

For Immediate Release

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Media Release

CCSD to provide meals at no cost to students for 2021-2022 school year

Division of Strategy and
Communications

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Charleston, SC – For the second school year in a row, every Charleston County School District (CCSD) student will be able to eat breakfast and lunch at school for free. Meals will be served at no cost to all students, whether or not the school they attend is part of the Community Eligibility Program.

Last week, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) announced a set of nationwide waivers that will allow school meal programs and childcare institutions across the country to serve healthy meals for the 2021-2022 school year.

Since the current school year started on September 8, 2020, CCSD's Nutrition Services Department has served 3 million lunches and 1.5 million breakfast meals.

The USDA offers a targeted set of flexibilities through June 30, 2022, for school meal programs and childcare institutions across the country. Schools nationwide will be allowed to serve meals through the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option (SSO), which is typically only available during the summer months. This option allows schools to serve free meals to all children.

Although the waivers do not extend the option to operate the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) during the regular school year, school districts that choose this option will receive higher-than-normal meal reimbursements for every meal they serve. This option maintains the nutrition standards of the standard school meal programs – including a strong emphasis on providing fruits and vegetables, fluid milk, whole grains, and moderate calorie levels while allowing schools to serve free meals to all children. School districts that choose this option can manage increased costs associated with pandemic-related operational and supply chain challenges, too.

The USDA will continue to offer targeted meal pattern flexibility and technical assistance as needed. In addition, schools and child and adult care institutions can continue providing breakfasts, lunches, and after-school snacks in non-group settings at flexible meal times. Parents or guardians can also pick up meals for their children when programs are not operating under a regular schedule while maintaining social distancing consistent with federal recommendations.

For a complete list of the waiver actions announced last week, visit FNS's COVID Response page at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/coronavirus>.

For more information about the continuation of free school meals in CCSD, please contact the Division of Strategy and Communications at (843) 937-6303.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally-accredited school district that is committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all of its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 87 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools. Options include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military.