



# FREE LUNCH

## (AND BREAKFAST TOO!)

The Plattsburgh City School District will be participating in the Community Eligibility Program (CEP) in 2016-17, which will allow all PK-12 students in our District to receive free breakfast and lunch at school each day. This program has no income qualifications, but each family should complete the attached form (which the District uses for reporting purposes, and which could help to ensure that this program is successful and will continue in future years). Again, every student in each Plattsburgh CSD school (plus CVES, where we operate the food service operation) will be eligible for a free breakfast and lunch this year.

Here are some questions and answers to further explain this new program:

### **What food does CEP cover?**

The CEP will provide a standard meal – breakfast and lunch – for each student. Either the daily menu offering or the alternate meal is covered. The CEP does not cover an additional meal or ‘a la carte’ items such as an additional milk, bottled water, chips, etc.. Students may still purchase ‘a la carte’ items, but there will be no need for students to purchase a breakfast or lunch.

### **Why is this program being offered?**

This program is part of a USDA special provision of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010. Each qualifying school district may choose to participate or not. Plattsburgh CSD, based upon the socio-economic composition of its student body, currently qualifies for this program. The Plattsburgh CSD Board of Education considered this program and decided to participate for the 2016/17 school year.

**Is this program related to the Free & Reduced Lunch Program (FRLP) which has existed for many years?**

No. This is a different, non-income dependent program. In fact, this program will render the previous application for the FRLP unnecessary (because all students will now be eligible for free meals).

**Is there anything parents should do?**

Yes. Please complete and return the attached form. This former neither qualifies nor disqualifies students from eligibility (all students are eligible – regardless of family income). But this form does feature important information which the District must report to the State and which will impact the District’s reimbursement... which will impact whether this program can be sustained for multiple years.

**How long will this program last?**

Depends. The State Education Department, Office of Child Nutrition, approves a 4-year CEP cycle. After each 4-year cycle, the State will review data to determine whether Districts still qualify. However, Districts may choose to participate on an annual basis, and the Plattsburgh CSD Board of Education will review this program’s performance each year to determine whether it will continue. It is the Board’s hope that this program will continue in our schools for as long as possible.

**Will students still be allowed to charge items?**

No. Because meals will be provided at no cost (and because the only time students will pay cash will now be for ‘a la carte’ items), there will be no charging.

**What will become of charges on existing student accounts?**

Many families carry balances/charges from year-to-year, and these will remain in-place until paid. If you would like to discuss a payment plan for your child’s charges, please feel free to contact Charlene O’Connor, Food Service Director at 561-7500, x5093. Credit balances (additional money available on student accounts from last year) may be refunded to the parent, or may be left in-place for use on ‘a la carte’ items.

### **What should students and families expect in September?**

Growing pains. This program is new, and will require some adjustments and some patience. Some processes (such as cashing out) will be made simpler, whereas others (serving) will be more time consuming. The District's cafeteria staff is ready to take-on this transition, and we expect that, while there will be challenges, these will be minor and easily resolved. Students who plan to eat breakfast at our elementary schools (because lunch periods feature student rotation, whereas there is only one breakfast period) are asked to be particularly patient as this is the area wherein we are least certain of participation levels.

### **Are adult/staff meals affected?**

No. The same pricing as 2014-15 is in-place for adult/staff meals.

### **Who should I contact if I have questions?**

Charlene O'Connor, Food Service Director, 561-7500, x5093 or [coconnor@plattscsd.org](mailto:coconnor@plattscsd.org).



**WE HOPE YOU WILL PARTICIPATE!**

**The sustainability of this program depends  
largely on student participation rates.**