

From: Bushong, Linda (MDE) **On Behalf Of** Leikert, Howard J (MDE)
Sent: Tuesday, November 22, 2011 1:14 PM
To: MDE-SchoolNutrition
Subject: Tuesday News from MDE 112211

Let's start out with information right away:

- 1) IMPORTANT FOR COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY OPTION (CEO) DISTRICTS – We have been told by our data people that not all CEO districts are properly reporting students in the Michigan School Data System (MSDS) under the School Nutrition Eligibility (SNE) field. It appears that some CEO districts have reported either **zero** free eligible students or 100% free eligible students in the SNE field. This must be corrected or the districts may face grave financial consequences. The SNE field impacts a district's allocation of grants such as Section 31a. If you are a CEO district, check with your business office to be certain that it reported **actual** SNE data for each individual student even though the students were not required to submit an Income Eligibility form for the School Meals Programs. The MSDS deadline is November 23, 2011. Quick action is needed in order to correct any oversights.
- 2) Verification – I realize this is past due but just in case some of you forgot, verification was due November 15. If you haven't completed this, please get it finished as soon as possible. On our website, we have the "12 Steps to Verification" if you need some guidance at www.michigan.gov/schoolnutrition.
- 3) United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Issues Final Rule on Geographic Preference – While this is a little dated, I thought this information would still be important to communicate. I have copied it in its entirety. It is a bit lengthy but very informative. The USDA recently published the final rule on this provision, known as the "Geographic Preference Option for the Procurement of Unprocessed Agricultural Products in Child Nutrition Programs."
This new rule is significant as it encourages schools to partner with nearby farms in an effort to get more healthy, locally-grown foods into school meals. USDA, Under Secretary of Food and Nutrition Services Kevin Concannon described this rule as "an important milestone," because for the first time, schools are permitted to give local providers a **preference** when they bid for school food. The final rule contains many improvements compared with the draft version. One of the most significant is the flexibility provided to schools by permitting the purchasing institution to define "local" as it chooses. Also important is an expanded definition of "minimally processed" to allow the combination of fruits and vegetables, such as in a vegetable medley; formed products, such as ground beef patties, with no fillers or additives; and the addition of ascorbic acid as a preservative. The rule also provided necessary clarification on preparation techniques, such as the filleting of fish and slicing of chicken, which are considered cut and therefore allowed under the Geographic Preference Rule. [Click here](#) to read a fact sheet from the National Farm to School Network on this final rule. This final rule on geographic preference applies to institutions in all of the Child Nutrition Programs, including: the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, Special Milk Program for Children, Child and Adult Care

Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program, as well as to purchases made for these programs by the Department of Defense Fresh Program. The provision also applies to State agencies making purchases on behalf of any of the aforementioned Child Nutrition Programs. [Click here](#) to read the full press release from USDA. The USDA Farm to School Team also recently released a Q&A memorandum (SP 18-2011) on the geographic preference option – [click here](#) to read their blog post on the topic.

- 4) Applying Behavioral Economics in the Cafeteria – For those of you already on Mealtalk, I apologize for the duplicate message, but I wanted to make sure everyone saw this. If you're not familiar with behavioral economics and are looking for some easy ways to get the kids in your lunchrooms to select the healthier options in the lunch line, then I hope you can find an hour to participate in this webinar from Cornell University's Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Programs. If you're not available at either of the times it is being presented (December 6 and 7), it will eventually be posted online (January, I'm told) at www.healthiergeneration.org/schoolmeals. The following is a direct link to the webinar information: <http://www.healthiergeneration.org/schoolsdisplay.aspx?id=4294967713>. For more information on behavioral economics in Child Nutrition Programs, please visit <http://ben.dyson.cornell.edu/index.html>.
- 5) School Meal Initiative (SMI) Reviews - School Food Authorities (SFA) scheduled for an SMI Nutrition Review in School Year 2011-2012 were notified via an e-mail message last week that MDE is hosting a SMI Nutrition Review Workshop on December 7, 2011, to assist with your review. Attendance at this workshop is highly encouraged. Space is limited and the registration deadline is November 30, 2011. The following is the link to the registration site: https://mdoe.state.mi.us/fs_registration/. If you are unable to attend, there is an SMI webcast on our website at www.michigan.gov/schoolnutrition. Scroll to the Compliance Reviews area (located near the bottom of the page) and click on School Meals Initiative (SMI) Nutrition Reviews. Here you will find links to the webcast and all necessary forms needed for the review. If you have any questions, please e-mail mde-schoolnutrition@michigan.gov.

I will be at a State Agency meeting next week with USDA. If I hear of any important news, I will let you know. Have a great Thanksgiving weekend!

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Looking for information on local schools? Go to www.michigan.gov/mischooldata.