




STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Sponsors of the National School Lunch Program

FROM: John D. Frassinelli, Division Director
School Health, Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education 

DATE: August 4, 2021

SUBJECT: Operational Memorandum No. 07-21
Paid Lunch Equity (PLE): Guidance for School Year 2021-22

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) memorandum [SP 11-2021](#), [CACFP 10-2021](#) and [SFSP 06-2021](#), *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021: Effect on Child Nutrition Programs-REVISED*, addresses the Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) requirements for school year (SY) 2021-22. For SY 2021-22, local educational agencies (LEAs) are exempt from the PLE pricing requirements found at [7 CFR 210.14\(e\)](#), if they: 1) elect to participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) for SY 2021-22; and 2) had a positive or zero balance in their nonprofit school food service account as of December 31, 2020.

Important: LEAs operating only the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) during SY 2021-22 are not required to follow PLE requirements for SY 2021-22, per [Child Nutrition Waiver #97: Nationwide Waiver to Provide Flexibility for School Meal Programs' Administrative Reviews of School Food Authorities Operating Only the Seamless Summer Option \(SSO\) in School Year \(SY\) 2021-2022](#).

For SY 2021-22, LEAs participating in the NSLP that (on a weighted average) charged less than the target weighted average price of **\$3.18** for paid lunches in SY 2020-21, are required to adjust their weighted average lunch price or add *non-Federal funds to the non-profit school food service account*. However, if the LEA participating in the NSLP for SY 2021-22 has a positive or zero balance in its nonprofit school food service account as of December 31, 2020, the USDA allows the LEA the discretion to complete the necessary steps to determine their target SY 2021-22 paid lunch price, and the LEA may be exempt from the PLE requirements.

To be exempted, LEAs participating in the NSLP (and not the SSO) for SY 2021-22 must submit an exemption request to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) no later than **September 1, 2021**. If the LEA participating in the NSLP has a positive balance in the nonprofit school food service account and does *not* request an exemption by this date, the LEA will be required to establish prices for paid lunches according to the PLE provisions. This includes completing the [SY 2021-22 PLE tool](#). **Note:** When completing the PLE tool for SY 2021-22, LEAs that do not have pricing/sales data from October 2020 may use October 2019 pricing/sales data. The exemption request must be signed by one of the two authorized signers and must include written assurances that the LEA had a positive or zero balance in the nonprofit school

food service account as of **December 31, 2020**. Email the exemption request to Teri Dandeneau at teri.dandeneau@ct.gov. **Note:** The CSDE may request to review the LEA's documentation to support the exemption.

Note: If the documented weighted average student lunch price was \$3.18 or greater for SY 2020-21, the LEA is **not** required to complete the PLE tool or request an exemption for SY 2021-22.

The chart below provides an overview of the PLE requirements.

Determining if a PLE Exemption is Required for Sponsors <i>Participating in the NSLP Only</i>				
Documented October 2020 weighted lunch price from SY 2020-21	Positive or zero balance in non-profit school food service account as of December 31, 2020	Negative balance in non-profit school food service account as of December 31, 2020	Is completion of PLE required?	Is PLE exemption request to the CSDE required?
≥ \$3.18	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No , but recommended	No
< \$3.18 and the LEA does not want to increase the price of paid lunches for SY 2021-22	Yes	No	No , but recommended	Yes
< \$3.18 and the LEA does want to increase the price of paid lunches for SY 2021-22	Yes	No	Yes , paid lunch prices will be adjusted accordingly	No
< \$3.18	No	Yes	Yes , paid lunch prices will be adjusted accordingly	No

Questions may be directed to your [CSDE school nutrition consultant](#).

JDF:tdd

Important: This is a numbered Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) operational memorandum that contains important program information. Please read carefully and retain for future reference. All CSDE operational memoranda are posted on the CSDE's [Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.