

Community Eligibility Provision

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Presenters

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Adapted from USDA, FRAC



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CEP Fundamentals

What is CEP, CEP benefits, and eligibility



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What is the Community Eligibility Provision?

- The Community Eligibility Provision, or **CEP** allows schools with a high percentage of needy children to serve meals at no charge to all enrolled students for a period of up to **four** consecutive school years
- Individual schools, groups of schools, or entire school districts may elect CEP, provided they meet the participation requirements





What Makes CEP Different?

- Traditional school meal programs require schools to determine children's eligibility for free or reduced price school meals on an individual basis
- CEP does not require the collection of meal applications and eliminates the need to collect money from students
- CEP relies on data of other assistance programs, like the *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*



CEP Benefits



Students:

- Enjoy healthy meals at school at no charge to the household
- With universal meal service, there is no stigma attached to a meal

Parents:

- Do not have to fill out individual household applications
- Do not have to worry about refilling meal accounts, or whether their child has an opportunity to eat at school

Schools:

- Reduces paperwork and administrative costs
- Streamlines meal service operation
- Students spend less time waiting in lines and more time eating; they are less likely to discard food and come to class better nourished and ready to learn



Eligibility – 3 Requirements

Schools, groups of schools, or school districts must:

1. Have an *identified student percentage* (ISP) of at least 40% as of April 1st of the school year prior to implementing CEP
2. Participate in NSLP and SBP
3. Have a record of administering the Programs in accordance with regulations



Who are the Identified Students?

- CEP eligibility is based on the percentage of **identified students** who are *enrolled in the participating LEA*
- **Identified Students** are low income children who are certified for free school meals without the use of a household application
- Students certified based on categorical eligibility (e.g. directly certified with SNAP or based on status as migrant youth, homeless, foster child, Head Start, Even Start)



Who are the enrolled students?

- Enrolled Students: students who are enrolled in and attending schools participating in the community eligibility provision and who have access to at least one meal service daily
- Students who do **not** have access to either breakfast or lunch due to the times they are attending school are **not** included in the count of enrolled students.



How is the Identified Student Percentage (ISP) calculated?

$$\text{Identified Student \%} = \frac{\text{\# of Identified Students}}{\text{Total \# of enrolled students}} \times 100$$

- The identified student percentage may be determined by:
 - an individual participating school
 - a group of participating schools in the LEA
 - entire LEA if all schools participate



How are meals claimed?

- ISP is multiplied by a factor of **1.6** to determine the % of total meals served that will be reimbursed at the Federal **FREE** rate
 - 1.6 multiplier set by USDA approximates free and reduced % if applications were still collected
- The remaining % of total meals is reimbursed at the Federal **PAID** rate
- If $ISP \geq 62.5$, all meals reimbursed at **FREE** rate ($62.5 \times 1.6 = 100$)



Meal Reimbursements with Community Eligibility (CEP)

Percentage of Identified Students	Percentage Reimbursed at the Free Rate	Percentage Reimbursed at the Paid Rate
40%	64%	36%
45%	72%	28%
50%	80%	20%
55%	88%	12%
60%	96%	4%
62.5%+	100%	0%



When do LEAs have to provide funds to cover operating costs?

- When the level of Federal reimbursement received under CEP is less than the cost of providing all students free meals, LEA uses district operating funds.



How are schools grouped?

- Schools can be eligible to participate in CEP individually, in a group, or district-wide
- When schools are grouped, ISP is calculated using the identified student and enrollment totals for all schools in the group
- Schools that would not be eligible to participate in CEP individually may participate as part of a group, provided that the group's ISP is still at least 40%
- LEAs can enroll multiple groups in CEP



Grouping Example

- In this example, three schools are grouped together by their LEA:

	Identified students	Enrollment	ISP
School 1	60	120	50%
School 2	38	100	38%
School 3	150	200	75%
Group of schools	248	420	59%

Total identified students for group (248)
Total enrollment for group (420)



CEP Deadlines

April 1st

- The date on which the identified student percentage must be established for determining the eligibility and the claiming percentages to be used.

April 15th

- School level percentage data is collected by ADE/CNU.
- ADE/CNU notify LEAs of districtwide eligibility status and provide guidance and information.

May 1st

- ADE/CNU must post the LEA districtwide and school level lists on website and send the link to FNS

June 30th

- Interested and eligible LEAs must notify ADE/CNU of their intent to participate in CEP.



Financial Viability

- Ensuring financial viability is key when electing CEP

- USDA Estimator Tool

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/community-eligibility-provision>



Maximize Identified Student Percentages

- Ensure that direct certification data is coming from all possible sources.
Week of March 14 will be statewide match!
- SNAP participation records
- Homeless, migrant, or runaway youths certified through documentation provided by applicable program liaisons
- Participation rolls for Head Start, and pre-K Even Start
- Foster children certified through means other than an application



How do we Enroll in CEP?

1

- Interested schools and districts must notify ADE/CNU by June 30th that they would like to participate
- Application information will be provided in a Commissioners Memo. Documentation is submitted to ADE/CNU indicating eligibility.

2

- ADE/CNU will review the documentation to ensure the school/district:
 - Meets the 40% ISP requirement
 - Participates in both the NSLP and SBP
 - Has a record of administering the meal program in accordance with program regulations

3

- Once the school/district is approved, ADE/CNU will facilitate technical assistance.



Can we stop CEP?

- LEAs or school(s) may return to standard counting and claiming any time during the school year. (New applications must be distributed and processed.)
- State agencies must provide schools or LEAs dropping out in the middle of a school year at least 30 days to transition back to standard counting and claiming.



Changes During the 4-Year Cycle

- A new identified student percentage may be established each year (April 1)
- During the 2nd, 3rd and 4th years, the LEA/school may select the higher of the identified student percentage from:
 - the year directly prior; OR
 - the year prior to the first year of operating CEP
- LEAs/schools in year 4 with an identified student percentage of less than 40% but more than 30% may elect for an additional year (a grace year)



Recordkeeping

- Records must be maintained for the duration of the CEP plus 5 years from the last claim submitted for the CEP cycle and for any period with unresolved audit findings.
- LEAs **MUST** retain ALL records and documentation used to calculate the ISP%.



Federal, State & Local Education Funding

Title I, E-Rate discounts, impact on other programs

Refer to Commissioner's Memos on the ADE and
Child Nutrition Webpages

Refer to the CEP Planning and Implementation
Guidance



What about other Federal Child Nutrition programs?

- The CEP free claiming percentage serves as a proxy for free and reduced price certifications (ISP X 1.6)
- May be used when determining area eligibility for Child Nutrition Programs (Afterschool Snack, Seamless Summer)
- FFVP uses the product of the ISP X 1.6 for the purpose of awarding funds



Communicate with Stakeholders

Include all stakeholders in conversations about CEP.

- School administrators/board members
- School food service staff and/or food service vendors
- Title I and ADE contacts
- State nutrition contacts
- PTA representatives, parents and families
- Other groups that may be impacted by CEP



Helpful CEP Resources

- Community Eligibility page on the USDA FNS website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/community-eligibility-provision>
- **Includes:**
 - Policy guidance
 - Program requirements/information
 - Reimbursement estimator & grouping tool
 - CEP guidance from other Federal agencies



❖ **Appendix I: CEP Policy Memos and Forms**

December 14, 2015 **SP 16-2016** Community Eligibility Provision: Guidance and Updated Q&As

November 30, 2015 **SP 15-2016** CEP State Agency Procedures to Ensure Identified Student Percentage Accuracy

November 27, 2015 **SP 14-2016** Flexibility for CEP Certification Document Review During SY15-16 Administrative Reviews

June 5, 2015 **SP 38-2015** Mid-Year Elections under the Community Eligibility Provision in SY2015-2016



April 27, 2015 **SP 35-2015** Updated Title I Guidance for Schools Electing Community Eligibility

March 4, 2015 **SP 24-2015** Community Eligibility Provision: Annual Notification and Publication Requirements

November 21, 2015 **SP 08-2015** Updated E-Rate Guidance for Schools Electing Community Eligibility

June 12, 2014 **SP 50-2014** Extension of the Deadline for Local Educational Agencies to Submit Applications to Elect the Community Eligibility Provision

April 10, 2012 **SP 24-2012** Interim Review Guidance



ADE Commissioners Memos

CNU – 16 – 026 Community Eligibility Provision Planning and Implementation Guidance-January 2016

CEP Statistics

2014-2015

Districts- 2

Schools- 4

Enrollment – 794

ISP(Students)- 477

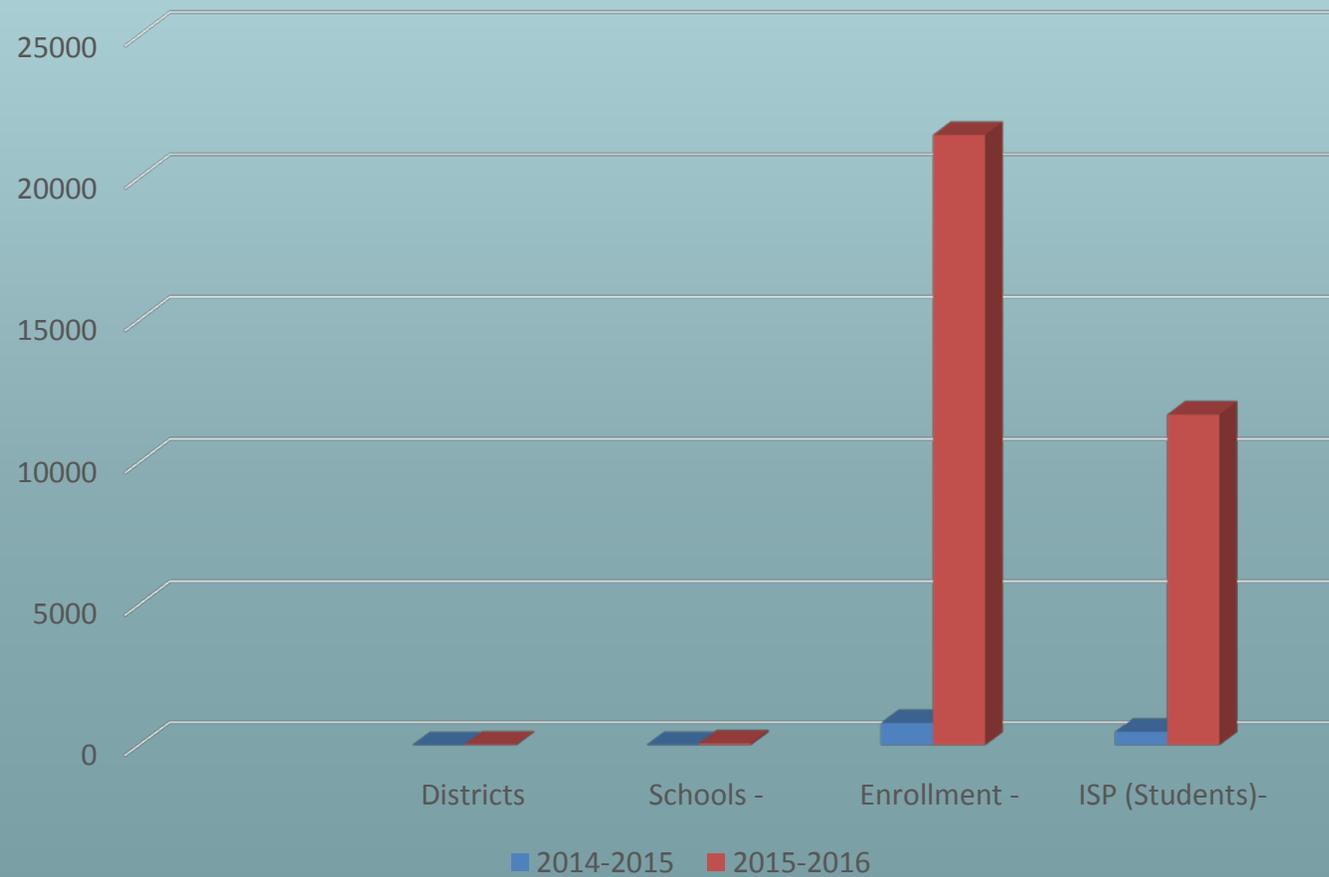
2015-2016

Districts – 20

Schools – 60

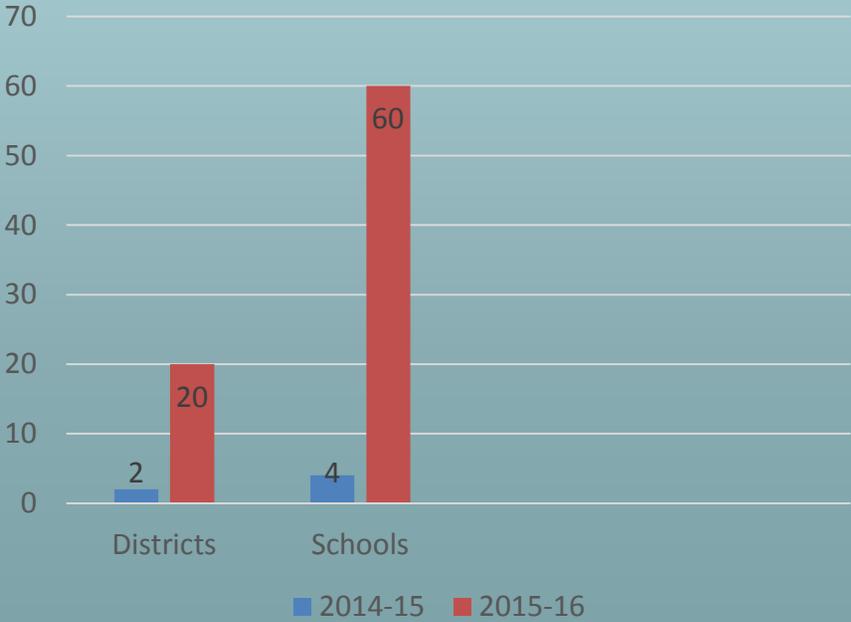
Enrollment – 21508

ISP (Students) - 11680

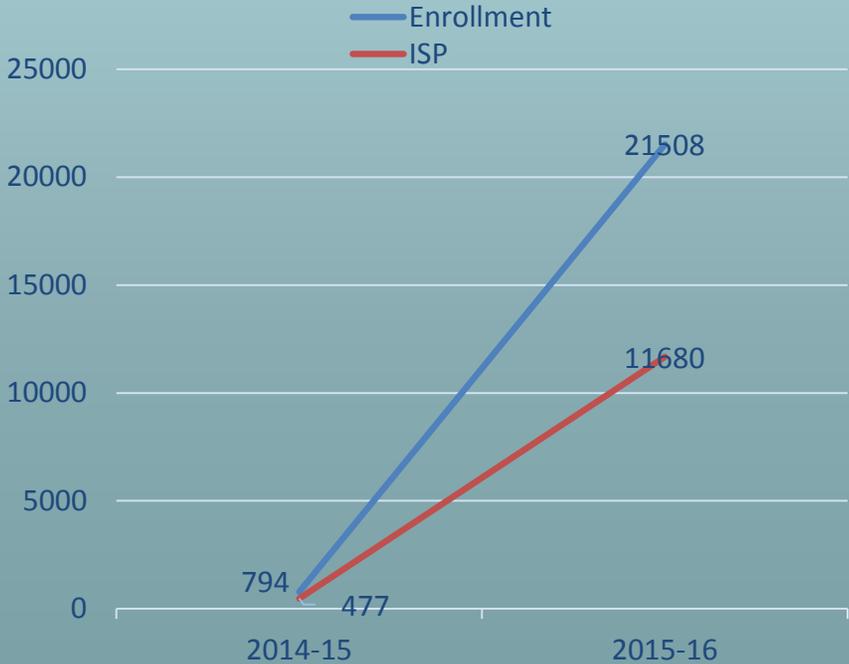


CEP Growth in Arkansas – SY 2014-15 to Current

Districts and Schools over Time

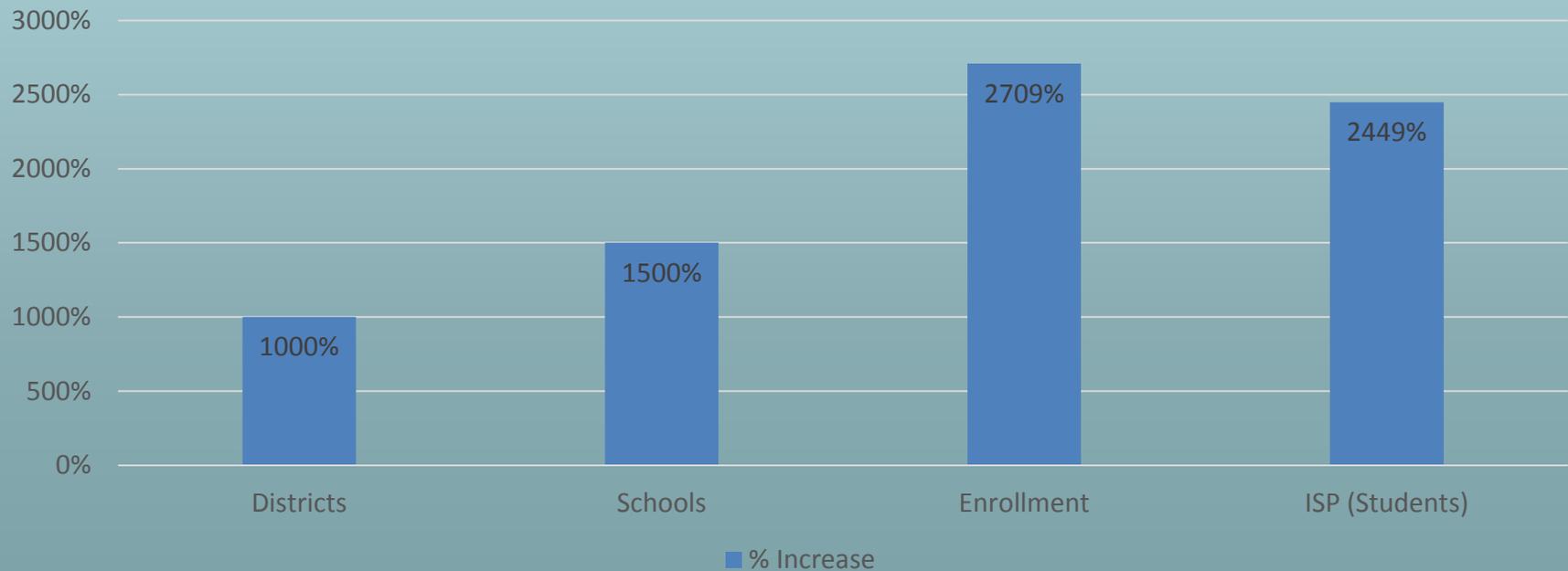


Enrollment and ISP over Time



CEP Growth in Arkansas – SY 2014-15 to Current

Districts and Schools over Time



CEP Panel Discussion

Hope School District

Mineral Springs School District

West Memphis School District

Questions?

