An identified Direct Certification percentage between 35 percent and 40 percent for future consideration.

Use the following link after February 15 to access the interest form and additional resources. The Wyoming Department of Education is currently upgrading its website. I have attached the interest form to this memo.

http://edu.wyoming.gov/Programs/nutrition/national_school_lunch_program.aspx

Contact Tamra Jackson at 307-777-6263 or tamra.jackson@wyo.gov with any additional questions you may have.

TJ:rs