

Office of Health and Nutrition Services  
Fiscal and Administrative Services Monitoring Team  
Paid Lunch Equity Tool Instructions School Year 2020-21

[Before you begin:](#)

- The Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) Tool must be completed annually (N/A for CEP district wide)
- Gather the following to complete the tool:
  - Current year's (SY2019-20) paid student lunch prices
  - October 2019 paid student meal counts by price
  - Previous year's PLE Tool SY2019-20
- Save PLE Tool and all supporting documentation
  - Tool must be saved in Excel format for Resource Management (RM) Reviews
  - Document current years' (SY2019-20) paid meal prices along with upcoming years' updated prices (SY2020-21)
- Data is only entered in the peach colored cells
  - All other cells are protected with formulas to prepopulate

[Completion Instructions](#)

Note: More detailed completion instructions can be found in the "Instructions" Tab within the PLE Tool

[Step 1 Filling out the Unrounded Requirement Finder Tab](#)

1. Start with the "Unrounded Requirement Finder" tab in the SY2020-21 PLE Tool
2. Enter the Unrounded Price Requirement in the peach colored box (Cell C8) for the current year (SY2019-20)
  - a. This number is carried forward from the previous PLE Tool (SY2019-20) from the "Unrounded Requirement Finder" tab Step 1 white colored box (Cell D8)
  - b. If you do not have the SY2019-20 PLE Tool, or that tool was not completed correctly, scroll down to row 16 and complete the information in the peach colored box (cell C16) to determine the previous year's (SY2019-20) requirement price.
    - i. You may use the optional tab "SY10-11 Price Calculator" to determine the weighted average price for cell C16 if needed

- ii. Enter the newly populated requirement price (Cell E16) into the Unrounded Price Requirement in the peach colored box (Cell C8) for the current year (SY2019-20)
3. The SY2020-21's "Weighted Average Price Requirement" will prepopulate for you in Cell D8 and then carries into the next tab "SY 20-21 Price Calculator"
4. You must complete this step 1 **before** proceeding to Step 2 Filling out the Price Calculator Tab

### Step 2 Filling out the SY 20-21 Price Calculator Tab

1. Start with checking to make sure the "Weighted Average Price Requirement" populated in Cell D8 in the "SY 20-21 Price Calculator" tab
  - a. If Cell D8 is blank repeat Step 1 Filling out the "Unrounded Requirement Finder" Tab
2. Scroll down to complete the "SY 2019-20 Weighted Average Price Calculator" box
  - a. Enter the number of paid lunch counts from October 2019 for the current school year (peach box starting on line 15 column B). Enter meal counts for every paid student price point (ex: Elementary, Middle, High School)
  - b. Note: This includes paid eligible student meal counts only (not free or reduced meal counts, adult meals, or ala-carte items)
3. Next enter the paid student lunch prices in the peach boxes starting on line 15 column C for each corresponding meal count entered from Step 2a. above
4. Review to make sure your SY 2019-20 Weighted Average Price populated in Cell E25
5. Review Cell E31 to determine if a price increase is required
  - a. Note: This reflects the total amount your current "SY2019-20 Weighted Average Price" is below your "SY 2020-21 Price Requirement" for the upcoming school year
6. Raising prices by the amount in Cell E31 or more would be ideal to avoid the potential for a price increase(s) again in the following year(s)
  - a. You must at least raise prices (on average) to the minimum price required in Cell E35 to stay in compliance for the upcoming school year
    - i. Note: the "10 Cent Cap" is a minimum requirement, not a maximum

### Step 3 (Optional) Pricing Estimation Calculator

1. You may use this optional Step 3 to determine new price points using the same paid lunch counts from October 2019. Test various price increase scenarios to determine what is best for your district.
  - a. Note: Your Pricing Estimation Weighted Average Price result in Cell E61 should equal at a minimum the required price in Cell E35 to comply.

### Other Tabs:

Most school districts will only use the "Unrounded Requirement Finder" tab with the corresponding "SY 20-21 Price Calculator" tab.

Following are explanations of the remaining PLE Tool tabs and their uses:

SY 20-21 Non-Federal Calculator – use this tab if your district wants to opt out of raising prices to students and instead cover the required increase with General/Non-Federal Funds. Please contact MDE before completing this tab because of the complex requirements.

SY 20-21 Split Calculator – use this tab if you are planning to raise paid student meal prices partially AND cover the remaining increase requirement with General/Non-Federal Funds. Again, please contact MDE before completing this tab because of the complex requirements.

SY2020-21 REPORT – optional tab to track your price requirements and carry forward amounts. This is a good one-page report.

SY 19-20 Price Calculator – linked to be used with the “Non-Federal Calculator” tab for which we recommend contacting MDE prior to completing.

SY 10-11 Price Calculator – this tab coincides with the “Unrounded Requirement Finder” tab if you do NOT know your Unrounded Price Requirement to carry forward. Please see Step 1, 2b instructions above.

#### Reminders:

- If the SFA is planning to use a USDA PLE Exemption for the upcoming school year (SY2020-21) and not raise prices according to the tool, the SFA must save a copy of the positive or zero fund balance as of December 31, 2019, as indicated in the guidance. Keep this documentation along with the completed PLE Tool. The PLE Tool must still be completed.
- MDE recommends completing the PLE Tool for the upcoming school year (SY2020-21) in the spring. This allows time to bring potential price increases to the School Board by June 2020, update POS systems, and communicate all price increases to families before the start of the new school year (SY2020-21). SFAs will also use the updated student meal prices to complete the MDE Adult Pricing Worksheet for SY2020-21 as well.
- Save all PLE Tools in Excel format. PLE Tools will be required in Excel format during Resource Management (RM) Reviews.
- Document all student meal prices every school year

#### Contact Info

For assistance completing the PLE Tool or questions:

Fiscal Monitoring Unit

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