

## **NYSED Guidelines for 2015-16 Programs Fact extract for Food Service Vendors**

In the 2015-16 school year, NYSED is using the SIRS (Student Information Repository System) as the official source of Free and Reduced Priced Lunch data for the purpose of allocating State Aid to districts, for other analyses, for use in Report cards and other public reports<sup>1</sup>.

Districts across NYS must provide individual student data records to SIRS with start and end dates of <sup>2</sup>eligibility for all students who were eligible to receive Free/Reduced Lunch during the 2015-16 school year. Of critical importance is the start and end dates that span Beds Day. Beds Day is the first Wednesday in October (Oct. 7, 2015).

If students were eligible for Free/Reduced priced lunch in the prior year (2014-15) their eligibility carries over for 30 operating days into the new school year (2015-16) or until a new eligibility determination is made, whichever comes first. The new eligibility determination, either approved or denied, supersedes the carryover eligibility.

Please refer to the excerpts below from the SIRS Manual:

Link to SIRS Manual: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/sirs/>

“Each academic year, every Program Service Code applicable to a student must be recorded and must also have a Program Service Entry Date. Program Services that were not exited in the previous academic year should be recorded with a July 1 entry date. Program Services that end during the academic year also require a Program Service Exit Date.”

“Carryover of previous year’s free or reduced price lunch eligibility is for up to 30 operating days (whether meals are served or not) into the current school year or until a new eligibility determination has been made. If a new eligibility determination for the current school year has not been made by BEDS day and a student is within the 30-day carryover period, the student should be reported as qualifying for either free or reduced-price lunch.”

“Students who have met the eligibility requirements for the **federal Free Lunch Program** must be reported with *Program Service Code 5817: Free Lunch Program*. Students who have met the eligibility requirements for the **federal Free Breakfast Program and/or the federal Free Milk Program** must also be reported with *Program Service Code 5817: Free Lunch Program*. For districts participating in the **Community Eligibility Option (CEO)**, report only those students who would qualify to participate in the federal lunch program independent of CEO. For example, do not report students who participate solely because the LEA is CEO eligible. Include students whose participation is as a result of the 30-day carryover provision.”

“Students who have met the eligibility requirements for the **federal Reduced-Price Lunch Program** must be reported with *Program Service Code 5806: Reduced-Price Lunch Program*. Students who have met the eligibility requirements for the **federal Reduced-Price Breakfast Program** must also be reported with *Program Service Code 5806: Reduced-Price Lunch Program*. Include students whose participation is as a result of the 30-day carryover provision.”

### **Programs Fact Extract Guidelines:**

Link to SIRS Extracts: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/vendors/templates.html>

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<sup>1</sup> Official FRPL counts for Charter Schools will be taken from BEDS online for use in Report Cards and other public reporting.

<sup>2</sup> For State Reporting purposes, Free/ Reduced Price Lunch Programs Fact records should extract based on a student’s *eligibility* for Free or Reduced priced lunch (either by Direct Certification, categorical eligibility or income verification) not based on whether the student uses their Free/Reduced lunch benefit.

Each time a Programs Fact extract is run, students eligible for free lunch or reduced price lunch (according to the definitions in the SIRS Manual) at any time during the school year, should be included in the Programs Fact extract file. Extracts must include start and end dates of eligibility. Even students who were not enrolled for the entire school year must be included if they were enrolled and eligible to receive either a free or reduced price lunch on BEDS Day. Eligibility dates should not be overwritten by subsequent Direct Certification or Medicaid imports from NYS that continue 2015-16 eligibility.

**For Students eligible because of the 30 day carryover window:** the 5817- Free lunch/ or 5806- Reduced Price Lunch- program service record should extract with a start date on or before the beginning of school, end date should be determined as follows:

If the student is determined to be *eligible*, there should be no end date.

If the student is determined to be *ineligible*, the end date of the record should be the date the student was determined to be ineligible.

**For newly determined Free/Reduced Price Lunch eligible Students:**

The 5817- Free lunch/ or 5806- Reduced Price Lunch- program service records should extract with a start date of the initial 2015-16 eligibility decision

**For Students who have had a change in eligibility status (i.e., Free Lunch to Reduced Priced Lunch):**

The program service end date on the initial eligibility record and program service start date on the subsequent eligibility record *must not* overlap and cannot be the same date.

**\*Please note:**

- Students who were eligible because of the 30 day carryover window or were newly determined eligible in the current year and **have subsequently left the district** should continue to have their 5817- Free Lunch / or 5806 – Reduced Price Lunch program service record extracted.
- Districts need to have the ability to change a student’s program eligibility start and/or end date retroactively and have those modified records be included in their Programs Fact extract.
- Free/Reduced Priced Program service eligibility start or end dates cannot be future dates.
- In the event that a parent declines FRPL benefits after being directly certified (i.e., SNAP, TANF, Medicaid), their child’s 5817- Free Lunch Programs Fact record should remain open and continue to extract.
- When one child in a household has free meal benefits through direct certification (SNAP, TANF, Medicaid) all children verified living in that household must be certified for free meal benefits as well. Additional Eligibility guidelines are posted at [http://portal.nysed.gov/portal/page/pref/CNKC/Eligibility\\_pp/Additional%20Eligibility-Verification%20Information%20\(10-13\).pdf](http://portal.nysed.gov/portal/page/pref/CNKC/Eligibility_pp/Additional%20Eligibility-Verification%20Information%20(10-13).pdf)
- For students who are within the 10-day loss of benefit grace period, their program service record should be ended at the time the students are determined to be no longer eligible for a free or reduced price lunch (at the beginning of the grace period).

- A student that may have a program service record for either free or reduced priced lunch that encompasses BEDS day, and that subsequently gets a Direct Certification letter, must not have previous eligibility records overwritten with the Direct Cert. program records. The initial dates of eligibility must be preserved.
- Similar to the situation above, if a student is in the 30 day carry-over window and submits a new application for eligibility, the new application eligibility date should not overwrite the original 30 day carry- over start date/record. Again, for accountability and reporting purposes, it is important to maintain the history on these students, and to not overwrite one date with another.
- When preparing to certify this data for SED, there are two deadlines, the first occurring in April, and the other at the end of August. Districts must have the flexibility to continue to review, update and extract 2015-16 FRPL records until the 2015-16 reporting deadline has passed at the end of August.