



School Administration Frequently Asked Questions 2021-2022 School Year

What is P-EBT

1. What is Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT)?

- P-EBT provides supplemental food assistance benefits to students who have temporarily lost access to free or reduced-price school meals due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal of the program is to make sure no qualified student goes hungry by missing out on school meals

Eligibility

1. How do I know if our district/school is eligible?

- Each school building within the district is considered for eligibility separately
- To be eligible, a school must meet all the following criteria:
 - Be closed or have reduced in person learning for 5 consecutive school days in the current school year due to COVID-19 (school closure due to staffing shortage do not count toward 5 Day threshold) **AND**
 - Be a provider of the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program or be a CEP school
- Virtual School Eligibility
 - If a district places all virtual students in the same classroom and district employees are providing instruction, then the student(s) **may** qualify for P-EBT benefits
 - If a district outsources and creates a virtual academy that is a distinct, fully virtual institution that is not eligible to participate in the NSLP or the SBP, then students are not eligible for P-EBT benefits regardless of the relationship to the home district

2. Modality Hierarchy

- If 10% or more of the student population are in-person for the entire month the school will report **In-Person** and no benefits will be issued automatically
 - NOTE: In this situation, individual students who have a modality other than **In-Person** will have the opportunity to request a reconsideration

- If more than 90% of the student population is fully remote for the entire month the school will report as **Primarily Remote** and benefits will be issued automatically to eligible students
- Changes made mid-month:
 - Schools will report **Hybrid** if both of the following circumstances are met in a month and benefits will be issued based on number of instructional days primarily remote
 - School level circumstance changes in the month: modality, closure (closure due to staffing shortage do not count), threshold met, **AND**
 - More than 10% of the student population attended partially in-person and partially remote for the entire month
 - **Please Note:** When reporting Hybrid, schools will need to report the number of instructional days a school building participated in primarily remote learning or was closed due to COVID-19

3. What is the 5-Day Threshold?

- For a school building to be eligible they must have 5 consecutive school days of reduced in-person learning due to COVID-19 this school year (school closures due to staffing shortages do not count toward 5-Day threshold), refer to the 5-day threshold work sheet
- The 5-day threshold only needs to be met once per building during the school year

4. What is Attendance Type?

- Attendance type is how students receive instruction.
- Refer to the Attendance Type Worksheet for more detail
- Attendance Type needs to be entered for each month of the school year beginning the month the 5-day threshold is met

5. What is a COVID-19 related absence?

- **School Initiated**
 - School directs student(s) to stay home for a COVID-19 related reason
 - A school ordered quarantine of a student, a group of students, a classroom, or a school
 - Stay-at-home order mandated by the school, whatever its duration, if it is part of the school's or the state's protocol for managing COVID-19 outbreaks, positive tests, and/or potential exposure
 - School closures due to staffing shortages do not count for P-EBT benefits
- **Parent Initiated**
 - An absence initiated by the parent that is recognized and accepted by school officials as COVID-19 related
 - A parent's decision to keep their child home after a positive test or possible exposure to COVID-19
 - A parent's decision to keep their child home after exposure to COVID-19 at school in cases where the school does not direct the child to stay home

6. Free/Reduced Meal Eligibility Changes

- There will be no retroactive benefits for households newly determined eligible during the 2021-2022 School Year

- When applications for Free/Reduced Meals are approved after the start of the school year; eligibility will begin on the submission date of the approved application

7. How do I know which students are eligible?

- Eligibility starts if the student was:
 - Enrolled at a school that met the 5-day threshold **AND**
 - Approved to receive free or reduced meals at their school (including directly certified students and CEP schools) **AND**
 - Did not receive instruction in-person for some or all the month due to COVID-19 **OR**
 - If attending fully in-person, meals were not provided and eaten at school during the instruction day due to COVID-19

8. My school is a CEP school, are these students eligible?

- Students at a CEP school are eligible once the school building meets the 5-day threshold and the student receives reduced in-person instruction due to COVID-19

9. My school reported primarily in-person, but some students attend remote. Are the remote students eligible?

- Once the school building meets the 5-day threshold, and the building reports primarily in-person or hybrid, a parent may request a Reconsideration for students that attend remote

10. Are students that reside in a residential institution eligible for P-EBT benefits?

- No

Reporting

1. Overview

- Local school districts will complete an electronic survey indicating the school level attendance type for each building within their jurisdiction.
 - Survey data will be requested monthly to collect attendance type for previous month(s). Initial benefits will be issued based on those survey responses.
 - If a district reports that a school building went fully remote mid-month, the district will report the number of instructional days the school building participated in primarily remote learning or was closed due to COVID-19 (school closures due to staffing shortages do not count for P-EBT benefits)
- Districts will report a primary attendance type by building based on the following hierarchy:
 - If 10% or more of the student population are in-person for the entire month the school will report “Primarily In-Person” and no benefits will be issued.
 - NOTE: In this situation, individual students who have a specific schedule other than fully in-person will have the opportunity to request a reconsideration.
 - If 90% of the student population is fully remote for the entire month the school will report as “Primarily Remote” and benefits will be issued based on the number of days remote

- Changes mid-month: schools will report “Hybrid” if both of the following circumstances are met in a month and benefits will be issued based on the number of days remote. School level circumstance changes in the month: attendance type, closure, threshold met, ***and***
 - More than 10% of the student population attended partially in-person and partially remote for the entire month.
 - Benefit issuance will be based on ***the specific number of days that the school was primarily remote due to COVID-19.***
 - School will need to report the number of instructional days the school building participated in primarily remote learning or was closed due to COVID-19 (school closures due to staffing shortages do not count for P-EBT benefits)

2. How do I know which months I should be reporting for?

- When you are instructed to access the reporting tool you will see the months for which we are collecting data

ATTENDANCE MONTHS	COLLECTION MONTH	ISSUANCE MONTH
September 2021 - December 2021	March	April
January 2022 – February 2022	April	May
March 2022 – April 2022	May	June
May 2022 - June 2022* <i>*June benefits will be issued based on May’s reported modality</i>	June	July

3. I submitted my report and need to update it, what do I do now?

- If you clicked “Submit” prior to completing the survey for all schools, you can enter the information for the missed school(s) when the reporting window opens for the next reporting period (generally the 1st day of the following month)
- If you entered an incorrect 5-day threshold date you can adjust it.
 - You will see a checkbox asking if you need to make corrections when you log in for the next reporting period, check the box and follow the prompts to make changes
- If you discover an error other than 5 day threshold date or school not reported, you can email MDHHS P-EBT Customer service at MDHHS-PEBT@michigan.gov please include “P-EBT Reporting Issue” in the subject line and we will contact you regarding the error

4. We had a student left off the list last year. How do we know the student is on the list this year?

- Review your MSDS record for the student
 - Ensure that the student(s) address and FRL status are entered correctly
 - Verify that student is listed as attending a school that participates with National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program

- If not, you will need to do a student record maintenance (SRM) and update the information
 - MDHHS is not able to add students to the eligibility list or make corrections/changes to MSDS
 - Eligibility information is gathered by Michigan Department of Education (MDE) at Fall, Spring, and End of Year collection and supplied to MDHHS
- 5. My entire school district is CEP, do I still have to report?**
- Yes, all districts will need to report and provide survey information for each school building
 - Student eligibility cannot be determined for any building that fails to report on the P-EBT Eligibility Reporting portal, students in non-reporting districts are not eligible for P-EBT benefits

Free and Reduced-Price Eligibility and Michigan School Data System (MSDS)

1. Who decides student eligibility?

- Data entered in MSDS by the schools is used to determine student eligibility
 - MDE pulls that data from MSDS then supplies MDHHS with a list of eligible students following Fall Collection
 - MDHHS receives updates from MDE following Spring and End of Year Collection
- MDHHS cannot add students to the P-EBT program or change Free Reduced Lunch Status in MSDS

2. Address line one in MSDS is for residential addresses only, how will this effect mailing benefits_[ML(1)]?

- Students who are active on a Food Assistance case with MDHHS will receive benefits on the EBT (Bridge) card for the Food Assistance case
- For students on Medicaid (MA) but not Food Assistance, the address associated with their Medicaid case will be used
- For all other students, the MSDS address will be used
 - For purposes of P-EBT all data in address line 1 of the personal demographic data in MSDS must have the appropriate mailing address

3. When is the MSDS data pull taking place?

- Data will be pulled from MSDS at least three times on a cycle that corresponds with the P-EBT benefit delivery process discussed above
- Please note there may be a delay in benefit delivery for some students based on availability of data in the MSDS

4. Who should I contact with questions about school eligibility in the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program?

- Information on National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program is available at: Michigan.gov/SchoolNutrition

5. Our Fall Collection data had two addresses for Homeless Students, is it too late to update with an SRM_[ML(2)]?

- It is never too late to update MSDS with correct address data
 - If it is after the initial data drop from MDE to MDHHS that updated address data may be used later to change address information at MDHHS
- 6. Will there be a data validation check on the addresses used from the MSDS?**
- MDE is doing some checks on address accuracy, but unfortunately MDE is unable to catch everything
 - Please work with your staff to ensure the address data provided is the best possible information

Reconsideration Process

1. Will reconsiderations be the same as last year?

- Less reliance will be placed on school buildings meeting the threshold for P-EBT benefits to be issued. Given the decrease in whole school building closure; most students will be eligible based on a request for a reconsideration
- Reconsiderations will be processed in the order they are received
- Reconsiderations must be received by June 30, 2022 to be processed
- Parents/guardians will be provided with an opportunity to request a reconsideration of the student's attendance type based on a COVID-19 related absence
 - This process will be a manual process
 - The Reconsideration Form will be publicly posted at www.michigan.gov/pebt
 - A parent/guardian must complete the reconsideration request and submit it along with verification to MDHHS
 - Parent/Legal Guardian completes Section 1 & 2
 - School completes Section 3
 - Verification letters must be included only if the school does not complete Section 3 and when needed letter must include:
 - Proof of child's attendance type
 - Date(s) of COVID-19 related absence(s) (school closures for staffing shortages do not count for P-EBT benefits)
 - Date of submission of approved application for FRL
 - MDHHS staff will review individual circumstances and, as necessary, provide P-EBT benefits
- COVID-19 related absences for purpose of P-EBT eligibility will be defined as:
 - Any absence where the school directs students to stay home for a COVID-19 related reason. This would include a school-ordered quarantine of a student, a group of students, a classroom, or a school. It would also include any other stay-at-home order mandated by the school, whatever its duration, if it is part of the school's or the state's protocol for managing COVID outbreaks, positive tests, and/or potential exposure
 - School closures due to staffing shortages do not count for P-EBT benefits

- An absence initiated by the parent that is recognized and accepted by school officials as COVID-19 related. At the discretion of the school or the state, this could include a parent's decision to keep their child home after a positive test or possible exposure to COVID-19. It could also include, again at the discretion of the school or the state, a parent's decision to keep their child home after exposure to COVID-19 at school in cases where the school does not direct the child to stay home

Miscellaneous

1. Who do I contact with questions?

- Please email MDHHS-PEBT@michigan.gov
- Or call the P-EBT helpdesk at (833) 905-0028, option 1 (School/District Staff Only)

2. Is there a way to view and change our district contact person?

- If you have questions about your district contact person please email MDHHS-PEBT@michigan.gov, include "PEBT District Contacts" in your subject line

3. Where should we direct parents who have not received last school year's P-EBT benefits?

- Please verify in MSDS the student was Free/Reduced eligible for last school year and was listed as attending a school that was participating in either National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program or CEP
- Please have the parent contact the P-EBT helpdesk at (833) 905-0028, option 2

4. How will benefits be issued?

- Any eligible student active on a Food Assistance case will receive their P-EBT benefits on that EBT/Bridge card
- All other eligible students will receive a new P-EBT card in the mail.
 - A separate card will be sent for each eligible student
 - If the student is active on a Medicaid case, the card will be mailed to the address on that case
 - If the student does not have active Food Assistance or Medicaid, a P-EBT card will be mailed to the address in MSDS Address Line 1

5. For students who received P-EBT card last year, will they reuse last school year's card?

- No, they will receive a new card

6. Will there be an explanation of benefits to parents?

- Yes, a notice will be sent to parent(s)/guardian(s) of all students that receive P-EBT benefits
- MDHHS will send a notice to districts for all school building(s) to publish to parents/guardians for any school buildings where there are no issuances (report Primarily In-Person)

- The notice will provide instructions for how a parent /guardian could request a reconsideration if their student received instruction in a different attendance type than what was reported by the district

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