TO: Sponsors of the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program

FROM: Shannon K. Yearwood, Bureau Chief
Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs

DATE: March 27, 2023

SUBJECT: **Operational Memorandum No. 09-23**
Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Annual Notification Requirement for all Local
Educational Agencies (LEAs) Participating in the National School Lunch Program
(NSLP) and/or the School Breakfast Program (SBP)
Due April 7, 2023

This memo provides guidance to school food authorities (SFAs) participating in the NSLP and/or SBP
to fulfill federal regulatory requirements governing the collection of timely, school-specific data to
inform the development of the school year (SY) 2023-24 CEP eligibility lists. This annual notification
requirement does **not** apply to residential child care institutions (RCCIs) or sponsors of the Special
Milk Program.

Federal Requirements

The National School Lunch Act (NSLA) requires the Connecticut State Department of Education
(CSDE) to annually notify LEAs of **districtwide** eligibility for CEP participation [42 U.S.C.
1759a(a)(1)(F)(x)(II)]. All LEAs (regardless of participation or intent to participate in the CEP) must
submit **school-level** CEP eligibility data to the CSDE [42 U.S.C. 1759a(a)(1)(F)(x)(III)]. Last year, as
LEAs transitioned from COVID operations to standard program operations, the U.S Department of
Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) offered statewide waivers for CEP deadlines
to allow state agencies and LEAs sufficient time to collect the necessary data. However, for SY 2022-
23, CEP waivers do not apply, and state agencies and LEAs are expected to meet the regulatory CEP
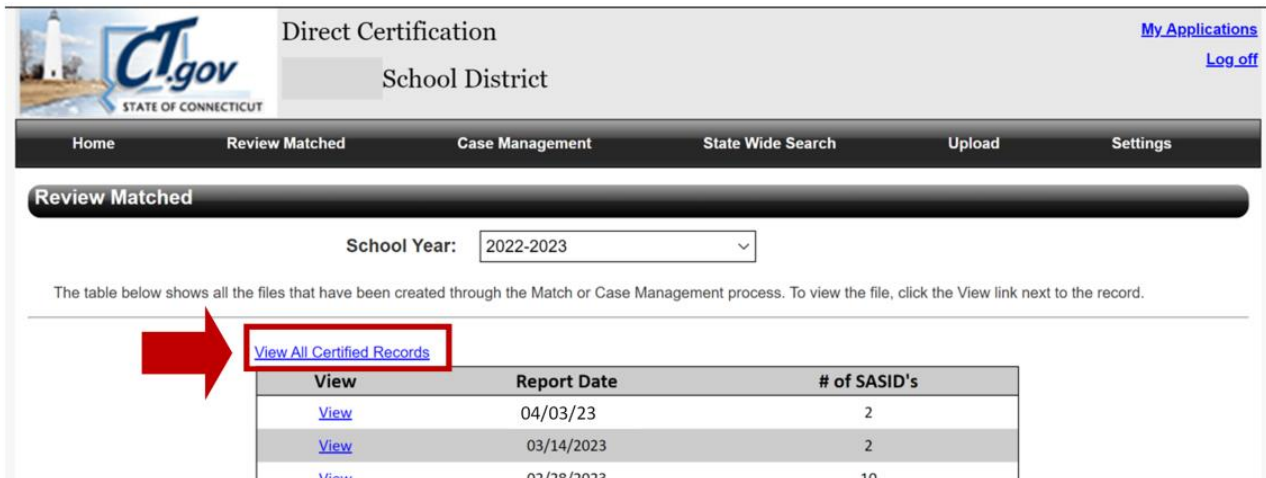reporting deadlines.

Reporting Process

All public and private SFAs of the NSLP and SBP (on behalf of the LEA) must enter into the CSDE's
Online Application and Claiming System (CNP System) the three data elements (refer to page 2) **by
close of business on April 7, 2023, even if they do not currently participate or intend to
participate in the CEP.** These data elements are regulatory requirements of the NSLA and serve as a
notice of CEP eligibility and near eligibility to LEAs and schools.

Required Data Elements

All primary source data documents used to support the numbers entered into the CNP System must be maintained on file by the LEA and saved according to the federal regulations pertaining to records retention for the CEP. **Note:** Only students who have access to the NSLP and/or SBP should be included in the total number of directly certified students and total student enrollment. LEAs should make arrangements to collect required data from recipient sites if there is an interschool agreement in place. Private schools should also save an enrollment file in case that school will be participating in the CEP. **Supporting documents do not need to be uploaded or submitted to the CSDE at this time.**

Per regulations, SFAs are required to enter the three required data elements into the CNP System, specifically from **April 1, 2023,** for each school that operates the NSLP or SBP.

Note: Because April 1 is a Saturday, the Direct Certification Web Application date and the enrollment data date used will be **April 3, 2023**. The data must reflect all enrolled students directly certified in SY 2022-23, up through and including **April 3, 2023**. Therefore, SFAs must be sure to click on "View All Certified Records" (see below) when accessing the CSDE's direct certification list.

For the specified date, SFAs must determine the three required CEP data elements listed below.

1. The total number of directly certified students found on the CSDE's direct certification list, by school (including those with extended eligibility), which can be accessed from the CSDE's Direct Certification Web Application.

2. The total number of students, by school, who are directly certified manually or outside of the CSDE's direct certification list, e.g., homeless, runaway, some Head Start, and foster students. Refer to the USDA's *Eligibility Manual for School Meals* for acceptable documentation.

3. The total enrollment from the LEA's master enrollment file provided by the LEA's central office Student Information System. **Note:** Do **not** enter data from the food service point-of-sale data system.

Required Procedure for Developing the LEA's Master Enrollment File

The LEA's total enrollment (master file) from April 3, 2023, must be obtained only from the LEA's central office Student Information System, and saved as an Excel document. The file must be maintained according to the federal regulations pertaining to records retention for the CEP.

The file must contain the following:
- date that the data pertains to;
- school name;
- school facility code (assigned by the state Public School Information System (PSIS));
- student last name;
- student first name;
- student date of birth;
- student grade; and
- state assigned student identifier (SASID) number for students in public schools.

For information on how to access the CNP System to enter notification data, please refer to the CSDE's document, *Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Data Collection Guidance for School-level Eligibility Information*.

The table on page 4 summarizes the CEP notification due dates for NSLP and SBP public and private school sponsors.

Summary of CEP Notification Dates		
Date	**Action required**	**Comments**
On April 3, 2023	LEAs access the CEP data from the CSDE's direct certification list on the CSDE's Direct Certification Web Application.	The CSDE and the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) typically complete the matching process weekly. Wednesday is the best day to access the complete data.
By April 7, 2023	All LEAs participating in the NSLP and/or SBP (except RCCIs) report the required notification data (see "Data Elements" on page 2) in the CNP System.	Insert only school year 2022-23 data as of April 3, 2023.
By April 15, 2023	The CSDE reports CEP districtwide and school-level eligibility or near-eligibility status to LEAs to determine if a CEP application may be submitted to the CSDE.	LEAs are eligible to participate in the CEP if the ISP for the entire district, groups of schools, or individual schools meets or exceeds 40 percent.
By May 1, 2023	The CSDE posts the LEA and school-level CEP Notification lists on the CSDE's CEP website.	

Information regarding the CEP application process for SY 2023-24 will be issued later. Questions may be directed to your CSDE school nutrition team member.

SKY:saa

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.