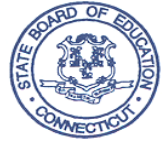





STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Sponsors of School Child Nutrition Programs

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

DATE: March 17, 2015

SUBJECT: Operational Memorandum #17-15
Paid Lunch Equity: Guidance for School Years 2015-16 and 2016-17

This memorandum extends, through School Year (SY) 2016-17, the availability of an exemption to the Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) requirement for certain School Food Authorities (SFAs) in strong financial standing, as described below. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) provided an exemption to this requirement in SY 2013-14 in memorandum SP 34-2013 “Paid Lunch Equity: Guidance for SY 2013-14” and in SY 2014-15 in memorandum SP 28-2014, “Paid Lunch Equity: Guidance for SY 2014-15”. Extending the PLE exemption for another two years will allow FNS to continue to gather feedback and experience with the exemption in order to inform future policy considerations, including a final rule.

In SY 2015-16 and SY 2016-17, State agencies should exempt an SFA from the PLE requirements if the SFA requesting the exemption has been certified as meeting the meal pattern requirements and can demonstrate that the required increase to paid lunch prices or revenue contributions would cause the SFA to exceed the three month operating balance limit. For example, when evaluating financial documentation provided by an SFA, the State agency may determine that, because the SFA consistently carries a two month operating balance, failure to provide the PLE exemption would cause the SFA to exceed the three month operating balance limit.

In making an exemption determination, a State agency, using the attached list of Factors for Consideration, must also consider whether there are other necessary or appropriate uses for the SFA’s funds. In some instances, those funds might be better used to operate or improve the program, to meet program requirements and goals, or to address deficiencies in program operations. Examples of ways SFAs can use extra funds include improvements to the quality of meals and improvements to cafeteria equipment.

Because the financial standing of a school food service account may change from year to year, those SFAs that were exempted in SY 2013-14 or SY 2014-15 must request a new exemption annually for SY 2015-16 or SY 2016-17 and must provide their State agency with the proper documentation to be considered for the exemption. State agencies must evaluate all aspects of food service operations including meal costs, non-program food revenue and compliance with all requirements, including the Smart Snacks in Schools standards, when determining whether to grant each exemption request for SY 2015-16 and SY 2016-17.

Questions may be directed to:

COUNTY ASSIGNMENTS	CONSULTANT	E-MAIL AND PHONE
Fairfield County	Fionnuala Brown	fionnuala.brown@ct.gov 860-807-2129
Hartford County (towns/cities beginning with A-R)	Teri Dandeneau	teri.dandeneau@ct.gov 860-807-2079
Hartford County (towns/cities beginning with S-W) Windham County	Susan Alston	susan.alston@ct.gov 860-807-2081
Litchfield County	Allison Calhoun-White	allison.calhoun-white@ct.gov 860-807-2008
Middlesex County Tolland County	Andy Paul	andrew.paul@ct.gov 860-807-2048
New Haven County	Jackie Schipke	jackie.schipke@ct.gov 860-807-2123
New London County	Monica Pacheco	monica.pacheco@ct.gov 860-807-2073

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