



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 13, 2020

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Michael F. Rice, Ph.D., State Superintendent
Diane Golzynski, Ph.D., RD, Director, Office of
Health and Human Services

SUBJECT: Feeding Children During School Closures

Michael F. Rice
Diane L. Golzynski

Governor Gretchen Whitmer announced Executive Order 2020-5 directing the closure of all elementary and secondary school buildings in the state to students for educational purposes beginning on Monday, March 16, 2020, through Sunday, April 5, 2020. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) requested and received a waiver from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to serve non-congregate meals under the Unanticipated School Closure provision of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

The waiver allows providers of school meals to serve meals without having to keep children together and on-site. This waiver allows districts to explore creative options for feeding children who depend on those meals even if the school building is closed.

This memo will provide guidance to local administrators to determine the best way possible to serve children in need. All buildings and districts (public, charter, or private) currently providing meals to children in school can participate in this program. **Up to two meals per day may be served to all children ages 18 and under for free and will be counted at the point of service. This includes students with disabilities ages 18-26 with an active individual education program (IEP).**

MDE believes in ensuring children have what they need to be successful in life. This belief includes staying safe and healthy. Right now, it is important to remember federal child nutrition programs exist to feed those most in need. These programs keep children healthy through the food offered and teach children how to maintain a

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lifelong healthy diet. In this time of unknowns and unique challenges, MDE has created options to assist school district staff in caring for our youngest Michiganders.

Who may participate and how to get approval

If you are an SFSP meal sponsor and have participated in the Summer Food Service Program in 2018 or 2019, have attended an Unanticipated School Closure SFSP training, or will attend the webinar on Monday, March 16, you will need to complete the short intake form found at

<https://mdoe.state.mi.us/gems/public/QuestionnaireHome.aspx?code=i5b9tdev>.

If you are a district where at least 50% of the children qualify for free or reduced-price meals at any site or sites, but you have not participated in SFSP in the past two years, then in addition to attending the Unanticipated School Closure SFSP webinar and completing the intake form above, you will need to watch the SFSP training videos found at https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-66254_34491_96106-511787--,00.html.

Finally, if you are a district where all of your sites are under 50% free and reduced-price lunch eligible, you may still participate! Just like the previous group, you will need to attend the Unanticipated School Closure SFSP webinar, complete the intake form above, and watch the Summer Food Service Program training videos. MDE will consider you to be a "closed enrolled site." This means that you will need to provide meals where free and reduced-price students in your district primarily live. You will need to target the low-income kids in ways that best reach and serve these children. The expected best practice is that you will serve these children using a roster or enrolled student list. In cases where that is not possible, during this time of emergency only, we will accept the SFSP count sheet.

Options for meal service

We want children to eat, but want to prevent them from eating together in school settings or in large groups at this time. How you do this will be determined by conversations that you have within your own administration. What will work for one community may not work in another community. Think outside the box. Find ways to ensure children are not hungry at this time, while holding to the best meal quality and service practices possible.

Some things to consider:

- All meals must be complete, reimbursable meals following the SFSP meal pattern. Visit www.michigan.gov/sfsp to learn more. Two meals per day can be reimbursed.
- Meals may be freshly prepared, components, or shelf-stable and may contain USDA Foods or commodities.
- Meals may be reimbursed under this program starting today, March 13, 2020.
- Where practical, consider offering multiple meals per day and/or multiple days at each time to reduce the number of times families must pick up the meals.
- You may consider "grab-n-go" meals, a drive-thru set-up, or the placement of meals on a bus and the delivery of meals on your district bus routes where children or families can pick up what you are offering from a bus stop. If you

choose to deliver using your district bus routes, please list the name of that bus route as a site in the intake form.

- Expand your service times to allow for proper spacing of visitors to pick up meals and minimize the number of times that families must visit to pick up meals. For example, it isn't likely practical to have families pick up breakfast and then come back to pick up lunch or supper.
- If you have participated in the SFSP using a mobile truck or food truck, consider doing exactly that again.
- Work closely with district administration, local emergency managers, and the local health department for proper hand washing, cleaning, and sanitizing techniques while preparing meals.

What about staff to prepare the meals

First, work with your district's administrative team to create a plan. When necessary, work with community partners who may be willing to assist in assembling and serving meals. If you feel that you've tried everything and still cannot find a solution, please call us. MDE will search for other options that may be available to you. MDE does not want children not to be fed at this time due to a lack of staff. As always, continue to work closely with your local health department to ensure everyone involved is kept safe.

Today, we participated in a conference call with 400 local superintendents and food service directors. Additionally, Dr. Golzynski did 3 webinars where she spoke to 700 district food service and business leaders. To replay the initial conference call that she and I had with local superintendents and food service directors, please use the following call-in information: 866-207-1041, access code: 1244611.

By remembering the purpose of these programs, the children that the programs were meant to serve and why, we will all get through this very challenging time together. MDE staff are here to assist you. All food and nutrition analysts have been temporarily pulled from the field so that your time can be spent planning to serve children rather than preparing for a compliance review.

Should you have further questions, please contact our Child Nutrition Programs team at MDE-SchoolNutrition@michigan.gov or 517-241-5374.