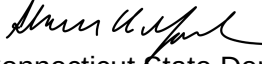




STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Sponsors of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Programs

FROM: Shannon K. Yearwood, Bureau Chief 
Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, Connecticut State Department of Education

DATE: August 10, 2026

SUBJECT: Operational Memorandum No. 13-26
Connecticut School Meals: Readiness in School Everyday (RISE) for school year (SY) 2026-27
[Notice of Intent and Attestation Statement](#) Due August 24, 2026

Pursuant to Public Act No. 26-68 (Connecticut State Budget fiscal year (SFY 2026-27), state funds have been allocated to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) for school year (SY) 2026-27 to be able to provide: 1) breakfast meals at no cost to all students in schools that participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) School Breakfast Program (SBP) and do not operate the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP); and 2) lunch meals at no cost to students eligible for reduced-price meals in schools that participate in the USDA National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and do not operate the CEP. For purposes of this program, these funds will be referred to as school meals for Readiness in School Everyday (RISE) funds.

All schools participating in the USDA SBP and NSLP that do not operate CEP must continue to make individual student eligibility determinations (free, reduced-price, or paid) in accordance with federal requirements. Although RISE funds allow eligible students to receive breakfast and reduced-price lunch meals at no cost, accurate eligibility determinations remain essential to ensure proper federal reimbursement and precise calculation of RISE funds payments.

The RISE funds will reimburse eligible local education authorities (LEAs), residential child care institutions (RCCIs) with day students, endowed academies, and private nonprofit schools operating as their own sponsor or operating under an interschool agreement with an NSLP sponsor as indicated below.

- Paid breakfasts will be reimbursed based on the difference between the federal paid rate for breakfast and the federal free rate for breakfast.
- Reduced-price breakfasts will be reimbursed based on the rate of 30 cents per breakfast.
- Reduced-price lunches will be reimbursed based on the rate of 40 cents per lunch.

Additionally, if a school qualifies for "[severe need reimbursement](#)," payments will reflect the LEA's federal severe need eligibility for lunch and/or breakfast reimbursement levels as applicable.

Eligible Schools

For purposes of this state funding, schools approved to participate in the USDA NSLP and/or the SBP and not operating the CEP are eligible to receive RISE funds for their approved sites, including residential child care institutions (RCCIs) with day students, endowed academies, and private nonprofit schools operating as their own sponsor or operating under an interschool agreement with an NSLP sponsor.

Payments

After processing monthly claims for federal reimbursement, the CSDE will calculate each LEA's RISE funds reimbursement based on eligible meals claimed and issue payments through the existing process used for monthly federal reimbursement transmittals.

LEAs must submit claims within the 30-day claiming window to receive RISE funds reimbursement through the regular monthly payment process.

Claims submitted after the 30-day claiming window and within the allowable 60-day claiming window will be processed for RISE funds reimbursement; however, payment for these claims will be issued as a single lump-sum payment following the conclusion of SY 2026-27. Approved one-time exceptions will also be issued in the lump-sum payment.

The Disbursement of Funds (DOF) module in the Child Nutrition Programs Online Application and Claiming System (CNP System) will allow each participating LEA to view their RISE funds reimbursement payments.

Example of RISE funds payment

ABC School District has six sites that will be operating the SBP and NSLP in SY 2026-27 and three additional sites that are operating the CEP in SY 2026-27 and are not eligible to receive RISE funds.

The ABC School District submits their September monthly claim for reimbursement in accordance with the monthly claiming schedule for all sites. The chart below shows the RISE funds reimbursement the CSDE will provide to ABC School District for September based on the number of reimbursable breakfast meals claimed in the reduced-price and paid eligibility categories and the number of reimbursable reduced-price lunch meals claimed at the six eligible sites.

Breakfast

Breakfast	Federal per meal reimbursement regular rate for breakfast (SY 2026-27)	RISE funds breakfast reimbursement rate	Number of breakfast meals served in September	RISE funds reimbursement per breakfast meal
Free	\$2.54	\$0.00	800	\$0.00
Reduced-price	\$2.24	\$0.30	125	\$37.50
Paid	\$.42	\$2.12	350	\$742.00

Total breakfast reimbursement:

\$779.50

Lunch

Lunch meal category	Federal per meal reimbursement regular rate for lunch (SY 2026-27)	RISE funds lunch reimbursement rate	Number of lunch meals served in September	RISE funds reimbursement per lunch meal
Free	\$4.76	\$0.00	2,750	\$0.00
Reduced-price	\$4.36	\$0.40	800	\$320.00
Paid	\$0.45	N/A	N/A	\$0.00

Total lunch reimbursement:

\$320.00

September total RISE funds lunch reimbursement \$320.00

September total RISE funds breakfast reimbursement \$779.50

Total: \$1,099.50

Use of Funds

RISE funds are intended to supplement federal reimbursement payments for LEAs providing meals at no cost as described in this memorandum. RISE funds may only be used by school food authorities (SFAs) to provide free breakfast meals to all students and free lunch meals that meet all applicable USDA SBP and NSLP requirements to those students with an approved reduced-price meal eligibility status under their sponsor agreement. RISE funds cannot be used at schools that do not participate in the NSLP/SBP or in schools operating CEP.

CSDE Monitoring

The CSDE will monitor each LEA's RISE funds reimbursement to ensure compliance with the RISE funds requirements pursuant to 2 CFR 200.332, and consistent with other school nutrition program funds, through existing oversight measures used in the Administrative Review process for school nutrition programs. RISE funds may be subject to future external audit activity under standard auditing practices.

Notice of Intent and Attestation Due August 24, 2026

All eligible NSLP sponsors must complete the notice of intent attesting to whether the SFA will or will not agree to accepting RISE funds. If the SFA agrees to accepting RISE funds, the SFA agrees to serve all SBP meals at no cost and eliminate the household share for all reduced-price lunch meals for the duration of SY 2026-27 in all applicable schools under their sponsor agreement.

The [CSDE RISE Funds Notice of Intent and Attestation](#) must be completed no later than **August 24, 2026**.

An SFA's decision to opt in to the RISE funds applies to all sites included under the SFA's agreement that are approved to operate the NSLP and/or the SBP during SY 2026-27. An SFA may not opt in for some LEAs or schools under its agreement and opt out for others.

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

SKY:tdd

Attachments: (1)

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.

The Connecticut State Department of Education is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer.