

From: Bushong, Linda (MDE) **On Behalf Of** Leikert, Howard J (MDE)
Sent: Tuesday, December 20, 2011 3:23 PM
To: MDE-SchoolNutrition
Subject: Tuesday News from MDE 122011

One more Tuesday News from me before the holidays. The next Tuesday News will be January 10, 2012!! For now, here is the information for the week:

- 1) Local Wellness Policy (LWP) – There has been some confusion over what changes the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act (HHFKA) made in relation to the LWP for the current school year. Attached is an easy to read chart that highlights the differences between the original 2004 guidance and what is new thus far under the HHFKA.
- 2) An Important Coordinated Review Effort (CRE) Tip – Make sure all people listed on an income based free and reduced meal application show their income, even if that income is “0” (zero). Not having all members (including children) of a household declaring their income is considered an incomplete application which can result in fiscal action (we can take money back). So review your applications and make sure this information is completed on all of the income based applications. If necessary, you can call to verify, for example, Bobby Smith is 4 years old and does not receive any income. Circle zero in cases like this and make a notation of your phone call.
- 3) School Garden Grants - Seeds, shovels, irrigation equipment, hoop house materials...what do you need to help your school garden grow? Often, the biggest obstacle to starting a school garden is funding. That’s why FoodCorps and the Whole Kids Foundation spent this fall raising funds for the School Garden Grant Program. The Whole Kids Foundation will be providing \$2,000 grants to support up to 1,000 school garden projects this spring--at FoodCorps schools and in other communities around the country. The deadline is **December 31**. Apply now to turn your dream school garden wish list into a reality. Click here to check out the eligibility and selection criteria as well as frequently asked questions - [apply for a garden grant today](#). Note – this is not a State or United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant. Please work with FoodCorps on this grant.
- 4) More Direct Certification Guidance – Attached is some helpful guidance on the direct certification process. Both the State of Michigan and USDA will be looking for more compliance in completing this process on a timely basis. It has become an important tool in helping to make sure low income students receive free meals and the importance of direct certification is only expected to increase over the coming years.

To all that receive this email and your staffs, have a wonderful, safe and Happy Holiday Season!!

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

Comparison Chart of the 2004 and 2010 requirements for local school wellness policies (LWP)

	Old Requirements Child Nutrition WIC Reauthorization Act, 2004	New Requirements Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010
Overview	Directs local educational agencies (LEAs) to have in place a LWP for each school under its jurisdiction.	Strengthens LWPs and adds rules for public input, transparency, and implementation.
Elements of the Local School Wellness Policy	LWP to include, at a minimum, goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities to promote student wellness, as well as nutrition guidelines for all foods available on school campus.	In addition to the 2004 requirements, the LWP is also to include goals for <u>nutrition promotion</u> .
Stakeholder Involvement	LEAs are required to involve parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators and the public in the development of LWP.	In addition to the 2004 requirements, LEAs are now required to permit <u>teachers of physical education</u> and <u>school health professionals</u> to participate in the development of LWP.
Stakeholder Participation	The stakeholders named above are required to participate in the development of the LWP.	In addition to the 2004 requirements, LEAs are now required to permit <u>all stakeholders named above and in 2004</u> to participate in the <u>implementation and periodic review and update</u> of LWP.
Local Discretion	LEAs can determine the specific policies appropriate for the schools under their jurisdiction, provided that those policies include all required elements specified in the Act.	Same as 2004 requirement.
Public Notification	None.	LEAs are required to inform and update the public (including parents, students, and others in the community) about the content and implementation of the LWP.
Measuring Implementation	LEAs are required to establish a plan for measuring implementation of the LWP.	LEAs are required to measure periodically and make available to the public an assessment on the implementation of LWP, including the extent to which schools are in compliance with LWP, the extent to which the LWP compares to model LWP, and to describe the progress made in attaining goals of LWP.
Local Designation	LEAs are required to establish a plan for measuring implementation of the LWP, including designation of one or more persons within the LEA or at each school, as appropriate, charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the LWP.	LEAs are required to <u>designate one or more LEA officials or school officials</u> , as appropriate, to ensure that each school complies with the LWP.

**Michigan Department of Education
Grants Coordination and School Support
School Nutrition Programs**

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Insists You Pull the List!

Direct certification lists are becoming increasingly important in School Nutrition Programs. This list has the names of students in your district that are eligible for free meals without further application. For the School Year 2011-2012, USDA began requiring all public and non-public schools to pull the direct certification list a minimum of 3 times a year. The State of Michigan Center for Education Performance and Information (CEPI) refreshes the direct certification list monthly. Although the USDA requirement is 3 times a year (at the beginning of the school year, 3 months after the initial effort, and 6 months after the initial effort), the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) strongly recommends the list be pulled on a monthly basis. MDE routinely checks to see how often the direct certification list has been accessed by each school district.

Why is checking the list more frequently so important?

- Students, including foster children, that may not otherwise have access to food will receive free meals and snacks during school.
- Students living in the same household as a student on the direct certification list are more easily identified as eligible for free meal benefits through categorical eligibility.
- There is less paper work when a student is on the list because there is no need for an application.
- The eligibility roster is easier to update and more accurate. Students that are directly certified are automatically eligible for free meals and snacks and eligibility can be updated monthly.
- Students that enroll from another district can be checked for eligibility status immediately. This cuts down on the time it may take to contact the other district and wait for paper work.

What do you need to do to make sure you have the most accurate and up-to-date list?

- Work with the person in your district who has access to the direct certification list to ensure it is obtained at least 3 times a year to meet the USDA requirements.
- Ask if you can apply for security access to pull the direct certification list in your district. Access will make it easier to check the list more frequently, preferably monthly, as recommended by MDE.
- If you have a free and reduced application for a student(s) that is also directly certified, disregard the paper application and include that student(s) as directly certified.

Did you know accurate information about direct certification can impact the Community Eligibility Option (CEO)?

- Provide more accurate information to potentially use for the CEO option.
- Increase the number of eligible children certified for benefits.

More details and new information about direct certification can be found at our website at www.michigan.gov/schoolnutrition. Scroll to Guidance and click on Direct Certification.

The USDA Memo 31-2011 dated, 4/27/2011 Frequency of Direct Certification Matching Activities Beginning in School Year 2011-2012 is available at www.fns.usda.gov/fns/. Scroll to Regulations and Policy and click on School Meals in the Policy Section.

Direct certification can help eliminate food insecurity in our communities. Let's feed all of our kids. We insist you pull the list!