



Illinois State Board of Education

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TO: School District Superintendents
School District Title I, Part A Directors

FROM: Monique M. Chism, Ph.D.
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RE: Community Eligibility Option and Title I

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Overview

Beginning in the 2011-2012 school year, the United States Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of Education implemented a new claiming option for providing reimbursements to LEAs for providing free (no cost to the students) breakfasts and lunches to all students in schools with significantly economically disadvantaged populations. This new program, the Community Eligibility Option (CEO), is similar to Provision 2 and Provision 3 of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) that precedes it. The CEO can save not only money, but also reduce the amount of paperwork required to ensure each student is receiving a nutritious breakfast and lunch, regardless of socioeconomic status. For details on the meal implications and further details of the CEO, see the ISBE Nutrition website at http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/nslp_hhfka_implementation.htm.

Community Eligibility Option

A school, group of schools, or LEA must have at least 40% of its students categorized as Identified Students.

Identified Students are students directly certified for free meals on the basis of their participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the extension of benefits to students living in the same household through use of the Illinois Direct Certification System; Homeless, Runaway, and Migrant Youth certified by the prospective district coordinator; and Foster Children certified by DCFS documentation. It does not include the students who are

determined eligible based on the submission of the Household Eligibility Application.

CEO is a four year option; the data used for approval and claiming percentages are good for four years and do not have to be updated until the LEA reapplies at the end of the four year cycle.

When determining the eligibility of a CEO school to receive Title I funds and its Title I allocation, an LEA must assume that the percentage of economically disadvantaged students in the school is proportionate to the USDA approved claiming percentage for which that CEO school is reimbursed for meals served. Thus, to calculate the USDA claiming percentage, the LEA should divide the number of Identified Students as of April 1 by the April 1 enrollment and then multiply this percentage by the statutory multiplier specified in the Act (currently 1.6). This multiplier will account for the households normally approved for free and reduced-price meals through the Household Application Process.

Example

Sample School	Enrollment	Number of Identified Students	Percentage Identified Students*	Statutory Multiplier	Percentage of economically disadvantaged students for Title I allocations
1	600	350	58.33%	1.6	93%
2	600	425	70.83%	1.6	100% Cannot be greater than 100%

*If percentage is 40% or higher, the school, group of schools, or LEA is eligible for CEO. To determine the approximate number of students that would be qualified as free and reduced-price eligible under the traditional method, multiply the enrollment by the percentage of economically disadvantaged students for Title I allocations. (Example: 600 X 93% = 558) approximately 558 students would have been qualified as free and reduced-price eligible.

Title I Implications

CEO schools will use only the data used to determine the identified students, such as data from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, instead of a combination of household application and direct certification data that are typically used to determine the Federal meal reimbursement provided by USDA. The Community Eligibility Option only requires the identified student count and approved claiming percentages to be updated once every four years. Consequently, for purposes of disaggregating assessment data by the economically disadvantaged subgroup for reporting and accountability and for identifying students as economically disadvantaged in implementing SES and priority for public school choice, school officials may deem all students (100%) in a Community Eligibility Option school as economically disadvantaged. In addition, when determining

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Title I eligibility and allocations for a CEO school, LEA officials may assume that the school has the same percentage of economically disadvantaged students as it had when the USDA claiming percentage was approved in year one of the four year option.