

Did you know that your school is able to provide free meals to all students under the School Breakfast and National School Lunch Programs through Provision 2 and the Community Eligibility Option (CEP)? Until now, Louisiana schools were unable to take advantage of Universal Meal Programs without losing their ability to count students eligible for at-risk funding. The Department is pleased to announce changes to financial policies allowing your district to take advantage of Provision 2 and the Community Eligibility Option, while continuing to receive at-risk funding.

Programs such as Provision 2 and CEP allow schools to provide free meals to all their students while simplifying their paperwork, streamlining meal service, decreasing school food service costs, and most importantly, promoting good nutrition and helping improve student performance.

The Department has amended Title 28, Section 1107 (d), the policy which determines the at-risk student count for schools wishing to participate in Universal Meal Programs. The updated policy ensures schools opting for Provision 2 and CEP will be able to continue to receive at-risk funding. Schools opting to implement Universal Meal Programs will not take meal applications each year. Instead, the at-risk count will be determined by the percentage of at-risk students enrolled in the most recent year the school took free and reduced priced lunch applications. That year's percentage rate will be applied to the current year's enrollment to establish the number of low-income students. The at-risk count procedures will remain the same for schools not using Provision 2 or the Community Eligibility Option. This alternative policy allows your school to reduce paperwork and access the Universal Meal Programs, while retaining your at-risk funding.

The Division of Nutrition Support hosted a webinar on the Community Eligibility Program on March 14. The PowerPoint presentation from the Consolidated CEP Training webinar, as well as additional materials to assist with implementation, is available at the [CNP website](#) resource links, under the [School Food Service](#) heading. The Finance Department will be issuing guidance on reporting and funding issues with regards to the CEP. Finally, Louisiana Appleseed, a pro bono nonprofit working on this policy change and its implementation, has created an [interactive website](#) that can help you decide if CEP or Provision 2 is right for your school and help guide you through the steps of implementing the programs. They are in the process of outreach through the mailing of hard copies of "Feeding More for Less" and meeting with schools and interested organizations across the state. If you would like copies of the book or have questions about Louisiana Appleseed's outreach, please email Jessie Haynes at [jhaynes@appleseednetwork.org](mailto:jhaynes@appleseednetwork.org).