# Superintendent’s Memo #156-20


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: June 26, 2020

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

## SUBJECT: Community Eligibility Provision Application 2020-2021

This memorandum provides guidance to local educational agencies (LEAs) for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) in the 2020-2021 school year. CEP in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) allows LEAs with a high percentage of directly certified low-income students to provide meals at no charge to all students. School divisions that meet the eligibility criteria may apply to participate in CEP for one or more schools, groups of schools, or divisionwide. Participation in CEP is a local decision that requires an evaluation. The Virginia Department of Education, Office of School Nutrition Programs (VDOE-SNP) staff are available to assist with this evaluation.

All school divisions were required to submit a CEP Site Eligibility Report in the School Nutrition Program Web-based System (SNPWeb) by June 15, 2020. This data collection detailed the number of identified students directly certified as eligible to receive free meals and the school enrollment as of June 1, 2020. A school, group of schools, or school division must have an identified student percentage (ISP) of at least 40 percent in the CEP Site Eligibility Report to participate. The complete [Virginia CEP Report](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/nutrition/statistics/index.shtml) of divisions and schools eligible, near eligible, or currently participating in CEP is available on the VDOE website.

### CEP Requirements

To be eligible to participate in CEP, a school division, or one or more schools, or groups of schools in the division, must:

* participate in both the NSLP and SBP;
* have an ISP of 40 percent or greater as of June 1, 2020. The 40 percent threshold may be determined for an individual school, a group of schools, or for all schools collectively divisionwide. Grouping schools allows some schools to be below the 40 percent threshold as long as the aggregate percentage of the group is at least 40 percent;
* agree to provide both breakfast and lunch at no charge to all students and, if the federal reimbursement is not sufficient to cover the meal costs, the LEA agrees to cover any meal costs beyond the reimbursement rate; and,
* submit an application to participate in CEP by July 31, 2020, and receive approval from the VDOE.

### Evaluating CEP for All Eligible Schools

The number of directly certified students has increased significantly in 2020 due to implementation of a new statewide VDOE direct certification process and economic changes related to the COVID-19 pandemic. LEAs should evaluate CEP for all eligible schools to provide meals at no cost to all students, eliminate meal applications, eliminate meal counting by category, and eliminate unpaid meal debt. CEP participation could also help LEAs transition back to in-person meal service through simplified accountability procedures.

### CEP Application Process

To participate, the school division must submit the CEP Schedule in the 2020-2021 SNPWeb Application Packet for a school, group of schools, or the entire division. The CEP Schedule is due by July 31, for 2020 only, along with the other required components of the CEP application detailed in Attachment A to this memo. Early submission is encouraged.

The CEP Schedule and application packet will be reviewed by VDOE staff to ensure the school/group/division meets the minimum ISP, participates in both the NSLP and SBP, and has a record of administering USDA school nutrition programs in accordance with federal and state regulations, including maintaining an appropriate and timely financial reporting system.

### Considerations for other Programs Using Individual Student Free and Reduced Eligibility

The validated ISP will be used for CEP and for other programs for which individual student free and reduced eligibility was previously used as an indicator of socioeconomic status. [Superintendent’s Memorandum 104-14](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2014/104-14.shtml) addresses the topic of economically disadvantaged student identification for accountability purposes in schools using CEP.

To provide required economically disadvantaged information for individual students, CEP participating LEAs must continue to conduct direct certification for all enrolled eligible students, including those attending CEP schools. Students enrolled in CEP schools who are directly certified each year should be flagged as economically disadvantaged in the division’s student information system, even though direct certification status will not be used by the school nutrition program to claim meals for individual students in CEP schools.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact your VDOE regional SNP specialist, or Dr. Sandy Curwood, RDN, Director, Office of School Nutrition Programs, at (804) 371-2339 or sandra.curwood@doe.virginia.gov.

JFL/SCC/LAF/tc

### Attachments

1. [CEP Application Requirements](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2020/156-20a.docx)
2. [Instructions for the CEP Schedule in SNPWeb 2020-2021](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2020/156-20b.docx)
3. [CEP Addendum to the Agreement and Instructions](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2020/156-20c.docx)
4. [Instructions for Uploading a File to the SSWS Dropbox](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2020/156-20d.docx)