

## Statewide Media Release National School Lunch, School Breakfast and Special Milk

Valley Academy Charter today announced their policy for free and reduced-price meals and free milk for children unable to pay the full price of meals/milk served under the National School Lunch, School Breakfast, and/or Special Milk programs. If the LEA participates in the program, they will have a copy of the policy, which may be reviewed by any interested party.

The attached household size and income criteria will be used for determining eligibility this year. Children from families whose income is at or below the levels shown are eligible for free or reduced-price meals/free milk.

Children/households currently approved for Food Stamps (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, or Family Employment Program (FEP) are automatically eligible for free milk or free meal benefits through the Direct Certification process, no application is required for free meal benefits. Households will be notified by the LEA of their eligibility and children will be provided free benefits unless the household notifies the school that it chooses to decline benefits. All children in these households are eligible for free meal benefits and if any child(ren) was not listed on the eligibility notice, the household should contact the school to have benefits extended to that child(ren). If the households/children receive benefits under Assistance Programs or other source programs are not notified by the school of their free meal benefits, the parent/guardian should contact their school.

Application forms for those not directly certified have been sent home including a letter to parents or guardians. To apply for free or reduced-price meals or free milk, households should fill out the application and return it to their school or district office. The information provided on the application will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility and may be verified at any time during the school year by school or other program officials. Children's names, eligibility status and other information provided on the paper application or obtained through direct certification may be disclosed to certain other Federal, State, or local agencies as authorized by the National School Lunch Act (NSLA).

For the school officials to determine eligibility, the household must provide the following information listed on the application: names of all household members; last four digits of the Social Security Number of the adult completing the application, or a statement that the person does not possess one; the income received by each household member with income frequency and income source noted; and the signature of an adult household member certifying that the information provided is correct.

Applications may be submitted at any time during the year. If a household member becomes unemployed or if the household situation changes, the family should contact the school. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for free or reduced-price meals or free milk.

Under the provisions of the free and reduced-price policy, a designated approving official will review applications and determine eligibility. If a parent or guardian is dissatisfied with the ruling of the official, he/she may wish to discuss the decision on an informal basis. If the parent/guardian wishes to make a formal appeal, he/she may make a request either orally or in writing to the hearing official by contacting the local school food service supervisor for more information. The policy contains an outline of the hearing procedure.

Foster children who are legal wards of the court are eligible for free meal benefits. If a household has foster children and wishes to apply for meal benefits for such children, the household should complete the application.

When known to the Local Education Authority, households will be notified of any child's eligibility for free meals if the individual child is Other Source Categorically Eligible because the child is categorized as: homeless, migrant or runaway as defined by law; or enrolled in an eligible Head Start, Even Start (pre-school and pre-kindergarten children) as defined by law.

The information provided by the household is confidential and will be used only for purposes of determining eligibility and verifying data, unless a waiver releasing the use of the information for other specific programs is signed by the parent/guardian. Families directly certified will receive a waiver release form for their signature with the notification letter. The household name and address will be given to the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) unless "No" is checked on the back of the application.

Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants & Children (WIC) may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Individuals should complete an application for free and reduced price meals and return it to the school where the child is enrolled. The family will be notified of the child's eligibility.

"In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (Voice). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

The Income Eligibility Guidelines for free and reduced price school meals and free milk are shown below.

		Effective from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014									
HOUSEHOLD SIZE	FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES	REDUCED PRICE MEALS - 185 %					FREE MEALS - 130 %				
	ANNUAL	ANNUAL	MONTHLY	TWICE PER MONTH	EVERY TWO WEEKS	WEEKLY	ANNUAL	MONTHLY	TWICE PER MONTH	EVERY TWO WEEKS	WEEKLY
<b>48 CONTIGUOUS STATES, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, GUAM, AND TERRITORIES</b>											
1 .....	11,490	21,257	1,772	886	818	409	14,937	1,245	623	575	288
2 .....	15,510	28,694	2,392	1,196	1,104	552	20,163	1,681	841	776	388
3 .....	19,530	36,131	3,011	1,506	1,390	695	25,389	2,116	1,058	977	489
4 .....	23,550	43,568	3,631	1,816	1,676	838	30,615	2,552	1,276	1,178	589
5 .....	27,570	51,005	4,251	2,126	1,962	981	35,841	2,987	1,494	1,379	690
6 .....	31,590	58,442	4,871	2,436	2,248	1,124	41,067	3,423	1,712	1,580	790
7 .....	35,610	65,879	5,490	2,745	2,534	1,267	46,293	3,858	1,929	1,781	891
8 .....	39,630	73,316	6,110	3,055	2,820	1,410	51,519	4,294	2,147	1,982	991
<b>For each add'l family member, add</b>	<b>4,020</b>	<b>7,437</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>5,226</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>101</b>