



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Sponsors of the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs

FROM: John Frassinelli, Chief
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education

DATE: June 26, 2014

SUBJECT: Operational Memorandum #39-14
Extension of the Deadline for Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to Submit Applications to Elect the Community Eligibility Provision

One important goal of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA) is to ensure every American child has access to the nutrition he or she needs to grow into healthy adults. The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a powerful tool to ensure children in low-income communities have access to healthy meals at school. As noted in the February 2014 letter to program stakeholders from Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack and Secretary of Education Duncan, the CEP allows participating high-poverty schools to offer healthy free lunches and breakfasts to all students without requiring their families to complete individual applications. Once initial eligibility and claiming percentages are established under the CEP, they are guaranteed for four school years. There are approximately 3,000 LEAs and more than 22,000 schools eligible for the CEP. The CEP has the potential to offer over 8 million low-income children free meals each school day.

Participation in the CEP is a local decision and offers several benefits for schools. Currently, ten states and the District of Columbia participate in the CEP. Initial evaluations demonstrate that participating schools have increased participation in their lunch and breakfast programs, experienced revenue gains and decreased administrative costs. [Title 1 Guidance](#) was disseminated in a January 2014 Department of Education publication providing a range of options for implementing Title I requirements while also participating in the CEP. Beginning school year (SY) 2014-15, eligible LEAs and schools in all states may elect to participate in the CEP. Pursuant to the HHFKA, LEAs have until June 30, 2014, to elect to utilize this innovative provision for SY 2014-15. This timeframe is now extended.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recognizes that many LEAs may need additional time to consider and apply for the CEP. **Accordingly, the Food and Nutrition Service is extending the deadline for LEAs to elect to participate in the CEP in SY 2014-15 until August 31, 2014.** The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) will accept any LEA elections submitted on or before that date.

There are several resources available on the USDA Web site to assist LEAs with the decision to elect the CEP. The [USDA CEP Web page](#) includes the Department of Education Title I Guidance, Q & A guidance and tools to assist LEAs as they consider implementing this important provision. In March 2014, the CSDE launched a dedicated [CEP Web page](#) with additional information, resources, lists of eligible and potentially eligible LEAs and schools, resources, CEP Policy Statement Addendum (application) and CEP Participation Worksheet. The CSDE strongly encourages those schools and LEAs that have not yet elected the CEP to review these resources and carefully consider the positive impact that the CEP can have in their communities.

The CSDE joins the USDA in its commitment to providing healthy school meals to all school children.

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