

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 25, 2021

**Attendees/Presenters: Monica Pacheco (presenter), Sean Fogarty, Caroline Cooke, Dan Giacomi, DSS (presenter), Teri Dandeneau (presenter), Fionnuala Brown (presenter), Susan Alston, Shannon Yearwood (presenter), Michelle Rosado (hostess)**

0:05

Speaker 1 - Hi everyone, and thank you so much for joining us for our School Lunch Tray Table Talk on this beautiful Thursday afternoon. I do hope all of you do have a chance to go outside and enjoy this beautiful spring weather today.

0:16

I am pleased to be joined by my team and one of our very close state partners over at the Department of Social Services.

0:23

And um we are going to talk with you a little bit, or work a lot around, what was in the School Lunch Tray um for this past Wednesday and we're going to take a deeper dive.

0:33

And keep in mind that when you join these webinars, you can certainly ask us questions that pertain to the School Lunch Tray, or if you have questions that are just on your mind, and you want to ask us, you can certainly submit those. We will answer them as we can. We also treat this as an office hours of sort. So certainly submit whatever is on your mind, let us know what you're thinking, that's going to help us make sure that we have the resources you need, ready and available.

0:56

So um, we are gonna dive right in and I'd just add, as I said, want to give a shout out to our partner Dan Giacomi over at the Department of Social Services, and we are going to walk you through the Pandemic EBT which we have talked a few times about during the School Lunch Trays, but we're gonna really give you a little bit of a lay of the land. So you feel prepared when these benefits rollout.

1:19

So we'll get to that in a few minutes, but before we have a few updates around USDA Foods, I'm going to hand it over to Monica.

1:27

Speaker 2 - Okay, thanks a lot Shannon. Good afternoon everybody. I have just two quick updates; uh the first being a reminder that you should be thinking about notifying your vendors about menu changes as students are returning back to school.

1:41

Um we're hearing more and more about the resuming of in person classes and more of the students coming back into the building, which is wonderful, um but think ahead and realize you may be making menu changes, and certainly your meal count numbers will change and you need to give your vendors advance. Notice certainly for your USDA Foods for your net off invoice for the processed items are stocked on a par level just like commercial product as far as based on usage.

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2:09

And so you need to make sure you're letting your distributor know that those numbers may change and as best you can, what items and by how much you can. But this also applies to your commercial products, your grocery, your bread, milk, commercial produce.

2:26

The vendors are used to certain levels of usage right now and certainly if you're making menu changes and anticipating changes in your meal counts as much notice as possible will be very much appreciated by them and will also help prevent any of those shortcut falls um when you start ordering new items or additional items and they can be prepared for that.

2:46

And then the other item I want to go over was our cheese and now we're dealing with are Shredded White Cheddar. The material code is 100002, that there should be 1 more 0, and the number on the School Lunch Tray. And basically, this is the cheese that has now um shelf life, that needs to have it used or frozen by April 20th. So, we're asking that you take a close look at your allocations.

3:09

And if you're seeing any of that product or still listed, that you get orders and to have it out of HPC as soon as possible with the last date being Friday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, and that's to give you enough time to either use and or freeze, and, and properly handle this. If you find that you are not able to use this product, and you realize you're not going to be able to use it in time store it as well, please make sure you're filling out a request to donate form. The link is right in the School Lunch Tray. It's also on our food distribution webpage but we do need those as soon as possible, which means as by actually Friday tomorrow. So please take a moment to take a quick look at that. And if you determine there's product that you're not gonna be able to use the Shredded White Cheddar, please fill out that form and submit it by tomorrow. So that we can make other plans for it.

3:58

And actually, Shannon, that's it for me. So I'm going to pass it on back to you.

4:05

Speaker 1 - Thanks very much, Monica.

4:06

I appreciate all the reminders and definitely things will change as we start to get back to school more, so um great advice.

4:15

Alright, so I'm going to ask Dan to come back on and join me and then Fionnuala do you mind going over to our PowerPoint, please? Thank you.

4:28

So, we know that a lot of you um are very familiar with the pandemic electronic benefits transfer from the first round that we were able to get out last fall. And you were instrumental and us being able to get those benefits out to eligible children.

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4:43

So, uh my partner here Dan and I are gonna go through the basics around P-BET and a little bit around the backgrounds that you experienced last year, or last fall, and then what it's gonna look like as these benefits are going to be out very shortly.

4:59

So we'll there a few differences and how it operated last time. So we think it's important for you to have a good understanding of how that transpired and where, um where the changes occur so that you can be prepared when you start to hear from your household, but if you can go to the next slide Fionnuala please?

5:18

So you may or may not be aware that pandemic P-EBT we're gonna call it P-EBT the 1.0 so the original version was operating during the 19-20 school year and it was a response from the Families first Corona Virus Response Act of 2020, or FFCRA, as we are calling it. It's an emergency nutrition benefit that is basically snap benefits, which is Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or formerly known as food stamps.

5:45

But it works a little bit differently. But the funds are going to be used the same stuff. We'll get into that a little bit, too.

5:52

But if the first round was allowed for, it really ties eligibility to children who would receive a free or reduced price meal, if they, if, through the school lunch program, if not for their school closure. And the school had to be closed for at least five consecutive days.

6:09

As all of you know, our Governor last year, now, a year and a week ago, canceled all classes on March 16th, so effectively shutting down our schools from March 17th forward, which allowed the state to be able to actually come up with one uniform benefit across all eligible households to be able to issue that out.

6:28

And that benefit was a value of one, school breakfast, at the free rate, and one school lunch at the free, rate.

6:36

And that ends up, that ended up between being a benefit level of \$364.80 per student.

6:45

So, it was a really great program. A lot of you know that really supported your households out there to be able to purchase food and support local economy and make sure that kids to make an, excuse me, that households can make ends meet, and that kids have the food, that they needed both from you and from the supplemental Program.

7:04

So we can go to the next slide, and Dan if you want to take over for P-BET 2.0?

7:14

Speaker 3 - Yes, thanks, Shannon, and good afternoon, everyone.

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7:17

As Shannon mentioned, uh you know, P-EBT 1.0 was a fantastic program and we at the Department of Social Services were excited, excited, and uh, joy to be able to partner with the Department of Education and you all on that program. As a result of that program, we we're able to bring into the State of Connecticut, approximately \$108 million worth of additional SNAP benefits, and as, as I'm sure you're aware, those benefits go uh by and large directly back into the Connecticut economy through local grocers, farmers markets, supermarkets corner stores in the lake.

7:58

So, Shannon did mention a little bit about the P-EBT 1.0 plan for the 2019 and 2020 year. We're now going to talk a little bit about P-EBT too, for the 2020-2021 School year.

8:10

Um, as a result of a number of acts such as the Continuing Appropriations Act and other Extensions Act and Consolidated Appropriations Act, FFCRA was extended for an additional school year.

8:25

It has, since I believe been extended even past the additional school year to the point of whenever there is a pandemic in public health emergency enacted that we would be able to run this program. But we're not trying to get too far ahead of ourselves. We're trying to take it one step at a time.

8:41

So, in response to the 2020-2021 school year, some other things came into account realizing that not all schools are now closed as they were previously.

8:53

Um realizing that many schools are operating in different remote type models, whether it be a hybrid model, um some schools are still operating fully remote, and others being back to school permanently, but having individuals who are learning remotely for all over part of the school year.

9:12

It allowed the state to make some simplifying assumptions as to the learning mode and program itself. So we'll get into that in a little bit about what simplifying assumptions we chose for P-EBT 2.0 includes children who would receive free or reduced price meals, as Shannon said, through the National School Lunch program, if not for school closure. But then also, as I kind of mentioned, added reduced hours or attendance. It's still set forth that the school had to have these closures or reduced hours or attendance for at least five consecutive days.

9:46

But what it allowed us to do is say, once the school met the five consecutive day mark, any student that then had to learn remotely for part of her all of a month, due to the public health emergency, would qualify for P-EBT benefits.

10:02

Um it did also include a provision regarding children in childcare facilities or cover childcare facilities.

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10:08

And then kind of quantified that, that all children under the age of six are considered enrolled, we're not going to talk too much about that today. We'll go over it briefly. That is something that will be coming within the next few months, um and really pertains more to us a specialized subset of children here in the state, which is why we didn't want to go into too much detail about it, but thought it was important for you all to be able to hear a little bit about the bare bones of it.

10:33

Um next slide, please.

10:45

Speaker 1 – Alright, my turn! So, how, how is eligibility being determined for children in school? So, one of the first things, as Dan mentioned, is we have to make sure that the schools, child schools participate in national School Lunch program.

10:58

But, as you know, a lot of you out there are have opted into the nationwide waivers, allowing you to operate either, either the Summer Food Service Program, or the Seamless Summer Option of the National School Lunch Program.

11:10

So, the way that we are able to determine this through the simplifying assumptions um on whether or not we can consider that child to have, have participation in a school participating in school lunch, if you had, if you are as a sponsor, had a permanent agreement on file with us.

11:27

Um, to be it, sorry, my computer just went weird for a second.

11:33

If you had a permit if you had an NSLP permanent agreement with the Department of Education prior to operating the Summer Meals Program.

11:41

So, um, let us know if you have questions around that, and there's, there are the majority of school districts do in our state participate in National School Lunch Program.

11:52

So if you received um if your children receive pandemic EBT, 1.0 then it's likely your school may qualify as participating in National School Lunch Program.

12:04

That children may not, may not receive benefits this time, and we're going to go through that in a minute.

12:09

Then we look at that five consecutive days and, and what the good thing is, is that after that first mark of five consecutive days, we don't have to redetermine a five consecutive day mark each month.

12:21

Once that threshold has been met, it's met, and we can look at it, at that, school and student level, eligibility um through the remainder of operating program.

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12:31

So the, so then the next thing that we need to look at is, would those kids have received a meal at free or reduced price if there's, if they were attending their school. And so, the way that we're looking at that is through direct certification.

12:45

So, all of you know a lot about direct certification and that really is tied to SNAP, TSA, um and HUSKY A, which is our Medicaid program for. Children who are enrolled and HUSKY A, with incomes that are at 185%, or below the federal poverty threshold.

13:03

It includes children who are directly certified as foster, Homeless, runaway, and some head start facilities do qualify.

13:11

Um it's also through the free and reduced price school meals applications. I want to pause here for a second, because I know a lot of you really pushed hard, despite the fact that you're operating this summer programs, and it's very tough to get those income eligibility applications in right now and explain this to families and why it's so important.

13:29

Um and we know that we've, we have, how do you update our public school information system with the information the student's eligibility.

13:37

These will be coming back out to school districts and the next few months, and allowing another opportunity to be able to update addresses, you can update that free reduced status at any point in time with your PSIS Coordinator, in your district, and that's, and we'll use that, but it will use that set of data to also be able to issue additional benefits.

13:58

So, don't worry if you had to worry too much. If you haven't received too many free and reduced price applications, but you know that there's households in your district who are eligible, you still have some time to be able to communicate this to households, and let them know that if they submit those applications sooner than later, it's likely that they would be measured in this criteria for eligibility.

14:21

So, and then it's P-EBT is also available for all children enrolled in the school group of schools or district participating in the Community Eligibility Provision, as all of those meals would be served, typically, through the National School Lunch Program, at no cost.

14:38

So, we can go to the next slide.

14:43

So, I'll run through this one quick too answer that. So, as I mentioned before, that, just because children received 1.0 P-EBT in the first round at one point out, it does not mean that they're necessarily going to receive 2.0.

14:59

Can guess, you will probably get some questions about this at the district level.

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15:03

You'll have, you will have households that students may no longer be eligible for free or reduced price school meal if their income, if they were determined eligible through those income eligibility applications, and they haven't submitted again for this year. That may impact their ability to be eligible for 2.0. So, this is another really good reason to try and get those applications.

15:25

Um, some of the students who received P-EBT benefits moved out of state, some of them have graduated high school since the first round.

15:34

Um, some may have transferred, or their families may have moved to a district that where they are newly enrolled at a school that isn't CEP, and they were participating in CEP.

15:44

Before, or for those children who have been learning entirely at school in person for the whole school year, they would also not be eligible. The great news is that they're benefiting from the awesome programs.

15:58

You are all operating so we know that if they're in school, they are accessing very nutritious and delicious. Thank you for what you're doing that's going to complement that.

16:08

Dan, if you want to take that one.

16:11

Speaker 3 – Yeah, absolutely. So, as Shannon mentioned, you know, there's the first step of the process and P-EBT is determining student eligibility one student eligibility is determined.

16:22

We then had to also, as part of our plan, determine what benefit amount or what the level of benefits we will be providing to students the school year, as Shannon mentioned previously.

16:34

It was a little bit easier to be able to do it for P-EBT 1.0 because all the schools were closed and we're able to calculate the benefit based upon the value of one free lunch, one free breakfast and then multiply it by the number of days that the schools were closed in this scenario and this go around PVT to the auto. We had to come up with a different process, because of the fact that, as I said, previously, children are learning in different models. Thankfully, we were still able to use the value of one free meal, one free lunch and one free breakfast. And also include the value, I believe, one free afterschool snack.

17:16

Thanks to the President's Executive Order recently signed from there, we had to look at the attendance data provided by schools to see what students are, what exactly, how many days, exactly, I should say, students are learning remotely during a month.

17:33

Once we had that data, the wonderful staff at the Department of Education was able to calculate that based upon three criteria, and what we did once we had the three criteria that I'm about to go

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over, is tied to three benefit amounts. So the criteria that we came up with that we thought would be most equitable for the students here in Connecticut, and the value of the benefits that tied to it, is, look at those students first that are learning remotely for the entire month.

18:03

Second, look at those students that were learning remotely for more than the half of the month, but not the entire month.

18:11

And then look at those students third that are learning remotely for up to half of the month.

18:17

Um once we're able to do that and as you see, you know, on there, we kind of have the value of each of them.

18:23

Though the value you see on the screen is not uh reminiscent of what we're using is just an example of how the data was calculated in the different areas. We're able to then tie it, as I said, two days out, within a month and give a benefit level, and we'll go over that, I believe, in the next slide.

18:40

If you want to advance the slide, please.

18:45

So, I went over this a little bit, as well regarding the, the President's Executive Order, The value of the benefits are now calculated rather than the 570 that you saw previously, at \$6.82 per day.

18:59

And the monthly benefit levels, as I said, also as well, is students who attended school remotely for the entire month. The way we calculated.

19:07

That was that we determine that, based on a normal school year of 180 days, over the length of the program that we're going to be operating for the school year, which is going to run from September to June, it would calculate to 18 days per month that the students would be learning in school.

19:25

So, if they were learning remotely for the entire month, you would take that 18, multiply it by the \$6.82 and that's how we came up with the \$122.76.

19:36

For the other two groups, which we're calling mostly remote and Hybrid, what we didn't look at is the average number of days that those children are learning remotely in the month.

19:47

Once we came up with those days, which I believe are 14 and 5, though, don't hold me to that, because I'd been so steeped in other pieces of P-EBT that I forget the exact numbers. But, I believe 14 and 5, we were able to calculate the \$8.66 and \$34.10 benefits for those two groupings.



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20:07

So now we have the benefit level, we have the way of calculating eligibility. We have the monthly benefits that we're giving. You know, we're going to talk a little bit about when and how the children will receive the P-EBT benefits. If you want to go to the next slide, please.

20:23

Shan?

20:26

Speaker 1 - If I can find my mute button, I will unmute myself. So the period of time that's covered for the first time that folks are gonna see benefits is just in a two weeks, I think.

20:38

We're rolling out in April, so those children who have already an existing parts are those who are household participate. And Snap or the Temporary Family Assistance Program and those benefits are going to be added on in April to the existing EBT card that they have for those programs.

20:58

The benefit amounts are going to cover the time period from September to January and so that each house is going to look very different and the student, monthly levels might also look different, because, as Dan was talking about, we have to look at the monthly learning mode per child and school, in order to look at how, how to determine the benefit levels for each child.

21:23

So um we decided that we're going to do to, to benefit, I guess is a good term to use, and so that first one is going to roll out in April, and that will, I start soon. Obviously, and the next one is going to be in June or July, and that will cover the time period of February through the end of the school year.

21:43

So, we do, as, we, as we handle that, and P-EBT, one, we will calculate an average, or the end of the school year, based on what the, what, this, what, and the school year dates districts are implementing this year, and that's, when we will now. So, that's why that one takes a little bit longer, because we have to look at what that, that staggered ending is, and I've come up with the right level for it.

22:10

Um, so, children, whose, children who participate and HUSKY A, will receive their card via e, or via email address, and those will be mailed to the address on file with DSS.

22:22

So, SNAP Tier, A, and HUSKY A, are all administered by DSS, so that those, um, households who are eligible through participating in those three programs will receive the cards at the addresses associated with their benefits received from DSS.

22:41

Um the other recipients who are eligible through either enrollment and CEP school or through free and reduced price applications, will receive back card via the address on file with the school district.

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22:55

This is the address that the student has in our PSIS system. We will pull it directly from there. So it's very, very important. We know it's a ton of work, we know we've asked you for a lot of data. You know. Our stay was very cutting edge with our performance office really working with districts to collect this learning mode and student attendance data throughout this pandemic.

23:15

We were one of the few states who actually had that bad data collection going on, when P-EBT 2.0 was authorized, and so we, we really were well positioned.

23:24

Um a huge shout out to our Performance Office colleagues, it is absolutely been quite the endeavor to be able to do this, and then add on all of the data, work with these, with the P-EBT program. So just really invaluable there, and we wouldn't have this webinar without our performance office, as Michelle is our gracious host this who comes from procurement.

23:44

Um and then the benefits, just to, you know, they are not going to be loaded onto those original 1.0 cards.

23:51

We had no idea that 2.0 would be coming up, and so we instructed folks to after they have their benefits to be able to destroy those cards so that they didn't linger, and so now we're going to make sure that they have a card, and once they receive the card for that first issuance, and they're going to want to keep that card, because that is how those benefits will be loaded for the next phase, and phase two.

24:15

Um, I think we can go to the next slide Fionnuala.

24:25

So just a couple of differences, um we just came up with a quick chart to help you understand the basic really basic differences of these two programs. So just to re-iterate 1.0, that was one benefit level for all eligible students. This 1 is 3 benefit levels and I also want to thank our friends over at DSS.

24:43

We are one of the only states who has gone with three benefit levels instead of two benefit levels.

24:49

We, you know, as I said, had the data to be able to do that. We thought that was equitable. It does highly complicated things for the administering agency over at DSS. Um luckily, they really want to see these benefits, reach as many kids as much of an equitable way as possible. So, we're gonna make it work, but we're gonna need your help and we will be reaching out to you and hospitals ask, ask her for help, and making sure that their addresses are correct. And they're free reduced eligibility status, that's correct. So certainly you'll hear from us or during the EBP round.

25:18

Um in in the first one, it had to be close, your schools had to be closed for five consecutive days, and that was the only determinant.

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25:25

This round, it can be closed, it has to be closed for five consecutive days, or have five consecutive days of reduced hours, or reduced attendance.

25:33

So the way we are interpreting this is that, if any child learns remotely in your district, you are by default hybrid, and, therefore, if those, if that child learned remotely or hybrid for five days are longer than that would be a qualified for eligibility for this round.

25:52

Um, the, we also rolled it out a little bit differently in the first round, because of the way that we had to collect the data. So, that the first round of P-EBT was issued in three different phases.

26:05

The first phase went out to two folks who are already participating on SNAP and TFA.

26:11

We are not direct cert, was the next round for HUSKY A, And then the third round, was, was all of the other children who are eligible via the application route, or a CEP Enrollment.

26:23

We are working our very best to get this rounds out in two phases. So all eligible children should receive it in April. There may be a little bit of a delay as we have to clean up some of the data that comes in and outside of the DSS system. And then we're also trying to match that with that attendance and learning mode data out.

26:42

Hopefully, we'll be able to get all that out in April. It may go into May, and then the rest of the Phase two, again, will cover all eligible, regardless of what group are eligible, and that's what got through June and July.

26:56

Go to the next slide, alright, Childcare Facilities, back to you.

27:05

Speaker 3 - Thank you. So, as I said, we're not going to discuss too much about this, we did want to just give a brief overview about the childcare facilities themselves.

27:14

So in order to determine eligibility for children in childcare facilities, there were three criteria in which the child needs to meet.

27:23

First is, is the child a member of a household that received snap benefits at any time since October first of last year.

27:31

Second is the child enrolled in a cupboard childcare facility, which I already qualified earlier in the presentation. That all children under the age of six are considered enrolled and cover childcare facilities. So now, it would be all children under the age of six who have received snap benefits at any time since October 1<sup>st</sup> of 2020.

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27:48

And then the last one is, is the child's covered childcare facility closed or has reduced attendance or hours for at least five consecutive days, which you'll notice very similar to our schoolchildren. This results in the child's ability to attend the facility.

28:04

Or we would be able to link it to the schools themselves and say, are there one or more schools in the area of a childcare facility.

28:11

We're in the area of the child's residents closed or has reduced attendance or hours for at least five consecutive days.

28:18

As you probably are seeing from the last two bullet points there, it would be very difficult for us to be able to determine all of the different models and all of the different facilities whether it be a home daycare and unlicensed facility, A licensed daycare and in school daycare that's not participated in NSLP or any other combination, try and tie it back to these children are receiving snap benefits. So thankfully, we were able to, as I said, use some of the simplifying assumptions in order to determine how we would give benefits to these children.

28:49

So next slide, please.

28:54

So, what we did was, we worked with the Department of Education, as well as the Office of Early Childhood, who really has oversight over the licensing and reviews of many, if not most, of the childcare facilities in the state.

29:09

When we determined that OEC released a comprehensive guide for centers in group childcare homes and family childcare homes, the suggested that there be a reduction in the group size of students, as well as a prohibition, and mixing, or combining of groups of children within a childcare center.

29:26

Many of the facilities we saw went with what was called a cohort model, and that was that your child went into the classroom, they had to sit teachers or perhaps two teachers in one floater that work with the classroom and there was no mixing of those children with other rooms are those teachers to other rooms.

29:44

So, what we did was we were able to take that uh guide, as well, as the state public health emergency, that's still in place to request statewide approval ineligibility of all children under the age of six.

29:59

We'll still have to confirm all of the other conditions of P-EBT eligibility, as we said, but at least we were able to determine that they could all get the set benefit level itself statewide, and not have to try and tie it to that last piece of the school district, or the facility itself.

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30:16

So, what we're going to do is, we're going to do one monthly benefit level, and, as you'll see, it's still to be determined, because we're still reviewing some of the data to determine just the same way that the children are learning.

30:28

But what we will do, is, we will take the predominant learning model of students statewide based upon students in schools.

30:36

So, whether, it be fully remote, mostly, remote, or hybrid, we'll look each month and see what the predominant learning model is amongst the three, and that would be the benefit level that the children under the age of six would get for that same month.

30:49

So, if we looked, for example, in December, when many of our schools decided to close around the holidays, and remained close for the entire month and we'll say that December, uh the majority of our students, are learning in a fully remote model.

31:03

That would mean that our childcare children would receive a fully remote level of benefit for the month of December, so they would receive \$122.76 for them.

31:13

We have not submitted our plan for approval from FNS as required for childcare facilities but we hope to do so within the next few weeks and then start getting those benefits out shortly thereafter.

31:25

The next slide that we're going to see, if you don't mind Fionnuala, is just a quick guide that together DSS and CSDE put, uh, put together. In order to help individuals determine whether or not they're going to receive P-EBT benefits, as well as where the benefits will go to.

31:44

Whether it be on their existing EBT card, or, as Shannon said, on the address listed with DSS address listed on file at school.

31:53

So the first question, as, as I'm sure you see there, is your child eligible for free or reduced price meals, or does your child's school provide all meals free to all students? And thank you to Shannon, who put together the asterisks on the left side of the screen there, that kinda qualifies as, she said that, while most schools are offering meals at no cost.

32:14

Free P-EBT is still does tie to the free or reduced price meal eligibility and the determinants of it. If you're answering no to that question, obviously, that's the first qualifier that we have to child would not be eligible for P-EBT benefits.

32:28

But if you answer yes to that question, you would continue on through the flowchart until you get to your desired response then.

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32:36

On the right side of the chart, you'll see as well, uh just goes a little bit over what we went over here today in this presentation of when the deposits are going to be made, what the benefit levels are for each group, and how we determine which group an individual would fall into.

32:52

So that's all I have, Shannon, I don't know if you want to wrap it up or what you want to go from here, but I'll leave it to you.

32:59

Speaker 1 - Thank you, and now you have a lot of witnesses for that. Fionnuala can you go to the last slide, please?

33:06

Uh, just. We are developing a suite of resources and they are not ready to be publicized. Gap at the flowchart will be part of that. We have a Quick Facts Guide. We're working on a Q and A document. Um we will make sure that we have that available in the lunch trays.

33:22

But today, since we knew it would take a little bit of time to go through this, we are the resource roundup section, um we're going to dive deeper into that because it is around P-EBT.

33:34

And what that link will do is take you to a landing page with the USDA that where all state plans that have been approved are posted. So if you that includes ours and includes a comprehensive um set of Q&A documents, and other, the templates, and everything else that we use to be able to determine, this is the route that we needed to go with Connecticut. So certainly, if you're interested in learning more, you have some board members who want to learn more. You have parents interested. That's a great, that's a great place to get some of the nitty gritty.

34:06

Otherwise, we do, that our Department of Social Services does have, they have created a P-EBT page that we will be updating shortly um with the with the resources. We will also be making those available and program guidance for you. Um so, we wanted to make sure that we ran over this with you. We know last time it was a bit of a freight train coming through with the switching your operations and P-EBT, being new, and us having an issue it, and then, doing the address collections. And so much had changed. And there was so much pressure to be able to do this. And, and it's, it's a great program, and there's definitely continued pressure to be a look at the data, and make sure that we are getting these benefits out to those households.

34:46

So, um certainly, if there's anything to take away from today, as this is just around the corner, you have some more opportunities to be able to help us find those eligible kids in your district. If you haven't received those applications, um certainly do another question for them. With that, we're gonna open it up to questions, but today, I'm gonna ask you to type it into the question box. And what I'm gonna do is, I see that there are different questions have been submitted so far.

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35:14

So, I'm gonna go ahead and just ask the P-EBT, or answer the P-EBT questions, and then we'll jump into the rest of the School Lunch Tray, and we can certainly go through the rest of the questions at that point, as well.

35:25

So, the first question is, is P-EBT 2.0 occurring in school year 2020-2021, or in 2021-2022.

35:34

So, yes, as Dan mentioned earlier, it's definitely rolling out in April that it be people will start seeing benefits, and that's this April, for the 2020- 2021 school year.

35:47

Um but with the new authorization that allows P-EBT to be operating in the kit, in conjunction with a public health emergency, there is likely continuation and potential to go into next school year.

36:03

I see you took yourself of mute for that one Dan.

36:05

Speaker 3 – Well yea, I think you did a great job answering it. I will say, as well, obviously, as discussed during the presentation, it would also requires students to be learning remotely for all over part of a month, right?

36:20

So, if the school itself is in person for the entire year and students are learning remotely, the student themselves would have to have remote learning for at least five consecutive days or be on a hybrid schedule, and things of that nature, or the school itself would still have to meet the five consecutive the criteria that does reset every school year. So they would not carry it over from the previous school year.

36:45

Um so, a lot of that, as Shannon said, depends on that eligibility and other factors, but there is the potential, that as she said, we would be operating it during the summer and during the school year, ongoing.

37:01

Speaker 1 – Yup, P-EBT is here to stay, and we will definitely keep working with you to make sure that it works. Fionnuala, did you have something to say? Speaker 4 – Yes, and I just wanted to add some instructors, sponsors, on the line, our office may have reached out to you, in particular, about private school students. So, you may have already, you know, have some of this information. Because we had to gather information for those private school students were, some food service directors may not be aware, that this information is being collected, obviously, outside your department, through the PSIS system. So, I just not sure if you went into that in detail. But I thought it'd be important just to mention that, is happening or has happened. So if you've heard Department of Education reaching out to some food service directors regarding this data, it was particularly for private school students and the public school students being captured dimension.

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38:02

Speaker 1 - Yeah, that's a really great point Fionnuala, thank you for bringing that up. Until that point, you know, we because the, our PSIS system, I asked the public school information system, we don't have the ability to collect the same type of data for those private schools and those agreements. Or we're operating national school lunch program. So, we will be asking you to the private schools are definitely going to be doing this manually as well and sending it to us. And we really appreciate, we know we had a very aggressive timeline on that, and, so, hopefully, we can get some more information to you sooner than later on when that next collection will be asking for.

38:39

Um so, one of the other question here is, who is determining providing the learning model data for individual students?

38:45

So, that is a great question, um that is whoever in your district is designated to enter that information into the public school information system. So, you definitely want to make sure that you're working very closely with your PSIS Coordinator. If you don't know who that is, send me an e-mail.

39:00

I will connect with our Performance Office folks who can tell you who in your district is that person who has the authorizer person to enter that information as a PSIS. So I think that's about it.

39:13

And then this next one is not particular to P-EBT, but I think it does pertain to it since we are talking about the EBT as well. So one of the questions came in around the community eligibility provision. And that is, are there any updates on CEP calculations for 21-22? Are we using April data or something else?

39:32

So this is a great question. We had the same question for a couple of months, um and USDA is, has indicated that there is guidance forthcoming.

39:41

Um last year, we had waited until the final moments, and actually one-year today. We actually sent out that information around the requirement for all public schools to be able to submit that data to the Department of Education, whether or not you plan to participate or are participating in CEP.

39:58

So, we have not received back guidance yet. We know last year, it came out on April 1<sup>st</sup>, and so we quickly issued a revision, and um really changed course, and how that was determined, and how you use that data.

40:11

We have no indication from USDA or how that will, how that may change or be the same, so the best we can do right now is follow what the regulations say, and as of now, without any pending USDA updates, that data is going to still be reliant on April 1<sup>st</sup>.



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40:28

Then we also know that direct certification has been a little bit late this month. Some of that, most of that is intuitive, trying to get P-EBT launched.

40:37

We also have Summer EBT coming around the corner, and we will cover that in a future edition of this.

40:43

The, you know, that that's coming, that relies on that information as well, but the direct cert is being run this week. And it will be run on April 1<sup>st</sup>. So as of April 2<sup>nd</sup>, you'll be able to look at that data.

40:55

We will send the, we are planning to send a memo out tomorrow if all goes well, but we will certainly let you know at USDA changes that this year.

41:07

Keep an eye out for our e-mails. Alright. I'm not seeing any additional questions, so we can go ahead and move on to the next one.

41:20

And then Dan, thank you so much to you and to all of your team at the Department of social services for all of your very, very amazing work on these programs, and for sharing all these benefits on top of all of the SNAP increases, and all of the other programs that you are managing, too.

41:38

Thank you so much, and I know that I will be seeing much of you in our future. Speaker 3 - Thank you, and thank you all for having me, and I appreciate all the work everyone is doing. So thank you very much for your partnership, and thank you for listening.

41:52

Thank you. I'm going to ask my team member Teri to come on and talk about our next items in the School Lunch Tray.

42:02

Speaker 5 - Thanks Shannon.

42:03

I just want to mention very briefly, and make sure that you saw in the School Lunch Tray, the two dairy opportunities, and one has to do with a dairy grant opportunity, which is due, the deadline date is April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

42:19

Make sure that you take a look at that, because it allows you to get some equipment, and it's a very easy application process, so make sure that you check that out.

42:31

And then also, there are free resources that are being provided to celebrate National Grilled Cheese Day, which is on April 12<sup>th</sup> and Earth Day, which is on April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

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42:44

They have some free stickers for you, and I know kids love stickers. So you want to take advantage of this.

42:49

And the links are there in the website, and in the School Lunch Tray, and I just want to tell you that there's also a really nice poster that you may be interested in taking a look at and getting for free.

43:04

And I'm going to see if I can show or share my slide here. Can you see it?

43:15

Speaker 1 - Nope, not yet. Yes, now we can write. Speaker 5 - So this is just the poster, and you know, you can certainly click on the link and see how many that you can get, and it's got lots of really interesting information for you to take a look at.

43:30

So I just wanted to share that information and I'm going to, um, turn it back to Shannon.

43:41

Speaker 1 - Thank you so much, Teri.

43:43

I can't wait for April 12<sup>th</sup>. You know, I love grilled cheese and that I'm looking forward to celebrating, and I'm glad I met with all of you. That really brings us to the end of our school, lunch tray content today, and our resource roundup. So, we wanted, as we said before, just a little bit on P-EBT, it's a program, you are integral to its operations.

44:05

And so we want to make sure that you had some basic understanding around where that came from, and really how it's going to operate, so in your household, start asking you questions. You have a little bit more to go on.

44:15

Um and again, once we have this suite of resources ready, we will certainly let you know so that you have that available.

44:22

I think we're gonna give it just one more minute so that you can enter your questions as you want.

44:28

And while you do that, I'm going to remind you that we do, if you look at our School Lunch Trays, we have the link to be able to submit questions ahead of time.

44:39

So certainly you can submit those at any time, they don't timeout and all that link and we that helps us be able to answer questions that drives the contents of these and it also helps us be able to develop resources or reach out to you as for technical assistance as needed.

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44:53

Um we will be we will be sending out information around the April series of the School Lunch Tray Table Talk.

44:59

We know that this day and time seems to be very popular, and that it definitely works better than our Friday morning adventures did, so we will certainly look into making that information available, and sticking with this day, and day and time.

45:15

But no guarantees on that yet says, keep your eyes out for more information on that. We have a great, um great agenda for our next to unplanned already. We'll let you know, and that is, that will be much fore shadowing.

45:27

With that, I'm not seeing any other questions. And we're just really?

45:30

Yeah, well, we'll celebrate this beautiful spring day by ending 15 minutes early, and making sure that you guys have a few minutes to run outside, and enjoy this beautiful, beautiful, day.

45:41

Thank you for all you're doing. Please, take care of yourselves.

45:44

Make sure you put your, your, your air mask on first, as they say, when we used to be able to travel.

45:50

So thank you so much, everybody. Thank you to my team. Thank you to our partners, and we will see you in April.

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For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's Training for School Nutrition Programs webpage, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

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