



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

March 25, 2016

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP): Required 2016-2017 Data Collection for All School Divisions, Due Date April 15, 2016

The Community Eligibility Provision for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) gives eligible local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high percentages of low-income children the option to offer school breakfast and lunch meals at no charge (free) to all children in those schools without collecting meal applications.

Under this provision, eligible LEAs and schools elect to provide meals to all students at no charge and are reimbursed for both breakfast and lunch through a formula using the percentage of "*Identified Students*" multiplied by a factor of 1.6. The resulting number is the "claiming percentage." This claiming percentage is applied to the total number of breakfast and lunch meals served to determine the number of meals reimbursed at the free rate provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The remaining meals are reimbursed at the paid rate. The claiming percentage, established in the initial year of implementation, may be used for four school years and may be increased if the identified student percentage increases and the LEA submits documentation verifying the increase.

Identified Students are defined as students approved for free meals through means other than individual household applications. This definition includes students who are directly certified for free meals based on their participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Identified students also includes homeless students, runaways, migrant youth, Head Start, Even Start and foster children approved for free meals by means other than a meal application, such as through the LEA liaison or other school division records. It does not include students who are categorically eligible based on information submitted on a free and reduced price meal application, such as a SNAP or TANF case number.

All school divisions must complete and return by **April 15, 2016**, the attached CEP Preliminary Data Collection report (Attachment A) for all schools (including school divisions currently operating under CEP and those that do not meet CEP eligibility requirements). The *identified student* data submitted on this required report must reflect all students who were directly certified by means other than a meal application as of **April 1, 2016**.

The completed Excel workbook must be submitted electronically to the Department of Education (DOE), Office of School Nutrition Programs (SNP) via e-mail to: SNPWEBDOC@doe.virginia.gov.

Use the following file name format:

Division Name-Division Number-2016 CEP Preliminary Data as of 04012016

(For example: ACCOMACK-001-2016 CEP Preliminary Data as of 04012016)

Detailed information on completing the report can be found in Tab 1-*Instructions* in the Excel workbook.

The report must list **ALL** schools in the division including those with:

- An *identified student* percentage of 40 percent or more (eligible for CEP)
- An *identified student* percentage greater than 30 but less than 40 percent (near eligible)
- An identified student percentage less than 30 percent (not eligible for CEP)

School divisions with one or more sites currently operating under CEP must enter the number of identified students for each as validated by DOE in the base year for the individual school, group of schools, or division, as appropriate. If the ISP has increased since the base year and the division is planning to request an adjustment to the ISP, the newly documented number of identified students must be reported.

Data submitted by school divisions in the CEP Preliminary Data Collection report will be reviewed by DOE and consolidated into a state report which will be posted to the DOE Web site by May 1.

School divisions with one or more schools that meet the CEP eligibility threshold of 40 percent or more identified students may wish to consider implementing CEP. Schools, groups of schools, and school divisions with an identified student percentage of 62.5 percent or greater would qualify to receive free reimbursement for all student meals. Those with an identified student percentage of 55 to 62.4 percent would qualify to receive free reimbursement for 88 to 99 percent of the meals served to students.

For more information about CEP, the USDA [Community Eligibility Provision: Planning and Implementation Guidance manual](#) consolidates CEP guidance and best practices. The manual may be helpful to those school divisions that are considering participating in CEP as well as those that have already implemented CEP.

A Superintendent's Memorandum will be published in May 2016 to provide the CEP application for school year 2016-2017 and additional information about the application process. School divisions that are interested in learning more about CEP and those that are considering applying will also be invited to participate in training on CEP and the application process. The deadline for CEP applications is June 30 annually; USDA has granted an extension of the deadline to August 31 this year.

If you have questions or need more information, contact the school nutrition program specialist assigned to your school division or Lynne A. Fellin, associate director, at (804) 225-2717 or by e-mail at lynne.fellin@doe.virginia.gov.

SRS/LAF/idl

Attachment:

- A. [CEP Preliminary Data Collection Worksheet](#) (Excel)