

# LODI UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Rule 3553

## Business and Non-Instructional Operations

### Free and Reduced Price Meals

#### **Applications**

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the district's application form for free and reduced-price meals and related materials include the statements specified in Education Code 49557 and 7 CFR 245.5. The district's application packet shall include the notifications and information listed in Education Code 49557.2.

An application form for free or reduced price meals and related information shall be distributed to all parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year, and shall be available to students at all times during the school day.

In addition, the district application form for free and reduced price meals shall be available online. The online application form shall require completion of only those questions necessary for determining eligibility, contain clear instructions for families that are homeless or migrant, and comply with other requirements specified in Education Code 49557.

An application form and related information shall also be provided whenever a new student is enrolled.

At the beginning of each school year, the Superintendent or designee shall send a public release, containing the same information supplied to parents/guardians and including eligibility criteria, to local media. Copies of the public release shall be made available upon request to any interested person.

#### **Eligibility**

The Superintendent or designee shall determine students' eligibility for the free and reduced-price meals based on the criteria specified in 42 USC 1758 and 1773 and 7 CFR 245.1 – 245.13 and made available by the California Department of Education.

When authorized by law, participants in other federal or state programs may be directly certified for enrollment in the free and reduced-price meal program.

### **Verification of Eligibility**

Not later than November 15 of each year, the Superintendent or designee shall verify the eligibility of a sample of household applications approved for the school year in accordance with the sample sizes and procedures specified in 42 USC 1758 and 7 CFR 245.6a.

If the review indicates that the initial eligibility determination is correct, the Superintendent or designee shall verify the approved household application. If the review indicates that the initial eligibility determination is incorrect, the Superintendent or designee shall:

1. If the eligibility status changes from reduced price to free, make the increased benefits immediately available and notify the household of the change in benefits.
2. If the eligibility status changes from free to reduced price, first verify the application, then notify the household of the correct eligibility status, and, when required by law, send a notice of adverse action as described below.
3. If the eligibility status changes from free or reduced price to paid, send the household a notice of adverse action as described below.

If any household is to receive a reduction or termination of benefits as a result of verification activities, or if the household fails to cooperate with verification efforts, the Superintendent or designee shall reduce or terminate benefits, as applicable, and shall properly document and retain on file in the district the reasons for ineligibility. He/she also shall send a notice of adverse action to any household that is to receive a reduction or termination of benefits. Such notice shall be provided 10 days prior to the actual reduction or termination of benefits. The notice shall advise the household of:

1. The change and the reasons for the change;
2. The right to appeal, when the appeal must be filed to ensure continued benefits while awaiting a hearing and decision, and instructions on how to appeal; and
3. The right to reapply at any time during the school year.

### **Confidentiality/Release of Records**

All applications and records related to eligibility for the free or reduced price meal program shall be confidential except as provided by law.

The Superintendent authorizes designated employees to use individual records pertaining to student participation in the free or reduced price meal program for the purpose of desegregation of academic achievement data or for the identification of students who are eligible for alternative supports in a Title I program improvement school.

In using these records for such purpose, the Superintendent or designee shall ensure that:

1. No individual indicators of participation in the free or reduced price meal program shall be maintained in the permanent records of any students if not otherwise allowed by law;
2. Information regarding individual student participation in the free or reduced price meal program shall not be publicly released;
3. All other confidentiality provisions required by law are met;
4. Information collected regarding individual students certified to participate in the free or reduced price meal program shall be destroyed when no longer needed for its intended purpose.

### **Non-Discrimination Plan**

The District's plan for students receiving free or reduced price meals shall ensure the following:

1. The names of the students shall not be published, posted or announced in any manner, or used for any purpose other than the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, unless otherwise provided by law;
2. There shall be no overt identification of any of the students by the use of special tokens or tickets or by any other means;
3. The students shall not be required to work for their meals or milk;
4. The students shall not be required to use a separate dining area, go through a separate entrance, or consume their meals or milk at a different time;

When more than one lunch, breakfast or type of milk is offered, the students shall have the same choice of meals or milk as is available to those students who pay the full price.

**Prices**

The maximum price that shall be charged to eligible students for reduced-price meals shall be 40 cents for lunch and 30 cents for breakfast.

**Rule**

- approved: 07/11/68
- revised: 03/13/69
- revised: 02/09/72
- revised: 11/18/86
- revised: 09/02/97 (renumbered from 3542.31)
- revised: 04/07/98
- revised: 05/21/02 (renumbered from 3551)
- revised: 09/21/04
- revised: 05/03/05
- revised: 09/02/08
- revised: 02/07/12
- revised: 02/20/18