



Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

DATE: April 18, 2019

Park Office  
Center

MEMO CODE: SP 27-2019

3101 Park  
Center Drive  
Alexandria  
VA 22302

SUBJECT: Paid Lunch Equity: Guidance for School Year 2019-20

TO: Regional Directors  
Special Nutrition Programs  
All Regions

State Directors  
Child Nutrition Programs  
All States

In Section 760 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 (Public Law 116-6) (the Appropriations Act), Congress provides that only school food authorities (SFAs) that had a negative balance in the nonprofit school food service account as of December 31, 2018, shall be required to establish prices for paid lunches according to the Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) provisions in Section 12(p) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. 1760(p) and implemented in National School Lunch Program regulations at 7 CFR 210.14(e).

Consistent with the terms of the Appropriations Act, this memorandum provides notice that any SFA with a positive or zero balance in its nonprofit school food service account as of December 31, 2018, is exempt from PLE pricing requirements found at 7 CFR 210.14(e) for school year (SY) 2019-20. SFAs that had a negative balance in the nonprofit school food service account as of December 31, 2018, must follow PLE requirements when establishing their prices for paid lunches in SY 2019-20.

Because the Appropriations Act affects one school year only, FNS recommends that State agencies maintain documentation that includes which SFAs are using the PLE exemption for SY 2019-20 in order to demonstrate State agency oversight of this provision. This documentation should include a record that each SFA implementing the exemption had a positive or zero balance in the nonprofit school food service account as of December 31, 2018. This documentation may be reviewed by FNS upon request and during a Management Evaluation.

While SFAs that meet the Appropriations Act's criteria are exempt from the PLE pricing requirements, all State agencies and SFAs must continue to report paid lunch prices as required in regulations at 7 CFR 210.14(e)(7). SFAs still maintain the discretion to complete the steps necessary to determine their target SY 2019-20 paid lunch price, consistent with Program regulations at 7 CFR 210.14(e), and adjust their paid

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meal prices accordingly. Please note, the SY 2019-20 PLE tool and instructions will be provided in a separate communication.

State agencies are reminded to distribute this memorandum to Program operators. Program operators should direct any questions concerning this guidance to their State agency. State agencies with questions should contact the appropriate FNS Regional Office.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Angela Kline". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Angela Kline  
Director  
Policy and Program Development Division  
Child Nutrition Programs