

Business and Noninstructional Operations

Free and Reduced Price Meals

Applications

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the District's application form for free and reduced-price meals and related materials include the statements specified in Education Code 49557 and 7 CFR 245.5. District's application packet shall include the notifications and information listed in Education Code 49557.2.

The application form and related information shall be distributed in paper form to all parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year and shall be available to students at all times during the school day.

In addition, the District application form for free and reduced price meals shall be available online. The online application form shall require completion of only those questions necessary for determining eligibility, contain clear instructions for families that are homeless or migrant, and comply with other requirements specified in Education Code 49557.

An application form and related information shall also be provided whenever a new student is enrolled.

At the beginning of each school year, the Superintendent or designee shall send a public release, containing the same information supplied to parents/guardians and including eligibility criteria, to local media, the local unemployment office, and any major employers in the District attendance area contemplating large layoffs. Copies of the public release shall be made available upon request to any interested person. (7 CFR 245.5)

Eligibility

The Superintendent or designee shall determine students' eligibility for the free and reduced-price meals program based on the criteria specified in 42 USC 1758 and 1773 and 7 CFR 245.1-245.13 and made available by the California Department of Education.

When authorized by law, participants in other federal or state programs may be directly certified, without further application, for enrollment in the free and reduced-price meals program.

Verification of Eligibility

Not later than November 15 of each year, the Superintendent or designee shall verify the eligibility of a sample of household applications approved for the school year in accordance with the sample sizes and procedures specified in 42 USC 1758 and 7 CFR 245.6a.

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If the review indicates that the initial eligibility determination is correct, the Superintendent or designee shall verify the approved household application. If the review indicates that the initial eligibility determination is incorrect, the Superintendent or designee shall:

1. If the eligibility status changes from reduced price to free, make the increased benefits immediately available and notify the household of the change in benefits.
2. If the eligibility status changes from free to reduced price, first verify the application, then notify the household of the correct eligibility status, and, when required by law, send a notice of adverse action as described below.
3. If the eligibility status changes from free or reduced price to paid, send the household a notice of adverse action as described below.

If any household is to receive a reduction or termination of benefits as a result of verification activities, or if the household fails to cooperate with verification efforts, the Superintendent or designee shall reduce or terminate benefits, as applicable, and shall properly document and retain on file in the District the reasons for ineligibility. He/she also shall send a notice of adverse action to any household that is to receive a reduction or termination of benefits. Such notice shall be provided 10 days prior to the actual reduction or termination of benefits. The notice shall advise the household of:

1. The change and the reasons for the change.
2. The right to appeal, when the appeal must be filed to ensure continued benefits while awaiting a hearing and decision, and instructions on how to appeal.
3. The right to reapply at any time during the school year.

Confidentiality/Release of Records

The Superintendent designates the following District employee(s) to disclose a student's name and eligibility status from individual meal record only for the purpose of disaggregation of academic achievement data and/or the provision of services under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act pursuant to 20 USC:6301-6576.

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In using the records for such purposes, the Superintendent or designee shall ensure that (Education Code 49558):

1. No individual indicators of participation in the free and reduced-price meals program are maintained in the permanent records of any student if not otherwise allowed by law.
2. Information regarding individual student participation in the free and reduced-price meals program is not be publicly released.
3. All other confidentiality provisions required by law are met.
4. Information collected regarding individual students certified to participate in the free and reduced-price meals program is destroyed when no longer needed for its intended purpose.

Nondiscrimination Plan

The District's plan for students receiving free or reduced-price meals shall ensure the following (Education Code 49557; 42 USC 1758):

1. The names of the students shall not be published, posted, or announced in any manner, or used for any purpose other than the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, unless otherwise provided by law.
2. There shall be no overt identification of any of the students by the use of special tokens or tickets or by any other means.
3. The students shall not be required to work for their meals.
4. The students shall not be required to use a separate dining area, go through a separate serving line or entrance, or consume their meals or milk at a different time.

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Legal Reference: Education Code, 48980; 49520; 49557-49558; 49561 Code of Federal Regulations, Title 7, 245.1-245.13 United States Code, Title 42, 1758; 1773

Rules Approved: 02/19/1985

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