



Office for Prekindergarten through Grade 12 Education
Child Nutrition Program Administration
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Portal.nysed.gov

To: School Food Service Directors/Managers

From: Paula Tyner-Doyle

Date: March 2015

Subject: SY 2015-2016 PLE Exemption

The availability of an exemption to the Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) for certain School Food Authorities (SFAs) in strong financial standing has been extended through School Year (SY) 2015-2016. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) initially provided an exemption in memorandum SP 34-2013, "PLE: Guidance for SY 2013-2014". Providing an extension for another year will allow FNS to continue to gather feedback and experience with the exemption in order to inform future policy considerations, including a final rule.

In SY 2015-2016, a SFA may be exempt from the PLE requirements if they can meet all of the "Factors for Consideration". The SFA must be certified as meeting meal pattern requirements. They must demonstrate the required increase to paid lunch prices or revenue contributions would cause them to exceed the 3-month operating balance limit. With all factors considered, a SFA must show that there are no other necessary or appropriate uses for its funds. Funds may be better used to operate or improve their program, to meet program requirements and goals, or to address deficiencies in program operations.

For 2015-2016 exemptions, all aspects of food service operations including meal costs, a la carte sales and compliance with future requirements (e.g. the Smart Snacks in Schools standards) will be evaluated when determining whether to grant the exemption.

The financial standing of a school food service account may change from year to year. SFAs that received an exemption in SY 2014-2015 must request a new exemption for SY 2015-2016. They must provide the proper documentation to be considered for the exemption.

To request a PLE exemption, please fill out the attached form below, completing all instructions to include submission of a letter, with supporting documentation, PLE Tool for 2015-2016, and a projected Balance Sheet for 2015-2016.

Paid Lunch Equity Exemption Request for SY 2015-2016

SFA Information

Name of SFA:	LEA Code:
Contact Person:	Contact Phone:
Address:	Contact Email:

Factors For Consideration

- 1) Has the SFA been certified as meeting the updated meal pattern requirements?
- 2) Is the SFA financially prepared to meet future meal pattern requirements (e.g. higher costs associated with sodium targets, higher fruit consumption at breakfast, and offering whole grain-rich products)?
- 3) What steps is the SFA taking to meet the new Smart Snacks in Schools standards for items sold from the school food service account?
- 4) What projected financial considerations does the SFA have associated with these changes? What non-federal revenues do you anticipate coming into the school food service account (e.g. state reimbursement, a la carte sales, and general fund contribution)?
- 5) Has the SFA considered expanding offerings of fresh fruit and vegetables and/or expanded the varieties offered?
- 6) Does the SFA use salad bars?
- 7) What menu improvements have been made to encourage students to eat healthier meals and make the program more appealing?
- 8) What efforts has the SFA made to increase student acceptance /increase participation?
- 9) Does the SFA have an updated Wellness Policy with the required elements?
- 10) Has the SFA corrected all deficiencies, implemented all corrective actions and complied with all fiscal action identified in the most recent Administrative Review Report?
- 11) Does the SFA utilize signage, food placement and other techniques effectively to promote the selection of reimbursable meals?
- 12) Has the SFA previously met all paid lunch equity requirements?
- 13) Is the SFA currently meeting all non-program food revenue requirements? Submit the completed [Nonprogram Food Revenue Tool](#) or alternate mechanism used by the SFA to determine the need for the SFA to increase its revenue from nonprogram foods.

14) Are all child nutrition staff vacancies filled?

15) Does the SFA have all necessary equipment for storing, preparing and serving healthy meals and competitive foods?

16) Has the SFA applied for federal grants to purchase equipment? If funding has not been received, will the SFA use its own funds to accomplish the proposed activities?

17) What has the SFA done to improve the certification process to increase access to the program (e.g. maximize use of direct certification including SNAP, Medicaid, homeless and foster children, etc.)?

Send or fax this form to the attention of: "PLE Team Member"

Fax: (518) 473 – 0018

Attach to the form, a letter of exemption request on SFA letterhead.

The letter should address each item above, with documentation to support each item.

Send a completed [Paid Lunch Equity Tool](#) or alternate means for paid lunch price calculation for

Send a [PROJECTED 2015-2016 Balance Sheet](#).

(NYSED use only)

School Food Program Specialist assigned to exemption request:

Date approval or denial letter sent to SFA:

3 month average expenditure calculation:

(Total Expenditures / Number of Months Operating x 3)

Excess cash available for PLE from SY 2014-2015:

(Year Ending Balance – 3 Month Average Expenditures)

Projected excess cash available if increase meal price for SY 2015-2016:

(SY 2015-16 Weighted Average Price Requirement with 10 cent cap x Average Number of Paid Lunches Served in SY 2014-2015)

Notes:

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