

## **COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION (CEP) FAQs**

### **What is CEP?**

Through CEP, the District can offer no-cost lunches and breakfasts to all students for up to 4 consecutive years in approved/eligible schools.

### **What determines an eligible school?**

In order to be eligible, a school or group of schools, must have an “identified student percentage” (ISP) of over 40%.

### **What is an “identified student percentage”?**

Identified students are students certified free eligible for school meals using methods other than a free and reduced student meal application. The identified student count is NOT a school’s free and reduced student percentage. Students are considered “identified” if they meet one of the following categories:

1. Directly certified for free meals on the basis of participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Ohio Works First (OWF);
2. Homeless and runaway students;
3. Migrant students;
4. Foster children confirmed using court documentation.

### **What happens when my child goes to middle school next year?**

We will provide “carryover eligibility” for 30 operating days (or until a new eligibility is made). Students will receive meals at no cost at the beginning of a school year when transitioning from a CEP school to a non-CEP school.

### **When a student from a CEP school transfers to a non-CEP school, is the student eligible for meals at no cost for the duration of the school year?**

If a student transfers from a CEP to a non-CEP school, the new school will provide meals at no cost to the student for up to 10 operating days or until a new eligibility determination is made.

### **If a student at a non-CEP school visits a CEP school during meal time, will the student receive lunch at no cost?**

Yes. CEP schools do not accept payment from visiting students.

### **If a CEP student visits a non-CEP school during meal time, will the student receive meals at no cost?**

Non-CEP schools that host visiting students from CEP schools will provide students a meal at no cost to avoid any disruption to the students’ meal service.

### **May a student attending a CEP school be charged for a non-reimbursable meal?**

Yes. If a student selects a non-reimbursable meal ( i.e., the student refuses to select the components required for a reimbursable meal) the school may charge the student for the food components a la carte.

**I don't want my child to receive free meals. Can I insist on paying for my child's meal?**

We encourage all students to participate at no cost to reduce the peer-group stigma sometimes associated with free or reduced meals. Parents or guardians that insist on paying should be encouraged to make a monetary donation to the nonprofit school food service account. Children may also opt out of receiving free meals by bringing food from home or purchasing a la carte foods.

**I have students at a CEP school. Since all kids are considered free, are all of their fees waived also?**

No. In order to have your fees waived, you must qualify by meeting certain income eligibility guidelines. In order to see if you qualify, you would need to fill out a free/reduced application & check yes to have your fees waived.

**I have students within a single household attend both CEP and non-CEP schools. Can information from one sibling's household application be shared with a CEP school to determine another sibling's eligibility for other types of funding (e.g., fee waivers)?**

Yes. However, this will likely not provide comprehensive information for the entire student population at the CEP school because it's not likely that all CEP students will have a sibling that submits a school meal application at a non-CEP school.

**My child doesn't attend one of the CEP schools. How is it fair that I have to pay, but others at CEP schools don't?**

Unfortunately, no other schools within the District qualify for this program. However, our hope is that CEP results in enough of a participation increase generating additional income to fund different programs & ideas at non-CEP schools (e.g., summer feeding programs, made to order options at all middle & high schools, upgraded, previously unaffordable menu options, updated equipment to speed up line time, the potential for Districtwide free breakfast).