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Planning Ahead for Community Eligibility

Basics, Tools, and Implementation Tips



Breakfast Matters Webinar
January 10, 2019
3—4pm EST



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A BIG thank you to FRAC's Partners!

School Nutrition Association

Toni Aiken and Anna Woods

schoolnutrition.org

AASA, the School Superintendents Association

Kayla Jackson and Rebecca Shaw

aasa.org

ASBO, Association of School Business Officials International

Elleka Yost

asbointl.org



Today's Speakers

Robert Leshin

Director, Office for Food and Nutrition Programs
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Arlethia Brown

Manager of Business Services, Division of Finance and Operations
Camden Public Schools

Alison Maurice

Child Nutrition Policy Analyst
Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)



Community Eligibility Provision *Overview*

Robert Leshin

Director, Office for Food and Nutrition Programs
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and
Secondary Education

CEP Overview

- Allows low-income schools to offer meals to all students at no cost, without the need to collect applications
- Reduces paperwork for families and schools
- Operates on a four-year cycle

CEP Benefits

- **Students**
 - Enjoy free, healthy meals at school
 - Reduced stigma because all students eat for free
- **Parents**
 - Do not have to fill out school meal applications
 - Enjoy free, healthy meals at school
 - Do not have to worry about refilling meal accounts
- **Schools**
 - Reduces paperwork and administrative costs
 - Streamlines meal service operations
 - Cannot accumulate unpaid meal debt



CEP Eligibility

- Schools districts, groups of schools, or individual schools may participate
- Eligibility is based on the percentage of identified students enrolled
- The identified student percentage must be at least 40% for the entity to participate

Identified Students

Children who participate in SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR

Homeless, runaway, migrant, or foster children

Medicaid (in some states)

$$\text{Identified Student Percentage} = \frac{\# \text{ Identified Students}}{\# \text{ Enrolled Students}} \times 100$$



CEP Flexible Election Options

- **Individual School**
 - There is no limit on the number of schools that can participate as an “individual site”
- **Group(s) of Schools**
 - Provides flexibility to adopt CEP at schools that have lower ISPs by grouping with other schools with higher ISPs
- **District-Wide**
 - School districts can use one district-wide ISP, or have all schools in the district participate in different groups/individual sites

How are schools grouped for CEP?

- Schools can participate in CEP individually, in a group, or district-wide. There is no limit on the number of CEP groups a district can have.
- When schools are grouped, the ISP is calculated by dividing the total number of identified students by total enrollment for all schools included in the group
- Schools that would not be eligible to participate in CEP individually (ISPs below 40 percent), may participate as part of a group, provided that the group's ISP is 40 percent or above.

Calculating the Group ISPs: Example

- In this example, three schools are grouped together for CEP
- First, total the number of identified students across all schools in the group (248)
- Next, total the number of enrolled students across all schools in the group (420)
- Now, divide 248 by 420, which = .59. Multiply this by 100 to calculate the percentage (59%).

	Identified students	Enrollment	ISP
School 1	60	120	50%
School 2	38	100	38%
School 3	150	200	75%
Group of schools	248	420	59%

$$\frac{\text{Total identified students for group (248)}}{\text{Total enrollment for group (420)}}$$

How are reimbursements determined for CEP?

- ISP is multiplied by a factor of 1.6 to determine the percent of meals that will be reimbursed at the Federal **FREE** rate
 - The 1.6 multiplier approximates free and reduced-price percentages since school meal applications are no longer collected
- The remaining percent of meals are reimbursed at the Federal **PAID** rate
- There is no reduced-price category under CEP

ISP	Free	Paid
40%	64%	36%
45%	72%	28%
50%	80%	20%
55%	88%	12%
60%	96%	4%
65%	100%	0%

For example, school with 50 percent identified students would be reimbursed at the free rate for 80 percent of the meals eaten (50 multiplied by 1.6 = 80), and 20 percent at the paid rate.

How to Enroll in CEP

- Interested schools and districts must notify their State agency by June 30, 2019 expressing interest in participating (June 30th is a Sunday this year— so check with your state agency for clarity)
- Documentation must be submitted to the State agency showing eligibility
- The State agency will review the documentation to ensure the school/district:
 - Meets the 40 percent ISP requirement
 - Participates in both NSLP and SBP
 - Has a record of administering the meal program in accordance with program regulations
- Once the school/district is approved, the State agency will facilitate training and technical assistance



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Changes During the Four-Year Cycle

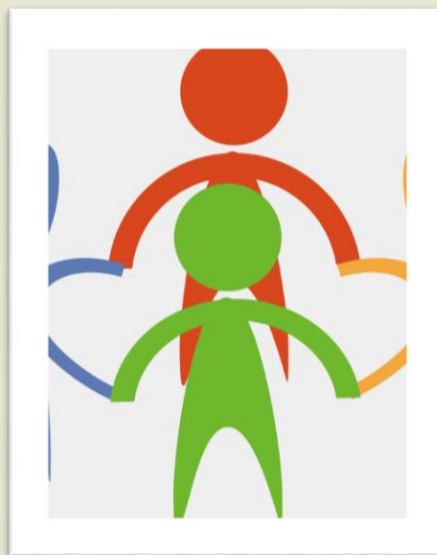
- A new identified student percentage may be established each year (April 1)
 - During the 2nd, 3, and 4th years, the school/district may select the higher of the identified student percentage from the year directly prior; OR the year prior to the first year of operating CEP
- A CEP school/district in year four with an identified student percentage of less than 40 percent but more than 30 percent, may elect CEP for an additional year, known as a “grace year”

SY 2019-2020 Timeline

- **Important Dates:**

- **April 1, 2019:** Identified student percentage must be established for determining the eligibility and the claiming percentages to be used
- **April 15, 2019:** State agencies notify school districts of districtwide eligibility status and provide guidance and information. School districts submit school level data to State agencies.
- **May 1, 2019:** State agencies post the school districtwide and school level lists on website to indicate schools eligible for CEP for the following school year (SY 2019-2020).
- **June 30, 2019:** Interested and eligible school districts must notify their State agency of their intent to participate in CEP.





Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

Arlethia Brown, MBA, CPFM
Camden, New Jersey
Camden City School District (Sponsor)

Session's Objective

- All About Camden City School District School's CEP Program
- The Decision to Apply
- Ups and Downs
- Road to Success
- Outcomes
- Questions and Comments



All About Camden's CEP Program

The Camden City School District was approved for Community Eligibility during the 2014-15 School year with 36 sites approved sites.

<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Identified Students</u>	<u>Qualified Percentage</u>	<u>Percentage X Multiplier</u>
11,855	8567	72%	1.15 %

Combining all schools and considering all students enrolled in the district allowed us the ability to have all schools approved as a district, 100%. 7 schools would not have been approved at 100%.

Originally we were reluctant to apply for CEP for the following reasons:

- Lack of understanding
- Loss of funds (State Aide), Reduced, and Paid Meals
- Documentation
- Household Surveys
- Staffing Challenges
- Increase in paperwork for Business Office
- What ifs.....



The Decision To Apply

We used the following to get our Business Office and Administrators to agree to apply:

- Eliminate reduced and paid student balances
- Elimination of alternative non-paid meal options
- Increase of free eligible students
- Reduction in paperwork for Food Service Team
- Elimination of meal applications
- Not having to identify free, reduced, and paid meals during meal claiming process
- Elimination of Master Eligibility List (MEL).
- Increase of revenue
- Time and efforts refocused on meals and operation other than meal applications
- The Food Service Team agreed to work after hours to help with household surveys
- Consolidation of operations with other school districts (Serving as a sponsor)



Ups and Downs...

Over the years we have had significant changes to our program and administration

Many student had immediate access to meals in their classrooms for breakfast and longer lunch periods provided students with more time to eat. More than 90% of our students ate breakfast and lunch on a daily basis from 2014-2016.

Since then our participation for breakfast reduced to 61% while lunch remained stagnate at 70 - 73%. Please note the following challenges:

- Staff reduction (Abolishment of lunch aides)
- Breakfast in the classroom dissolved
- Stale menu
- Shorter meal periods
- Reduction in late carts
- Reduction in revenue
- Staff turnover
- Closing of central kitchen



2018-2019 CHANGES – The Road to Success

- School Nutrition 101 Meetings (District Wide – Re-educating the community about our programs and services)
- Breakfast After the Bell Promotion
- Breakfast Late Cart
- Additional meal stations
- Staffing changes (Executive Chef)
- Increased Partnerships - (FRAC, Fuel up to Play 60, American Dairy, others)
- Menu Changes
 - Vegetarian Options
 - Meal Service Changes (Satellite and Full Prep to 4 well and 8 well locations)
 - 15 available items for breakfast
 - 17 available options for lunch
- 2018 CEP DATA:
 - Enrollment : 9796
 - Identified Students: 6943
 - Qualified Percentage: 71%
 - Percentage X Multiplier: 1.6%



Outcomes

- Current Lunch Participation: 82% and Climbing
- Current Breakfast Participation: 65% and Climbing
- Implemented Fresh Baked Goods
- Hot Chocolate is available
- Student's are happy with meal options
- Limited complaints
- Additional efforts in other areas of services and programs
 - Increased FFVP Sites
 - Summer Meals Programs
 - After School Dinner Programs
 - Wellness Committee Efforts
 - Sustainability Projects
 - Catering
 - Concessions – Food Truck for Events



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Camden City School District School Nutrition Team

Arlethia Brown, Sr. Manager of School Nutrition
abrown@Camden.k12.nj.us – Ext. 65598 or 38825

Tatiana Cody, Specialist
tcody@Camden.k12.nj.us - Ext. 65809 or 38840

Michelle Harper, Specialist
mharper@camden.k12.nj.us – Ext. 65614 or 38840

Hernandez, Joel, Aramark General Mgr.
Hernandez-Joel@Aramark.com - 856-966-5120, ext. 29305





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Recap, Resources, and Best Practices

Alison Maurice

Child Nutrition Policy Analyst

Food Research & Action Center

Implementation Best Practice:

Perform Direct Certification Often

- Extend eligibility to students living in households with other students who are directly certified when possible
- Frequent communication homeless liaison/school counselor to quickly identify students who are homeless or in foster care
- Perform direct certification matches as often as possible
- Partner with an anti-hunger organization to do SNAP outreach to your families

Resource: <http://frac.org/research/resource-library/direct-certification-improves-low-income-student-access-to-school-meals-an-updated-guide-to-direct-certification>



Implementation Tip: Increase Breakfast Participation with Breakfast After the Bell

Breakfast in the Classroom

Meals are delivered to and eaten in the classroom at the start of the school day.

“Grab and Go”

Students can quickly grab the components of their breakfast from carts or kiosks in the hallway or other high student traffic areas to take back to their classroom or in common areas.

Second Chance/Brunch

Students are offered a second chance to eat breakfast after homeroom or first period.

Resource:

<http://www.frac.org/programs/school-breakfast-program/school-breakfast-expansion-strategies>



Implementation Best Practices: Collecting Alternative Income Forms

- Make the forms “mandatory”
- Distribute the forms and process them in Nutrition Services following the meal benefit application process
- Use combined form if possible
- Work with school staff and have weekly communication
- Food Service fund must be reimbursed for any time spent processing applications

Resource:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/smj48h9oidg7vor/AABvfojeGQ4E7SlS-xs4xjo5a?dl=0>



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Implementation Tips: Partial CEP Implementation

School districts that don't have the poverty levels to participate in CEP districtwide can strategically group some schools together to implement CEP.

Steps for Keeping Parents Informed

- Send info home to parents in back-to-school packets
- Set up table at back-to-school night for parents who need to fill out school meal applications
- Provide a list of CEP schools on your website
- Place banners outside CEP schools/where parents drop off students
- Ensure school staff know where they can direct families to find school meal program info

Resource:
Coming Soon!



Implementation Tips: Making CEP Work with Low ISPs

1. Implement breakfast after the bell
2. Offer afterschool meals
3. Track daily participation and adjust menu as necessary
4. Engage students to determine meal preferences
5. Provide appealing, high-quality meals; and
6. Promote programs to students, parents, and the community.

Resource: <http://frac.org/research/resource-library/community-eligibility-making-it-work-with-lower-isps>



Additional Resources

- [FRAC's Community Eligibility Webpage](#)
- [USDA's Community Eligibility Resource Center](#)
- [USDA and US Department of Education Joint Guidance on CEP and Title I](#)
- [Alison Maurice](#) at FRAC amaurice@frac.org or 202-986-2200 ext. 5056



Questions and Answers

Thank You!





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Alison Maurice | 202.986.2200 ext. 5056 | amaurice@frac.org

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