

Recommended Procedures for Processing Direct Certification Eligible Students and Applications for Free and Reduced-Price (FRP) Meal Eligibles, Child Nutrition Master Roster and October 1 Annual Data Submission

Only the Child Nutrition Master Roster and the actual/original source documents will be used for audit purposes, for distribution of funds for meal reimbursement and for funding based on poverty data and/or Free and Reduced percentages. Therefore, it is recommended that districts take the steps below to ensure accuracy of application content and data.

Beginning each school year, as established by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the district's Child Nutrition Program must allow students to eat on the previous year's eligibility status:

- For up to **30 operating days** or,
- Until a current meal application is received and eligibility determination is made, whichever occurs first.

For this 30-day carryover period of student meal eligibility the district must use TWO eligibility rosters:

Child Nutrition Master Roster

- from the previous year for students who have not had eligibility determined for the current school year and

New School Year Master Roster

- with student eligibility status determined by current school year list or application

Districts must allow students that have not had a new eligibility determination made to eat on last year's meal status for the full 30 operating days of the new school year. At the end of the 30-day carryover period, students that have not had new eligibility determinations made for the current school year – based on household meal application or new lists; Direct Certification, Homeless/Runaway, Migrant, Head Start or Even Start, Foster Child Lists – must be changed to PAID eligibility status.

Districts on the Provision 2 Alternative for feeding children:

- Must keep the Master Roster and source documents from the Base Year that established October 1 Cycle 2 eligibles and update throughout the school year
- Maintain District Master Roster and keep up-to-date with drops and adds each Non-Base Year and throughout the school year

I. Direct Certification Information

Direct Certification

- 1) The first Direct Certification match information is downloaded into APSCN/E-School in August of each school year. There will be four Direct Certification matches for the 2014-15 school year however ONLY the first match is downloaded directly into APSCN/E-School. Retrieve the Direct Certification information from the Direct Certification portal established for this procedure. When the portal is available an email will be sent to the Direct Certification

Contact as listed on the Child Nutrition Contact Information attachment to the Renewal of Policy Statement for 2014-15 school year. Some district Point of Service (POS) programs will allow the direct certification matched students to be uploaded into the POS to assist in generating a master roster. It may be necessary to manually enter Direct Certification students into district Master Roster and into the POS system.

2) Direct Certification supersedes income or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) household meal applications. 3) All students living in the same household with students listed on Direct Certification are categorically eligible for free meals and must be given free meal benefits (unless those benefits are turned down by the household). The district is responsible for finding the other students in the household through enrollment records.

II. Approval of FRP Applications for Current School Year

A. Distribute Application Packet (all four pages).

Hand out application packet at registration, open house events, start of school or any time AFTER JULY 1 of the current school year. Schools that are in operation earlier than July 1 may distribute current year application packets 10 days prior to the beginning of school.

B. Collect Completed Applications.

1) For an **income application** to be complete, it must:

- a) Have the signature of the adult household member completing the application,
- b) List all household members and their respective incomes, including children. The “No Income” box should be checked if a household member does not receive income. If any household members are listed in Part 3 of the Meal Application do not have an indication of income or an indication of “No Income” the application is considered INCOMPLETE and cannot be approved until the district Determining Official makes contact with the household to obtain the missing information. It is REQUIRED that any changes made to the application submitted by the household by the Determining Official have sufficient documentation (on the application) _to indicate the contact with the household, who gave the information that was added or changed on the application, the date of the contact and the signature or initials of the district personnel that made the household contact.
- c) Have the last four digits of the social security number of the adult household member completing the application or the “No Social Security Number” box should be checked.

2) For a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) application to be complete:

- a) The names of all students in the household in Part 1
- b) The name of one person in the household on SNAP benefits in Part 2
- c) The SNAP case number or other SNAP identifier (not EBT card number) in Part 2
- d) The signature of the adult household member completing the meal application.

If the determining official can review the application for completeness at the time of collection, it will GREATLY reduce follow-up phone calls and additional staff time spent on application approvals.

C. Approve All Household Applications Centrally.

It is recommended that a district-wide determining official approve all household applications centrally. The possibility of error is reduced if one person approves all applications. Families/households CANNOT be required to submit more than one household application to the district.

D. Review All Applications Twice.

It is recommended that, following the initial review, all applications be reviewed again by the confirming official or someone other than the determining official to ensure accuracy of determination. This second review will ensure the original approval was made according to guidelines and the application was properly recorded on the Child Nutrition Master Roster.

E. Complete a NEW Child Nutrition Master Roster.

Create a new Child Nutrition Master Roster based on the currently approved source documents, i.e., approved Household Meal Application, Direct Certification List, Migrant List, Homeless/Runaway List, Head Start, Even Start or Foster Child. Direct Certification and categorically eligible students shall take precedence over a household application as a source document of eligibility. Keep a file of household applications with Direct Certification children submitted to the district and add any other students living in the household with Direct Certification students to the Direct Certification list. Remember: Eligibles on the Direct Certification list have been income verified by SNAP and should not be selected for additional verification.

Refer to the *Eligibility Manual for School Meals* for detailed instructions on the approval and processing of applications.

III. Preparation for NEW Child Nutrition Master Roster and Submission of Enrollment and FRP Eligibles for October 1 Data

F. Start with a New APSCN/E-School Roster.

- 1) When APSCN/E-School is rolled forward for the new school year, all students should be coded as "PAID." Current year Directly Certified students, who qualify for free meals, will be uploaded into the districts APSCN/E-School system by ADE CNU during in August. All other students should be coded as "PAID" until the district receives a source document and determines eligibility for the student.

G. Start a New Child Nutrition Master Roster.

- 2) The previous year's master roster MUST be used for up to 30 operating days or until new eligibility determination is made based on new application or source document received.

H. Code Approved Eligibles into APSCN/E-School.

- 3) The determining official or a designee should do the coding. The APSCN/E-School report MUST MATCH the Child Nutrition Master Roster AT ALL TIMES during the year.

I. Keep Master Roster Current.

- 4) School administrators and secretaries must supply data on a timely basis so that

information is kept current in both APSCN/E-School and the Child Nutrition Master Roster. It is very important for new students and dropped students information be received in a timely manner in order to have correct information at the POS.

J. Monitor Accuracy Frequently and Maintaining Accurate Data up to Date of Submission

- 5) Compare and correct the Child Nutrition Master Roster and APSCN/E-School throughout the year on a daily or weekly basis as the student population changes. Students should be dropped or added to the Master Roster and APSCN/E-School System on a timely basis.

BEFORE SUBMISSION OF CYCLE 2 DATA TO SIS, THE APSCN/E-SCHOOL ROSTER AND THE CHILD NUTRITION ROSTER MUST MATCH ON STUDENT ELIGIBILITY SOURCE DOCUMENTS AND ENROLLMENT BY SCHOOL AND DISTRICT.

IV. Submit October 1 APSCN/E-School Data and Printed Reports to Arkansas Department of Education Child Nutrition Unit with the September Claim for Reimbursement

The district APSCN/E-School Coordinator and Child Nutrition Director are responsible for communicating the October 1 cut-off date and the district procedures for entering student data during Cycle 2 to the district data entry personnel at the building level.

K. APSCN/E-School Data Entry.

- 1) Meal status eligibility based on Child Nutrition source documents for students actively enrolled in school on or before October 1 should be entered into the StudentPlus software PRIOR to the date the district APSCN/E-School Coordinator begins the Cycle 2 pull.
- 2) Complete balancing of APSCN/E-School Cycle 2 data, Child Nutrition Master Roster and Child Nutrition source documents. Failure to complete balancing will require a great deal of additional district staff time to provide documentation of any discrepancies between the data submitted to SIS and the printed report data submitted to Child Nutrition and can be very costly since this data is used to distribute state and federal funds to local districts.
- 3) The data entered for students enrolled as of October 1 should not be changed once the APSCN/ E-School Coordinator begins the Cycle 2 pull and until after Cycle 2 is submitted by the district to SIS. If new students are added or meal status eligibility is changed during the Cycle 2 pull, the district data submitted to SIS and the printed reports submitted to Child Nutrition **may not balance**.
- 4) Be sure to check submission data and printed report data for balancing prior to submitting to the Statewide Information System (SIS).

Consequences:

If there are discrepancies between the APSCN/ E-School electronic Cycle 2 data submitted to SIS and the printed reports submitted to Child Nutrition, the district will be required to identify specific student(s) by gender, race, grade and eligibility for all discrepancies. In addition it will require a formal letter of explanation from the district Superintendent explaining why the APSCN/ E-School printed reports do not match the APSCN/ E-School electronic Cycle 2 submission of enrollment and eligibles to the Statewide Information System (SIS). Further

audits of the submitted reports and backup documentation can be required to justify any discrepancies. ADE Child Nutrition must submit a final report of findings to the Assistant Commissioner of Fiscal and Administrative Services for approval of changes to APSCN/ E-School data.

L. Submission of Data.

Cycle 2 district data **MUST NOT BE SUBMITTED** without Child Nutrition Data and APSCN/ E-School Data matching on the number of eligibles and enrollment in each school/LEA based on the Child Nutrition **SOURCE DOCUMENTS** for the current school year.

M. Have Source Documents on File with district Child Nutrition Office.

EVERY FREE OR REDUCED ELIGIBLE IN APSCN/ E-School MUST HAVE A SOURCE DOCUMENT, i.e., an approved Household Meal Application, Direct Certification List, Migrant List or Homeless/Runaway List, Even Start List, Head Start List or Foster Child List ON FILE WITH THE DISTRICT CHILD NUTRITION OFFICE.