

Commissioner's Memo
6/25/2021

Student Eligibility and eSchool Rollover for SY 2021-2022 School Year

Memo Information

Memo Number **CNU-21-027**

Memo Date 6/25/2021

Memo Type Informational

Unit Child Nutrition

Regulatory Authority USDA Covid-19 Child Nutrition Response #85 and Policy Memo SP 15-2021

Response Required NO

Attention Superintendents; Principals; Child Nutrition Directors/Managers; Data Stewards (SIS; eSchool; eFinance; TRIAND)

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Memo Text

ATTENTION: Co-op Directors; Elementary Principals; High School Principals; Middle School Principals; Secondary Principals; Superintendents; Child Nutrition Directors, eSchool Coordinators

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will allow school districts to "opt-in" to a nationwide waiver to serve meals under the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) for school year (SY) 2021-2022. Under the SSO, meals are served to students without charge to the family and reimbursed at the free rate even if a meal application is not completed.

Districts should be aware, however, that eligibility for free or reduced student meals is used to determine a student's eligibility to receive Pandemic-Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT). For this reason, schools must make meal applications available to certify children for pandemic meal benefits and to qualify newly eligible children for SY 2021-22 and summer 2022 P-EBT benefits. Applications collected for SY 2021-22 are subject to verification.

Due to the number of funding sources that base funding calculations on a school or district's free and reduced eligibility percentage, DESE recommends that districts rollover the students' eligibility status from SY 2020-21 into SY 2021-22. The first direct certification match will be automatically uploaded into eSchool. All other student's status will remain the same as the SY 2020-21 eligibility status.

DESE will monitor enrollment and eligibility data for each school, as well as statewide data to determine if there are significant changes that would necessitate policy considerations regarding funding or affect the stability of data for school accountability ratings.

Districts must take the following action:

- continue to make meal applications available to families that wish to apply and newly enrolled students (such as pre-school, kindergarten and transfer); and
- process direct certification matches after receiving notification of each statewide match.