

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT BLACKFOOT'S CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM:

Q: If a student has a negative balance are they refused a meal?

A: No. All students are provided a meal, regardless of balance on their account, during serving times. Staff tries to accommodate students who show up after regular serving hours on a case by case basis.

Q: If a student has a negative balance are they given a peanut butter and jelly sandwich rather than a full meal?

A: No. All students are provided the regular meal.

Q: What should administration do if a child indicates they have been refused service?

A: Notify Child Nutrition immediately so the situation can be investigated and any necessary corrective actions be taken. We are committed to serving students a healthy, nutrition meal.

Q: What steps are taken by Child Nutrition staff for students with negative balances?

A: The following steps are taken:

- 1. Students are informed if the parents allow us to tell the student outright or if they ask directly about their account.*
- 2. Parents are notified by letter, E-Mail, and/or called by the Kitchen Manager.*
- 3. Low balance alerts are E-Mailed to parents from Child Nutrition weekly.*
- 4. Kitchen Managers notify Administration of students with a negative balance.*
- 5. A Free and Reduced Meal Application is usually sent home with the child or mailed to the guardian.*

Q: What if a child is eligible for free or reduced meals and the parent/guardian has not or will not complete the application process?

A: Building Administrators may complete an application for a child known to be eligible for meal benefits if the household has not applied. When exercising this option, the school official must complete an application on behalf of the child based on the best household size and income information or Other Source Categorical Eligibility status know to the official.

Q: How is a free or reduced determination made?

A: There are several ways eligibility determinations are made:

- 1. Student is directly certified from the state;*
- 2. Parents complete an application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals and qualify based on being on SNAP, TAFI, FDPIR, TANF or their household income qualifies them for either free or reduced meals.*

3. School Counselor AND Principle submit a homeless form to Federal Programs on the student
4. Student is officially identified as migrant
5. Student is identified as a foster student (note: ONLY the foster student and not the entire household would qualify in this instance)
6. School officials complete an application on behalf of a known eligible student

Q: Does every household need to complete an Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals?

A: No. If the household is not eligible for a qualifying program (i.e., SNAP, TAFI, FDPIR, TANF) or their income is above the eligibility guidelines it becomes an administrative burden and slows down the process for those that do qualify. Applications can be submitted online at www.bsd55.heartlandapps.com (preferred method) or a paper form can be completed and turned in.

Q: What is Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)?

*A: It is a program that was created to improve access to free school meals in eligible high poverty Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) and schools to eliminate the administrative burden of collecting household applications. Identified students are defined as the students certified for free meals who are not subject to verification. This definition includes students directly certified through SNAP, TANF, and FDPIR participation as well as homeless on the liaison list, Head Start, pre-K Even Start, migrant youth, runaways, and non-applicants approved by local officials. Foster children certified through means other than an application are also included. **Students who are categorically eligible based on submission of a free and reduced price application are not included.***

For additional information on CEP visit <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/cnp/sch-mp/cep/files/general/Community-Eligibility-Provision-Fact-Sheet.pdf> and <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/cnp/sch-mp/cep/files/general/Community-Eligibility-Provision-Brochure.pdf>

Q: How is CEP applied to our district and why doesn't the entire district receive free meals?

A: Instead of applications, the percentage of direct certified students is used. This percentage is multiplied by a factor of 1.6 to arrive at the free claim percentage under CEP. The reimbursement rate for non-direct certified students is approximately 12-14% of the reimbursement rate of the free claim percentage, so if the free claim percentage is not high enough it does not cover reimbursement costs when added to the regular reimbursement rate. Since our program cannot operate in the red, the two rates have to cover costs of providing these meals. This is why three individual schools with the highest direct certified percentages currently are participating in the program.

Q: Our school has a high free rate, why aren't we participating in CEP?

A: Your school may have a high free rate, when factoring in both direct certified students and applications but when this number is reduced to just the direct certified students then your percentage falls below the necessary threshold to make participation feasible.