Office of P-20 Education Policy
Child Nutrition Program Administration
89 Washington Avenue, 375 EBA, Albany, NY 12234
(518) 473-8781   Fax (518) 473-0018
http://portal.nysed.gov/portal/page/portal/CNKC

To:	**School Food Service Directors/Managers**
From:	**Paula Tyner-Doyle, Coordinator**
Date:	**July 2018**
Subject:	**State-Wide Direct Certification Matching Process and Mandatory Reporting of SNAP/Medicaid Eligible Students**

Online Direct Certification Matching Process (DCMP)

To provide increased access to free meals to children entitled to free meal benefits and allow for more accurate reporting, better policy and decision making at the local, State and federal levels, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) has a state-level Direct Certification Matching Process (DCMP).

The DCMP provides users with access to direct certification (DC) data (e.g., SNAP and Medicaid lists) and to DC data that has been matched to New York State student records through the New York State Student Identification System (NYSSIS).

The NYSSIS system is already in-use by school personnel responsible for assigning unique IDs to students. NYSSIS uses a sophisticated matching engine to identify duplicate student records and discourage the creation of multiple student IDs for the same child. The engine is also being used behind the scenes to match DC records to student records maintained in the NYSSIS system. State Matching is a USDA best practice as it relieves School Food Authorities (SFAs) from having to match at the local level. Rather than DC data alone, the State Match system will deliver to SFAs student identifiers (e.g., a local ID and a NYSSIS ID) appended to DC data for easy import into food service management or other local student information systems.

The NYSSIS system and State Match capabilities are available on the New York State Education Department (NYSED) Web site, at the NYSED Application Business Portal (https://portal.nysed.gov/abp).

For new SFAs: Once your SFA has obtained a BEDS code and as applicable, SORIS code, a SEDDAS account will be set up for the SFA Superintendent or CEO and a notification email will be sent automatically. Oftentimes since the email is computer generated it can get caught in the spam folder, so it is important your CEO look there first and set the SEDDAS donotreply@nysed.gov and the seddas@nysed.gov email as a safe email address. The CEO can then access the direct certification data or delegate a person(s) within their organization to access this data.

All SFAs are required to complete the Direct Certification Matching Process.

This applies to all schools (public and nonpublic) that participate in the National School Lunch, School Breakfast, Summer Food Service, or Special Milk Programs. SFA's must conduct DCMP a **minimum of three times a year within the following timeframes: as close to the beginning of the school year as possible; by or near November 30 and by or near February 28.**

SFAs implementing the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) district-wide, must conduct the DCMP, **once annually**, in all years of participation. Provision 2 (P2) schools must conduct the DCMP process, **once annually**, in both the base and all non-base years.

> The following do NOT have to complete the DCMP process:
> - Jails
> - Residential Child Care Institutions with **NO** day students

The system processes DC data monthly; therefore, SFA's are encouraged as a best practice for DCMP to access the data more frequently to ensure that children entitled to free meal benefits receive them and to help SFAs planning to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).

DCMP users are required to certify that this information will remain confidential in compliance with the disclosure statement provided. The online DCMP helps reduce the waste from paper applications and the burden on low income households to return applications. The DCMP is intended to certify all eligible students receiving SNAP and certain Medicaid eligibles (determined by the Medicaid Administering Agency at or below 133 percent of the Federal poverty guidelines before the application of blocks, exceptions or disregards).

Families who have been electronically matched using the DCMP should be notified in writing and should be provided the opportunity to decline the benefits. Prototype letters in both English and Spanish have been included below for SFA use. These prototype letters are also included in the Free and Reduced-Price Income Eligibility and Policy Information.

Three Main Functions of the State-level DCMP

1. State Matches - provides access to direct certification data pre-matched to your students using the student's NYSSIS ID. Check here first for your eligible students.
2. Search - allows you to search direct certification lists (SNAP & Medicaid).
3. Bulk Search - allows you to perform a batch search of direct certification lists by uploading a file listing multiple student records.

Both Search and Bulk Search provide access to direct certification data and will often be used to find students that are believed to be directly certified but for the following reason are not found on your SFAs State Match screen.

- A student has recently transferred into your school and this new enrollment information has not been updated in NYSSIS. Until this information is transmitted to NYSED the student will be assigned to their former school and will only be displayed to food service staff from that school.
- The student does not have a NYSSIS ID. For public schools, all students must have a NYSSIS ID. However, for nonpublic schools that choose not to participate in NYSSIS, a NYSSIS ID may never be created for a student and in-turn SED will not have a student record to use for matching.

- The State Match system was not able to find a match between a DC and NYSSIS record. There are two common reasons why this might occur. This is because, the record, although it may exist on a DC list, has not been processed yet. Because the matching process takes place over days or sometimes weeks, SED can make DC records available for searching while in the background they are being matched to NYSSIS records.

What you need to know about conducting DCMP at the *beginning* of the school year

Please review the NYSSIS-Child Nutrition- Welcome page after logging in to the system; system updates/enhancements are posted here as well as links to guidance documents.

SFAs should conduct the DCMP prior to the distribution of the parent letter and application to reduce the burden of paperwork for both households and SFAs.

In addition to accessing your State Matches, SFAs should use the Search and/or Bulk Search features to try to match any new enrollments (i.e. new kindergarten students, transfers, students attending BOCES who are enrolled in other districts) to a DC record. Once the current school year student data is transmitted to NYSED, and students NYSSIS IDs are linked to your district, these new enrollments will then show up in our State Matches (usually around BEDS day reporting which is the beginning of October).

Determining Eligibility for Free School Meals/Milk

Students' free and reduced meal benefits can only be carried over from the previous school year for 30 operating days from the first day of school. To prevent eligible children from experiencing a lapse in accessing their meal benefits, SFAs are strongly encouraged to immediately direct families who have *not* been electronically matched using DCMP to apply for free or reduced-price school meals using one of the following methods:

1. Submit documentation from OTDA's "myBenefits" account verifying receipt of SNAP/TANF benefits. If the family submits this documentation, you should search the DCMP database using the case number search tool to certify the student(s) via the electronic DCMP.
2. Submit a copy of the SNAP notification (certification/re-certification) letter. If you receive this notification letter, you should search the DCMP database using one of the available tools, to certify the student(s) via the electronic DCMP.
3. Complete and submit the **current year** "Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals/Milk."

Please note that only Medicaid students found in the electronic DCMP and extension of eligibility to other household members of that student are eligible for free meals/milk. Medicaid is not a means-tested program, therefore, a Medicaid number written on an application for free meals/milk or any other form of Medicaid documentation submitted by a family does not make a student categorically eligible for free meals/milk. If you receive an application or another form of Medicaid identification, you can search the electronic DCMP for the student(s), but if not found, the family will have to submit additional documentation to certify the student for free or reduced-price meals/milk.

If you have directly certified a student through the online DCMP and the household submits any other eligibility documentation (# 1-3 above) you should disregard the other forms of eligibility documentation and the student should retain the DCMP match on the master list.

The effective date of eligibility for free school meals/milk is the date of the automated data matching file which first identifies the student as eligible for direct certification, rather than the date the LEA accesses and processes the automated data matching file into their local point of service (POS) system. The date of the file will be displayed in the "DC Eligibility Date" column of the match results. Further information regarding the requirements of using the flexibility in determining the effective date of eligibility can be found in the USDA Eligibility Manual.

Mandatory Reporting of SNAP and Medicaid Eligibles At or Before the Filing of September Claim for Reimbursement

NYSED is mandating SFAs to report the number of SNAP *plus extension* to other household members, and Medicaid *plus extension* to other household members, by service/claim site at the beginning of the school year. The Child Nutrition Management System (CNMS) has been updated to include this report on the SFA level page tied to the September claim for reimbursement. Please note that this mandatory report of SNAP and Medicaid DCMP eligible students, plus extension to other household members, is required only once per year, but schools who are conducting standard counting and claiming procedures must conduct DCMP at least three times per year.

The SNAP/Medicaid mandatory report is tied to the September claim for reimbursement but may be completed any time after completion of the Annual Renewal Process. DCMP assists both standard counting and claiming and Special Provision (Provision 2, CEP) schools to certify/identify free eligible students, thereby decreasing the administrative burden of application collection/approval. This mandatory report of SNAP and Medicaid eligible students in the current year is required for Child Nutrition Program federal reporting (FNS-742 Verification Summary, FNS-834 DC Rate Data Element Report, and CEP Notification List) and other NYSED education reporting purposes (BEDS, Title 1, State Aid, etc.).

Please click on the links below to access the instructions, checklist, and prototype letters for the direct certification matching process.

State Match System Instructions/Guidance Documents
State Match User Document
State Match User FAQ
How to Grant NYSSIS State Match Entitlements
Prototype Notification Letter - English (Editable Version)
Prototype Notification Letter - Spanish (Editable Version)

* Please note that because of on-going maintenance and enhancements to the DCMP system, screen shots and descriptions included in the instructions/guidance documents may be different from the current website; however, the overall functionality remains the same.

A "How To" tour within the Bulk Search feature is available to help you navigate through the upload process. "How To" tours will be developed soon for the Search and State Match features as well.

If you have any questions, please contact your Child Nutrition Program Representative at (518) 473-8781.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1)   mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2)   fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3)   email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.