

Memorandum

Date: June 4, 2021
To: Mississippi School Districts
From: Scott Clements, Child Nutrition, State Director
Subject: P-EBT Cards for Eligible Students

The message below was sent to District Superintendents today. Please assist your District's MSIS coordinator in identifying students who normally would have been eligible for free or reduced meals during SY 2020-2021 year.

For schools that began the year as CEP, all students are considered free. For non-CEP school, please make sure your Direct Certification imports have been completed and any income applications that were submitted have been processed. This will assist in providing benefits to the maximum number of eligible children.

While determining eligibility is a core function for SFSAs, the Office of Child Nutrition is available to provide technical assistance. To assist, OCN will host a Q&A virtual meeting on Wednesday, June 9 at 2:00. Please watch your email for a link to this meeting.

Please send eligibility questions to Marianna Chauvin mchauvin@mdek12.org and we will address them during the Wednesday webinar. Questions regarding file transfer, data files, etc. should be directed to MDENET Help Desk mdenet@mdek12.org 601-359-3487.

Superintendents:

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 challenges facing our state, the Mississippi Department of Human Services, with support from the Mississippi Department of Education, has submitted a plan to the USDA to issue Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transaction (P-EBT) cards to Mississippi students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) benefits.

Through P-EBT, eligible school children will receive temporary emergency nutrition benefits loaded on EBT cards that are used to purchase food. Children who normally would have received free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Act are eligible if their schools were closed or operating with reduced hours or reduced attendance for at least 5 consecutive days.

For students to receive benefits, districts must report closures and students eligible for free or reduced lunch meals. Reporting school and student information will be a two-step process.

- 1) For each school, please complete this MDHS survey [Pandemic EBT Learning Mode Survey \(smartsheet.com\)](#) that will report school closures and reduced hours or attendance.
- 2) Upload information on eligible students to an MDE Office of Technology and Strategic Solutions (OTSS) SharePoint site. Invitations have been sent to each district's MSIS coordinator for the MDE OTSS SharePoint site.

Below, you will find:

- Instructions for the transmission of student data to the MDE
- A spreadsheet template for reporting student information

We strongly encourage every school to participate as P-EBT will provide benefits to some of Mississippi's most vulnerable children. For questions, please contact the MDENET Help Desk mdenet@mdek12.org 601-359-3487 (MDE OTSS) or Scott Clements sclements@mdek12.org 601-576-4990 (MDE Office of Child Nutrition). The deadline is June 18.

P-EBT District Data Instructions:

Step 1: Determine school's closure and reduced attendance data (enter on survey)

1. Was the school closed or operated at reduced attendance or reduced hours for at least 5 consecutive school days due to COVID-19 during the 2020-2021 school year?

This includes a delayed school start at the beginning of the year or an extended holiday break due to COVID-19. This also includes hybrid schedules where some portion of students attend in-person on alternating days.

2. In which month did the school first close or operate at reduced attendance for at least 5 consecutive days due to COVID-19?

Step 2: Determine school's predominant schedule for each month (enter on survey)

- a. In-Person - A school is predominantly in-person if a majority (51% or more) of students attended in-person (no virtual days) for the entire month.
- b. Hybrid - A school is predominantly hybrid for the month if a majority (51% or more) of students had a hybrid schedule (a mix of in-person and virtual days) for the entire month.
- c. Virtual - A school is considered predominantly virtual for a month if a majority (51% or more) of students were 100% virtual (never attended in-person) for the entire month.

Note: If a school switches from one of the previous three models to a different model during the month, then whichever model was used for a majority of the month should be considered the predominant model. For example, if a school started the month with every student on a hybrid schedule but the school switched to a fully virtual model for all students for the last 3 weeks of the month due to an increase in COVID cases, then the school would be considered predominantly virtual for the month.

Step 3: Determine students to include in file (upload student files) Criteria: Student would be eligible for free or reduced-price meals if the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program were operating normally. This includes children who are:

- directly certified or determined "other source categorically eligible" for SY 2020-2021, or
- certified through submission of a household application processed by the child's school district for SY 2020-2021, or
- enrolled in a Community Eligibility Provision school or a school operating under Provisions 2 or 3 for NSLP, or
- directly certified, determined other source categorically eligible, or certified by application in SY 2019-2020 and the school district has not made a new school meal eligibility determination for the child in SY 2020-2021.

Note: Student criteria should be based on the most recent data available, regardless of the timeframe that the school operated in In-Person, Hybrid, or Virtual.

You may create one file per district or one file per school. All data files must adhere to the file layout included with these instructions. Include all students in the schools who meet the criteria above, regardless of the school's closure or schedule status. **Please include the district number in your filename when uploading the file to SharePoint.**

ADC/adc
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