FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EDUCATION AND NUTRITION BENEFITS WITH THE MICHIGAN SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAM

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Our school offers healthy meals each day. For school year 2025-26, we are joining the Michigan School Meals program. All students can get one breakfast and one lunch free of charge each day at school until **September 30th**. Although no application is required to receive this free meal benefit, filling out the Education and Nutrition Benefits Application is still important! Your child(ren) may qualify for other benefits like reduced fees at school. Your application may also help the school qualify for education funds, discounts, and other programs.

1. WHO CAN GET ADDITIONAL EDUCATION BENEFITS?
   - All children in households receiving benefits from the **Food Assistance Program (FAP), Family Independence Program (FIP),** or **Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)** are eligible.
   - Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible.
   - Children participating in their school's Head Start program are eligible.
   - Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible.
   - Children may receive education benefits if your household's income is within the limits of the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines on this chart.

FEDERAL INCOME ELIGIBILITY CHART for School Year 2025-2026

Household Size	Annually	Monthly	Weekly
1	28,953	2,413	557
2	39,128	3,261	753
3	49,303	4,109	949
4	59,478	4,957	1,144
5	69,653	5,805	1,340
6	79,828	6,653	1,536
7	90,003	7,501	1,731
8	100,178	8,349	1,927
Each additional person:	10,175	848	196

2. HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILDREN QUALIFY AS HOMELESS, MIGRANT, OR RUNAWAY? Do the members of your household lack a permanent address? Are you staying together in a shelter, hotel, or other temporary housing arrangement? Does your family relocate on a seasonal basis? Are any children living with you who have chosen to leave their prior family or household? If you believe children in your household meet these descriptions and have not been told your children will get free meals, please call or e-mail **Patricia Harthun at PatriciaHarthun@wlcsd.org.**

3. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD? No. *Use one application for all students in your household.* We cannot approve an application that is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information. Return the completed application to: **Anne Merchant at AnneMerchant@wlcsd.org.**

4. SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE ALREADY APPROVED THROUGH DIRECT CERTIFICATION? No, but please read the letter you received carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification, contact **Anne Merchant at** AnneMerchant@wlcsd.org immediately.

5. CAN I APPLY ONLINE? Yes! You are encouraged to complete an online application instead of a paper application if you are able. The online application has the same requirements and will ask you for the same information as the paper application. **www.wlcsd.org, click on Family Access to login** and to

begin or to learn more about the online application process. Contact **Anne Merchant at** AnneMerchant@wlcsd.org if you have any questions about the online application.

6. MY CHILD'S APPLICATION WAS APPROVED LAST YEAR. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT A NEW ONE? Yes. Your child's application is only good for that school year and for the first few days of this school year, through **October 10, 2025.** You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year. If you do not send in a new application that is approved by the school or you have not been notified that your child is eligible, you will not receive additional education benefits and your school could lose out on additional funding.

7. I GET WIC. DO I NEED TO COMPLETE AND APPLICATION? Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for supplemental benefits. Please send in an application.

8. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED? Yes. We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report.

9. IF I DON'T QUALIFY NOW, MAY I APPLY LATER? Yes, you may apply at any time during the school year. For example, children with a parent or guardian who becomes unemployed may become eligible if the household income drops below the income limit.

10. WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH THE SCHOOL'S DECISION ABOUT MY APPLICATION? You should talk to school officials. You also may ask for a hearing by calling or writing to: **Michael Lonze at michaellonze@wlcsd.org**.

11. MAY I APPLY IF SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOULD IS NOT A U.S. CITIZEN? Yes. You, your children, or other household members do not have to be U.S. citizens to apply.

12. WHAT IF MY INCOME IS NOT ALWAYS THE SAME? List the amount that you normally receive. For example, if you normally make $1000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only made $900, put down that you made $1000 per month. If you normally get overtime, include it, but do not include it if you only work overtime occasionally. If you have lost a job or had your hours or wages reduced, use your current income.

13. WHAT IF SOME HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS HAVE NO INCOME TO REPORT? Household members may not receive some types of income we ask you to report on the application or may not receive income at all. Whenever this happens, please write a 0 in the field. However, if any income fields are left empty or blank, those will also be counted as zeroes. Please be careful when leaving income fields blank, as we will assume you meant to do so.

14. WE ARE IN THE MILITARY; DO WE REPORT OUR INCOME DIFFERENTLY? Your basic pay and cash bonuses must be reported as income. If you get any cash value allowances for off-base housing, food, or clothing, it must also be included as income. However, if your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance as income. Any additional combat pay resulting from deployment is also excluded from income.

15. WHAT IF THERE ISN'T ENOUGH SPACE ON THE APPLICATION FOR MY FAMILY? List any additional household members on a separate piece of paper and attach it to your application. Contact **Anne Merchant at** AnneMerchant@wlcsd.org to receive a second application.

16. MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR? To find out how to apply for **Food Assistance Program (FAP)** or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office https://newmibridges.michigan.gov/s/isd-partnershiplanding?language=en_US.

If you have other questions or need help, call **248-956-3081.**

Sincerely,

Julie Fortner