

Dear Authorized Representative and Food Service Director:

Please review the attachments and information in the body of this email and take the necessary action. The attached documents that are identified as SP XX-2012 are USDA memos that provide an update on regulations and must be reviewed to ensure you are operating according to regulations. Questions may be directed to your area consultants or Patti Harding at patti.harding@iowa.gov.

October 1 – Verification: Selection of Free and Reduced Price Households
Verification is the confirmation of eligibility for free and reduced price meals under the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. The number of approved applications on file as of October 1 is used to determine the number of households to be verified. The attached “12-13 Verification Information” provides instructions on the process. USDA requires the exact number of applications (all fractions must be rounded to nearest whole number) be verified. Carefully review the “Other Points to Remember” section of the attachment before you begin the process. If the school/district uses an automated system for sample selection please confirm it is based on total number of households (not individual students) and that it only includes those applications that are required to be included in the sample selection. Additional information on the verification process is provided in the USDA Eligibility Manual for School Meals (Part 8) located at http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/guidance/EliMan_h.pdf. The Verification Training webinar conducted on September 20 will be posted to the Bureau web page on October 5. USDA requires the verification process be completed by November 15. Please contact your area consultant, Diana Weber at diana.weber@iowa.gov or Patti Harding at patti.harding@iowa.gov for assistance.

Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) - Department of Education-Clarification on Guidance for the Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) Calculator Tool

The federal guidance on this tool explains that districts that choose to contribute non-Federal sources to the nonprofit school food service account (fund) in lieu of raising paid lunch prices must calculate the appropriate amount to contribute.

The guidance gave examples of potential sources for those non-Federal sources:

1. per-lunch reimbursements for paid lunches provided by States, counties, school districts and others;
2. funds provided by organizations, such as school-related or community groups, to support paid lunches;
3. any portion of State revenue matching funds that exceeds the minimum requirement established in 7 CFR 210.17 and that is provided specifically for paid lunches; or
4. any proportion attributable to paid lunches from direct payments made from school district funds to support the lunch service; e.g., a pro-rata share of general funds.

Those potential sources of non-Federal sources may be allowable, but each district must look to the laws in its own state to determine if those non-Federal sources could be used to subsidize the school food service fund.

As per Iowa Code, bullet number 4. (transfers from other funds) is NOT a potential source of the non-federal portion. Instead, districts could look for donations from organizations or individuals, fundraisers, or foundations or trust funds that specify subsidizing the school food service fund as an appropriate use. In reference to bullet number 1 and 3, state reimbursements for paid lunch do not exceed the minimum requirement and may not be considered as a non-federal source.

USDA Guidance on School Meal Changes - specifically those relating to calories and inadequate food

USDA has released a new resource to assist schools in responding to concerns about the school meal changes- specifically those relating to calories and inadequate food. As you know, we had a template letter to parents in the “School Day Just Got Healthier” toolkit, however that letter provided more general information about the changes and was not targeted at that issue. Here is a link to the new letter: Letter to Parents Template. The letter also has a link to the whole set of materials available.

Certification of Compliance with Meal Requirements Webinar – Posted

The webinar “Certification of Compliance with Meal Requirements” was aired on September 10, 2012. This webinar provides School Food Authorities (SFAs) with information about the requirements for the additional 6 cents per lunch reimbursement and walks participants through the USDA menu worksheets as well as the USDA simplified nutrient assessment. The webinar is located at http://www.educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2671%3Acertification-for-06&catid=59%3Anutrition-programs&Itemid=4678.

SP 10-2012 Revised September 18

Attached are Questions & Answers on the final rule to update the school meals offered under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, as required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. This guidance addresses the final rule overall, and includes questions on general and specific aspects of the new meal requirements. This document is updated periodically to issue additional Questions & Answers as they arise during the implementation of the new meal requirements. This revision includes a Table of Contents (the PDF bookmarks each section), as well as revised or new Questions & Answers. In addition, two sections (“Miscellaneous” and “Compliance”) were deleted and their content moved to other sections. The revisions are not identified in italic letters, as previously done, but a summary of the changes to each section is provided below:

SP 44-2012 Revised September 12

Attached are Revised Questions and Answers related to the Food and Nutrition Service prototype 6 Cents Certification Tool. Please note that the only revision made

to the Q&As is in question 14. USDA received several questions about this Q&A and have added information to make a more complete answer. Under section 201 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, an additional reimbursement of 6 cents per lunch is available for school food authorities certified to be in compliance with the new school meal patterns. The 6 cents certification tool will be used to certify school food authorities to receive the 6 cents performance-based reimbursement. The attached Questions and Answers reflect questions we have received and provide additional information on using the tool.

Sincerely,
Patti Harding, Administrative Consultant
Iowa Department of Education
Bureau of Nutrition and Health Services