

722 CONFIDENTIALITY OF FREE AND REDUCED MEAL ELIGIBILITIES APPLICATION FOR EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure student status confidentiality of free and reduced meal eligibilities and to define appropriate use of data that is collected by the school district related to student free and reduced meal eligibilities.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A student's free and reduced meal eligibility status is confidential. District 206 employees are required to keep student status confidential. Any employee who publishes, divulges, discloses or makes known in any manner, or to any extent not authorized by federal law (Section 9.B.2.c.) of the National School Lunch Act; 42 U.S.C. 1758.B.2.c. or a regulation, any information about a child's eligibility for free and reduced priced meals or free milk shall be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned not more than one year or both.

Federal regulations specify circumstances where status can be shared with other agencies. Aggregate data on eligibility status may be shared by the school district with approval of the superintendent.

III. PROCEDURES

- A. School district employees are not allowed to give out information about a student's eligibility unless a waiver is signed by the parent/guardian. An example of this waiver is found on page 3.
- B. School district employees can share information under the following conditions:
 - 1. The status can be shared with other school district's food service departments that operate the National School Meals Program.
 - 2. The status can be shared with agencies that operate National School Meals Programs, such as Runestone Area Education District, St. Mary's School, Zion Lutheran School, and New Testament School of Alexandria.
 - 3. The status may be shared with the administrators of the federally funded Title I Program.
 - 4. The status may be shared as outlined in the confidentiality statement found in the educational benefits application.

School district employees can share information with each other about individual eligibility status for the purpose of collecting necessary data to complete an application for educational benefits.

- C. The school district may identify specific district employees to be aware of an individual's eligibility status to improve a student's performance in accordance with the federal No Child Left Behind law. An administrative directive must be

developed by the superintendent to ensure the information is kept private according to state and federal law.

D. Aggregate Free/Reduced Eligibility Information – Whole School

Official data is available by calling the district's office of accountability (320-762-0720). Official enrollment and free/reduced percentages are updated in January of each year. School district food service uploads free and reduced data to the office of accountability. A student's eligibility is matched to the school where the student was assigned on October 1. This data is used for determining compensatory revenue.

For the first four weeks of school, school district food service is processing the current applications. After that time, the district food service department can provide existing numbers of students eligible for free and reduced priced meals. This enrollment will be aggregate and school personnel can help with corrections to a school's free/reduced eligibility list by identifying students that have left their building. The school district food and nutrition service department will remove students from the count if they are no longer attending a building site.

E. Aggregate Free/Reduced Eligibility Information – Grade or Group of Students

The schools may use data about a group of students or grade level group of students for grant applications or reduced fees. School personnel can ask for numbers of students eligible for free or reduced price meals for a group of students. The school can provide a list of students and the school district food service department can give the school personnel the total number of eligible students. Individual students may not be identified by the department when responding to requests. Enclosed is a sample of the parent/guardian release of information form.

Policy Adopted: May 18, 2004
Policy Revised: April 18, 2005
Independent School District No. 206
Alexandria, Minnesota

**PARENT/GUARDIAN RELEASE OF INFORMATION ON
CHILD'S ELIGIBILITY STATUS FOR FREE/REDUCED MEALS**

Yes, school officials may use eligibility status for free or reduced-price meals for my child(ren) listed below for the purpose of qualifying my child(ren) for other school-sponsored programs.

I give up my rights for confidentiality for _____ program for
_____ School.

| Student Name | Birth Date | Student Name | Birth Date |
|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

No, school officials may not use eligibility status for free or reduced-price meals for my child(ren) listed above for the purpose of qualifying my child(ren) for other school-sponsored programs.

Signature – Parent/Legal Guardian

Date

SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAM VERIFICATION

As a representative of the Alexandria Area School Food & Nutrition Services Department, I have verified the eligibility status of the child(ren) listed above and provided it to the program listed above.

Signature of School Official

Date