

Commissioner's Memo
4/18/2023

Paid Lunch Equity for Child Nutrition Programs

Memo Information

Memo Number **CNU-23-018**

Memo Date 4/18/2023

Memo Type Regulatory

Unit Child Nutrition

Regulatory Authority Consistent with 7 CFR 210.14(e)(4)(i), Section 7552, of Division A of the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2023, SP 11-2023

Response Required YES

Attention Bookkeepers; Child Nutrition Directors/Managers; General Business Managers; Principals; Superintendents

Primary Contact Information

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Memo Text

The purpose of this memo is to provide guidance for paid lunch pricing in Child Nutrition Programs for the 2023-2024 school year. The Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) tool is used to determine the weighted average price of a paid lunch prices for student meals or the amount of non-federal funds that must be put into the non-profit food service account. Under Section 752, the Consolidated Appropriations Act for 2023 and [SP 11-2023](#), only a School Food Authority (SFA) having a negative balance in the nonprofit school food service account as of June 30, 2022, will be required to complete the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) PLE Tool. School districts with a zero or positive balance are exempt from this requirement but need to retain the APSCN Board Report for period 12 (June 2022) showing the balance.

All SFAs are encouraged to complete the PLE tool and establish a paid lunch price for student meals as a future reference.

SFAs may use the prices they last charged students as the basis for their SY 2023-2024 paid lunch price calculation, even if those prices were charged during a year the SFA was not required to comply with PLE requirements. For example, SFAs that received flexibility under the PLE waiver during SY 2022-20231 or that were exempt based on the FY 2022 Appropriations Act may use prices charged during SY 2022-2023 to determine their PLE requirement for SY 2023-2024.

SFAs that did not charge for meals during SY 2022-2023, such as an SFA that operated under a special provision and is returning to standard counting and claiming in SY 2023-2024, may use the most recent paid lunch price data as the basis for its SY 2023-2024 paid lunch calculation. If an SFA is unable to find documentation of the last paid meal price charged to students, then it must follow [Paid Lunch Equity Guidance](#).

SFAs are not required to raise their paid lunch price by more than 10 cents for SY 2023-2024 from the last year they charged for paid lunches. SFAs can still choose to raise the price by more than 10 cents.

All SFAs are required to complete the attached form and those districts who had a negative balance as of June 30, 2022, must also complete and send in a copy of the completed PLE tool to ADE.CNU-A-PS@ade.arkansas.gov by Friday, May 19, 2023.

If you have any questions, please contact your Area Specialist at 501-324-9502.

Attachments

- [Contiguous_States_PLE_Tool_SY_23-24_085915.xlsx](#)
- [PLE_Attestation_085924.pdf](#)