



State of New Jersey


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Division of Food & Nutrition
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To: School Business Administrators, Charter School Leads; Non Public School Administrators; Food Service Directors

From: Arleen Ramos-Szatmary, Coordinator 
School Nutrition Programs

Date: September 3, 2015

Subject: "Back to School" Information and Reminders

The 2015-2016 School Year is about to begin, and the School Nutrition Programs Unit is continuing to implement and embrace the changes resulting from the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Please take a few moments to read the important reminders and updates noted below.

Professional Standards: Compliance with the Professional Standards for State and Local School Nutrition Programs Personnel began on July 1st. LEAs are encouraged to refer to the following websites in order to access current and applicable trainings, webinars and tracking tools:

- Institute of Child Nutrition (<http://www.nfsmi.org>)
- Professional Standards website (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/professional-standards>)
- School Nutrition Association (<https://schoolnutrition.org/ProfessionalStandards/>)

While all State Agency trainings and webinars offered throughout the year will count towards Professional Standards requirements, certificates will not be provided for live or recorded webinars. Documentation must be maintained via a tracking tool such as an Excel spreadsheet or the USDA Professional Standards Tracking Tool. Refer to the "Professional Standards" category under "Resources" in SNEARS for more information.

Verification Summary Report: A new and helpful tool, "Broccoli Rob", has also been incorporated into the Verification Summary Report to assist all LEAs in the completion of the data. The initial portion of the verification summary report to determine the number of applications to be verified must be submitted in SNEARS beginning October 1st. Part 1 of the verification collection report is due between October 1st and October 30th, and part 2 must be submitted by November 30th.

Verification trainings and a webinar have been scheduled: please see the memo posted in SNEARS on the memos and message page dated August 21, 2015.

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP): A webinar on "Managing CEP" will be held on September 28, 2015 from 10 AM – 12 PM. The webinar will highlight claiming and counting procedures, direct certification responsibilities, CEP edit check worksheets, verification data collection requirements and civil rights data collection responsibilities. A recording of the webinar will also be posted in SNEARS for future reference.

CEP districts are still responsible for completing the 2016 Annual Application. If you have not already done so, please be certain the 2016 packet has been completed and certified for final approval.

2016 Application Packets: SNEARS documents must be submitted and certified by September 30, 2015 in order to participate in the School Nutrition Programs for the 2015-2016 school year.

- The Fiscal Year 2016 packet can be accessed by clicking on the Program Management menu tab at the top of the screen in SNEARS.
- Please note that the USDA fiscal year begins October 1st each year, so any changes effective for September 2015 (ie, addition of a breakfast program) must also be made in the Fiscal Year 2015 application packet. The 2015 application packet is located under the *Current Application Packet* menu tab in SNEARS.
- After certifying all of the individual required documents, LEAs must also certify the entire application packet by clicking the green radio button titled, “Certify Application Packet” found under the “Application Packet Status Summary for FY 2016”.
- Remember to mail the required manual documents after the packet is certified. The listing of required documents and the mailing address for the School Nutrition Office is located in SNEARS.
- In addition, please ensure that the email addresses and phone numbers on the Schedule A are kept current and accurate so that important and/or urgent messages can be communicated as promptly as possible.

Direct Certification: Schools participating in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program must continue to conduct Direct Certification three times per year during the following timeframes, and according to your county’s scheduled week:

- July 15th – September 5th, 2015
- October 5th – October 30th, 2015
- March 5th – March 30th, 2016

In addition, a memo posted on June 2, 2015 provided new guidance for “sending” districts. In order to prevent duplication of matches for the same students, “sending” school districts must obtain the direct certification lists from the school where the children are consuming meals. If the school district where children are sent does not participate in any of the School Nutrition Programs offered by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, the “sending” school district can perform Direct Certification for those students.

National School Lunch Week – October 12th – 16th: This year, the National School Lunch Week theme is “School Lunch Snapshot”. The theme encourages the sharing of real and inspiring images of today’s school lunch. For more information and to download the National School Lunch Week Toolkit, please reference the School Nutrition Association website at: <http://schoolnutrition.org/nslw/>.

Farm to School Programs: We encourage all our LEAs to participate in Farm to School Programs throughout the school year.

- *Jersey Fresh* Farm to School Week is September 21st – 25th, 2015. We hope all schools will showcase *Jersey Fresh* produce in their lunch and breakfast programs!
- National Farm to School Month is in October. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) website contains a multitude of innovations, ideas, toolkits and resources for increasing

participation at: http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/fn/childadult/farm_to_school.html. Refer to the USDA Farm to School website at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool/farm-school>.

- The *Jersey Fresh* Farm to School Recognition Program recognizes schools and farmers who work together to ensure students have access to healthy Jersey Fresh fruits and vegetables in their school cafeterias. Schools must purchase and serve Jersey Fresh produce throughout the year as outlined in the application, which can also be found on the NJDA website mentioned above.

Local Wellness Policy: All LEAs must adopt a local wellness policy. It is the LEA's responsibility to amend the local school wellness policy to meet current requirements so that the unique needs of each school under the jurisdiction of the LEA can be addressed. A Wellness Policy Assessment tool will be posted in SNEARS in the near future.

NJDA's Jets Play 60 Eat Right, Move More Program: The NY Jets are partnering once again with the NJDA to sponsor the *Eat Right, Move More* program. Details on how to participate and accompanying deadlines will be announced in mid-September in the SNEARS messages/memo screen.

Food Safety Inspection Report: LEAs must report the number of health/sanitation inspections each school/site had during the 2014-2015 school year in SNEARS by October 30th.

A "Calendar of Important School Nutrition Program Events" accompanies this memo to assist LEAs in complying with all School Nutrition Program deadlines. Please direct any questions to the School Nutrition Programs Unit at 609-984-0692.

We look forward to working with you and your staff, and helping you to provide healthy, safe and low-cost meals for your students for the 2015-2016 School Year.