



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
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RYAN STEWART, ED.L.D.
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
GOVERNOR

March 13, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents, Charter School Directors, Food Service Directors, Food Service Contractors, Food Service Authorities

FROM: Secretary Dr. Ryan Stewart
Deputy Secretary Katarina Sandoval

RE: Feeding Plan during COVID-19 School Closure

New Mexico public schools will close from Monday, March 16 through Sunday, April 5 as preventative, cautionary measures to protect our students and communities from the COVID-19 virus. Our schools will continue to provide breakfast and lunch during this time to students beginning on Monday, March 16th.

Each district and charter school will submit to PED its plan for providing and distributing breakfast and lunch to students during these three weeks no later than Monday, March 16th. Note that PED asks for these plans to help support you as well as to communicate with parents and families about meal distributions. If you already have press releases or plans posted on your website, those will suffice and all you have to do is send the links. Please email your plan to Michael Chavez at michaelA.chavez@state.nm.us, Felix Griego at felix.griego@state.nm.us, and Sharona Secatero at sharona.secatero2@state.nm.us.

Please ensure that your feeding plan addresses the following components. Also, please refer to the enclosed Q&A guidance document provided by the USDA.

Calendar of Feeding Plan & Location of Food Distribution

Please indicate which days/dates, where, and the hours during which time your district/charter school will provide and distribute breakfast and lunch to students.

- If your district or charter school's Spring Break occurs during the next three weeks, we strongly urge you to provide meals even during Spring Break. Meals are reimbursable at this time.

- Districts and charter schools will provide “grab and go” meals to students at designated school sites. The meals must meet the regular menu planning requirements of the SFSP or SSO. Offer versus serve (OVS) will not apply and all meals must meet the requirements of the menu planning method used.
- In addition to designated school sites, districts and charter schools will deliver meals to students at designated locations outside of school sites.
- Districts and charter schools are also encouraged to use parks, food pantries, and other food networks and public sites to provide meals to students when needed during this period.
- As appropriate, smaller districts and charter schools are encouraged to collaborate with their larger, neighboring districts to maximize resources.

Plan for Food Distribution

Please indicate the method by which meals will be distributed to students at designated sites.

- Milk must be distributed, and shelf-stable milk may be used. USDA commodity foods may also be used.
- Both breakfast and lunch may be served at the same time to expedite distribution of meals, but only one day’s meals can be served at a time.
- When distributing meals, districts and charter schools must do a head count in order to ensure that meals are being distributed to school-aged children.
- Meals may be served to all children 18 and under in the household if at least one child attends the dismissed school. If a child care center that participates in the CACFP is located in a dismissed school, students enrolled in that center are eligible for meals provided to children attending the dismissed school.
- During these three weeks, the PED is waiving the food service handler permit requirement.
- Districts and charter schools at which at least 50% of students are eligible for free/reduced lunch will be reimbursed 100% of their costs for the meals served to students during the closure.
- For districts and charter schools at which less than 50% of students are eligible for free/reduced lunch, please know that the PED is looking for funding on your behalf to offset these costs. We strongly encourage these districts and charter schools to still provide meals during the next three weeks.
- PED is exploring the possibility of collaborating with the National Guard to help with food distribution in particular parts of the state. We also encourage you to reach out to your local fire departments to see how they might support with food distribution.
- Separate meal counts and records must be maintained for meals served under a COVID-19 waiver.

Communication with Students and Families

Please indicate the method(s) by which your district/charter school will inform your students, families and communities about your feeding plan.

- This could be links to your website and/or news releases.

NMPED staff are available to provide technical assistance during this time period. Please call Michael Chavez at (505) 699-4562 or Felix Griego at (505) 660-6203 with any questions you have.

Cc: Deputy Secretary Dr. Hand
Deputy Secretary Dr. Perea Warniment
Deputy Secretary Delgado
Deputy Secretary Bobroff
Michael Chavez, Director of Student Success & Wellness
Alan Brauer, Director of Charter Schools

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