

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Frequently Asked Questions

Calculating Identified Students

- 1. What is the formula to calculate Identified Student Percentage, if you want the entire district to participate?** Total number of Identified Students divided by Total Enrollment multiplied by 100 determines the Total Identified Student Percentage. If 40 percent or above, multiply by 1.6 to get the total Free reimbursement percentage.
- 2. If a school's enrollment significantly changes because of adding or removing classes, do we need to reestablish the Identified Student Percentage?** No. However, if this is the case, we suggest you reassess the number of Identified Students (Direct Certification (DC), homeless, runaway, foster-without household application, etc.) to ensure the most advantageous Identified Student Percentage is utilized each year.

Note: A new Identified Student Percentage can only be established at the beginning of each new school year based on data from the prior school year.

- 3. Do reduced priced students count as "Identified Students"?** No, Identified Students are students that are eligible for free meals without the need for a Household Application for Free and Reduced Price Meals. This group is comprised of students that are eligible for free meals through direct certification, homeless, runaway, foster, etc. It does not include reduced priced students since they are only determined eligible through the application process. The multiplier (currently 1.6) compensates for the reduced category.
- 4. What date should I use to calculate my percentages?** The Division of Food and Nutrition is required to post a report that estimates the number of Identified Students in each LEA. For the 2013-14 school year, we will utilize the number of students directly certified as this indicator. This number will be pulled from the October Claim for Reimbursement. LEAs should use their own local data to determine the number of Identified Students, since it is most accurate, timely, and includes homeless, runaway, foster, etc. For that, we are going to use the October DC numbers from the claim. I would definitely recommend using figures anytime up through March 31st; whatever will give you the highest Identified Student Percentage.

5. **How does CEP affect technical schools that receive eligibility status from the “home/sending” school?** The technical school must establish its identified student percent by obtaining the names of students directly certified, homeless, runaway, foster, etc. from the home/sending school(s) and/or collecting them directly to obtain the most comprehensive list.

Economically Disadvantaged

6. **If a district/schools participate in CEP, how would we track economically disadvantaged for state reporting and testing?** LEAs or schools within the LEA, participating in CEP, will use poverty data each year in the “economically disadvantaged” field in PIMS report in lieu of free/reduced eligibility. At local level discretion, LEAs may collect socioeconomic data in lieu of or in addition to poverty data in order to capture data to report in the “economically disadvantaged” field. (Please refer to the memo from the Secretary of Education on the www.education.state.pa.us/cep webpage.)

NOTE: The “economically disadvantaged” field in the PIMS report is separate and distinct from the “free/reduced eligible” field in PIMS. LEAs or schools within the LEA, participating in CEP, may report all students as eligible for free/reduced meals in the “free/reduced eligible” field in PIMS.

7. **Would the entire district/school be considered economically disadvantaged if they participate in CEP?** No. Please refer to Question 6.

Funding Sources - Other

8. **How are schools to fund the meals that are not reimbursed under this program if not meeting the 62.5%?** Funds would have to come from non-federal sources, not designated for anything else, such as a la carte, etc.
9. **How will I distribute Title 1 funds within the LEA?** LEAs will use the Identified Student Percentage with the multiplier for the individual buildings to determine the distribution of Title I funds. This may cause the distribution of funds to be different than in the past. Plan to make this known to schools as soon as possible. (Please refer to the USDOE memo on the www.education.state.pa.us/cep webpage for guidance.)

10. How will I determine E-Rate standings? LEAs will use free/reduced eligibility from the most recent year that individual student data was collected. Schools opting into CEP for the 2014-15 school year will use free/reduced eligibility data from the 2013-14 fiscal year. Further federal guidance is forthcoming on how this will be collected and determined in future years. (Direct them to Erate memo).

Program Participation

11. Do I have to have all schools within my LEA participate in the CEP? No. LEAs can select to have one school, a group of schools, or the entire LEA/school district participate.

12. All schools within my district are high poverty except one. Can I group this one school with the other schools to get an overall percentage of Identified Students? Yes. LEAs can collect Identified Students from all potential CEP schools, and then divide by the enrollment of those same schools to come up with the Identified Student Percentage. If any one of the schools or several schools are not high poverty, the LEA should calculate the Identified Student Percentage with and without those school(s). The LEA would then determine if they meet the 40 percent and if they want to include one school, a group of schools, or all schools in the CEP.

13. Do we have to serve Breakfast to participate in CEP? Yes. LEAs/schools participating in CEP must offer both breakfast and lunch.

14. Does CEP free/reduced eligibility transfer to same-household students in a non-CEP building? Please refer to USDA memo SP 21-2014.

15. Can LEAs/schools count the students enrolled in our cyber school as Identified Students? No. You can only count students who have access to breakfast and lunch daily.

16. What will the rate of reimbursement be under the CEP? The reimbursement rate for CEP schools is consistent with those operating under the traditional method.

17. Can RCCI's with day students participate on CEP? No, RCCI's, with or without day students, may not participate in CEP.

- 18. Can an LEA/school count students who are classified Foster that are placed in facilities (adolescent homes) outside our District?** Foster Children would only be counted in the identified student percentage if they are considered foster by the county office and part of the school's enrollment with access to school breakfast and/or lunch daily. If they do not have this access, they cannot be counted.
- 19. Where can an LEA/school find a listing of Foster students?** On PEARS Form Download there is a memo with a link to all the county offices. Please go to www.pears.ed.state.pa.us, Download Forms, PDE202b, page 3 of the USDA Memo SP 17-2011: Categorical Eligibility of Foster. The listing would be part of the County Assistance Office. The County Assistance Office can provide the list of foster children.

Re-Applying

- 20. Are LEAs/schools required to re-apply and recalculate the Identified Student Percentage each year?** CEP runs on a 4-year cycle, therefore, you would have to reapply after the fourth consecutive year. You can recalculate the Identified Student Percentage each year if you feel there is an opportunity to improve the Identified Student Percentage.
- 21. What happens after the 4-year cycle is over? Do we need to start collecting applications again?** Please refer to USDA memo SP 21-2014.
- 22. How do we add new schools to the group after the first year?** Please refer to USDA memo SP 21-2014.
- 23. To apply for the 2014-2015 school year, what months would we use to calculate the formula to see if we qualify?** The numbers need to be a reflection of April 1. Data can be used up to April 1, however, it is in the best interest of the LEA to use data that is highest within the school year. Most likely, this will be as close to April 1 as possible.
- 24. If the LEAs are not receiving Free and Reduced Price Meal Applications, how would you re-evaluate the Identified Students each spring?** Identified Students are comprised of students that are eligible for free meals without the need for a household application, such as directly certified, homeless, runaway, migrant, foster, etc. Eligibility from the Free and Reduced Price Meal Application is not used to calculate the Identified Student percentage.