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Dear Parents and Guardians,

The school meals program is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, school corporations across the country have been operating with the use of a federal waiver that allowed them to feed every child for free through the end of the 2021-2022 school year. This waiver has expired on June 30, 2022 and will not be available for the upcoming school year so corporations will return to the traditional eligibility requirements for free, reduced and paid meals. This means that for School Year 2022-2023, students will be charged for school meals except for those who qualify for free or reduced by Direct Certification or application. Our school corporation will again process free and reduced-price meal benefit applications.

The Food Services Department does have the ability to Directly Certify students who receive SNAP, TANF, some Medicaid, are certified as homeless, migrant, or are wards of the state (foster children). Households who are found to be directly certified will be notified in writing of the free or reduced-price meal status prior to the start of school and will not need to complete an application.

Meal benefit applications will not be available until July 1\*. Households are encouraged to apply before the start of the school year to avoid unpaid meal charges. Students who are not approved for free or reduced-price meal benefits before the start of the school year will be classified as paid status and meal charges may begin to accumulate starting the first day of school. Meal charges accrued before the approval of a meal benefit application will be the responsibility of the household.

**You do NOT need to complete an application if:**

- You receive notification that your child(ren) are directly certified.
- You know your household does not qualify for meal benefits. (Please have money in your child's account on the first day of school.)

\*Applications received prior to July 1 will not be effective for the 2022-2023 school year.

Thank you,

BCSC

believe in **better**