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Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2015 11:19 AM
To: MDE-SchoolNutrition <MDE-SchoolNutrition@michigan.gov>
Subject: Howard's News from MDE 101315

Just a couple of items from the School Nutrition Programs unit:

1. Verification - It is that time of year again to start conducting Verification. School Food Authorities (SFAs) are required to conduct Verification annually to confirm selected students' eligibility for free and reduced price meals in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. The deadline for completing Verification is November 15, 2015. Please keep all of your Verification information organized in a folder for easy access during an Administrative Review.

The Steps to Complete Verification are posted on the School Nutrition website under What's New and under Guidance - Eligibility Certification and Verification at [The Michigan Department of Education School Nutrition Website](http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-66254_50144---,00.html)ⁱ. Please note all of the documents required to complete verification are linked within the Steps to Complete Verification.

If you have any additional questions about conducting Verification, please contact Lisa Brown Taylor, School Nutrition Programs Consultant, at browntaylor@michigan.gov or (517)-241-3885. You may also contact the main number for the MDE School Nutrition Programs by calling 517-373-3347, or e-mailing MDE-schoolnutrition@michigan.gov.

2. School Meals Monthly Training Calendar - The Administrative Review topics for October are Direct Certification and Meal Applications. Please take a look at the attached information for instructions on how to review and improve these areas. Following the calendar and verifying compliance or taking action to meet compliance will greatly reduce the potential for findings and corrective action during an Administrative Review. Whether your Administrative Review is this year or a year or two down the road, everyone is invited to follow the calendar, take actions as needed, and eliminate areas of non-compliance throughout the year.

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Customer Service is a priority at the Michigan Department of Education – helping Michigan schools, families, and communities improve the achievement and well-being of ALL our children.

ⁱ http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-66254_50144---,00.html

Office of School Support Services

School Nutrition Programs

Direct Certification Reporting

1. The Direct Certification Report must be pulled a minimum of three times during the school year.
 - At or around the beginning of the school year.
 - Three months after the initial effort.
 - Six months after the initial effort.
2. MDE encourages schools to pull the direct certification report monthly to ensure all eligible students are receiving proper meal benefits.
3. Direct Certification takes precedence over applications. For example, if a paper application is submitted for a child that is on the direct certification report, the school must disregard the paper application and designate the child as directly certified.
4. Schools must notify households about Direct Certification eligibility. The notification must include the following information:
 - The child is eligible for free meals.
 - No further application is necessary.
 - An explanation of extended eligibility of any additional children in the household and directions on how to notify the school of additional eligible children.
 - How to notify the school if the household does not want free meals.
5. A sample notification letter is available on the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) Direct Certification web page under Help and Training. The direct link is: [Sample Direct Certification Letterⁱ](#).
6. Access to the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) for Direct Certification Reporting
 - Step 1: Go to [Link to State of Michigan Single Sign On Pageⁱⁱ](#).
 - Step 2: Enter your Single Sign-On (SSO) user ID and password.
 - Step 3: Click on "Michigan Student Data System (MSDS)."

Non-Public Schools Information for Direct Certification

1. Report your student enrollment in the MSDS throughout the school year either by manual entry OR bulk file upload.

2. The collection of the following Student Data is required for each student:

- First Name
- Last Name
- Date of Birth
- Gender
- Grade or Setting
- Operating District Number ("84000" for nonpublic schools)
- School/Facility Code (5 digits)

3. To Establish First Time Access to the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS):

Step 1: Go to [Link to Michigan Student Data System](#)ⁱⁱⁱ.

Step 2: Click on "Help and Support" (left hand bar).

Step 3: Click on "Application Login and Security Forms."

Step 4: Click the link for District users or Nonpublic users.

Step 5: Follow the step-by-step instructions.

School Meal Applications

The Michigan School Nutrition Programs website is an excellent resource for all of the school meals programs. You will find the Application Packets on the website in the "What's New" section. This information is updated annually. Click on [School Nutrition Website](#)^{iv}.

Things to Remember When Processing Applications:

1. Applications Must Be Complete

- Families must submit all required information for the application to be processed.
- Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) are not allowed to complete their application for them.
- LEAs must contact families to collect missing information and document the process (dates, initials, collected information).

2. Online and Scanned Applications

Free and reduced price family applications and supporting materials may be made available online.

- Electronic signatures permitted.
- Paper applications may be scanned.

USDA/FNS does not evaluate, approve or endorse any software for application processing. The LEA must make sure requirements are met for certification and verification.

3. Homeless, Migrant, and Runaway Youth

Homeless, migrant, and runaway youth are categorically eligible (automatically qualify) for free meals. It is the responsibility of the LEA to check with the Migrant Coordinator or the Homeless Liaison.

4. Categorical Eligibility

Categorical Eligibility for free meals is extended to all children in the household if any member of the household gets benefits from one of these assistance programs.

- Food Assistance Program (SNAP).
- Family Independence Program (TANF).
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR).
- Food Assistance Program (FAP).

5. Other Source Categorical Eligibility

Other Source Categorical Eligibility for free meals is not extended to all children in the household.

- Foster Children.
- Homeless, Runaway and Migrant.
- Head Start/Even Start.

6. Reviewing Denied Applications

LEAs must notify denied households of the following information:

- Reason for denial of benefits.
- Right to appeal.
- Instructions on how to appeal.
- Statement that family may re-apply for free and reduced-price benefits at any time during the school year.

ⁱ http://www.michigan.gov/cepi/0,4546,7-113-986_50502_53828---,00.html

ⁱⁱ <https://sso.state.mi.us/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.michigan.gov/cepi>

^{iv} www.michigan.gov/schoolnutrition