



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FL

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Contact:

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Action By:
Information Only

TO: All Principals

FROM: Michael J. Burke, Chief Operating Officer *MS*

SUBJECT: FREE AND REDUCED MEAL APPLICATIONS

The School Food Service Department was advised by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services that a paper application no longer has to be provided to each student since there is an online application process in place. Online applications are available in English, Spanish, and Creole.

For the past five years, the School Food Service Department has been aggressively marketing the online application process with great success and plans to continue those efforts:

- Sent NSLP marketing brochure sent out during July 2012
- ParentLink phone calls
- Email campaigns
- Posters for each school with online application information cards

We ask that school staff encourage the use of the online application system.

School Food Service will continue to provide a sufficient supply of paper applications to all schools to have in their ***front office*** and ***the cafeteria*** for those children who do not have access to the internet. In July 2013, a marketing brochure will be mailed to each household registered with the District informing them of the online process. Community partner locations are listed in the marketing brochure that can provide assistance with completing the application online.

There are many positive points to this change:

- **Customer Service** - The online application system provides a more efficient way of processing applications. On average, online applications are processed within one-two business days of submission, as there is no time delay between the delivery of the application and the approval process.
- **Printing savings** - In past years, we have printed over 300,000 applications. This year, we will be printing only 65,000.
- **Going Green** - Last year, out of the 51,689 applications that were processed, only 13,893 were paper applications. Therefore, there will be over 200,000 paper applications that will be discarded at the end of this year.
- **Document Retention** – Less storage space is required due to decrease in paper applications.

As in prior years, all students will retain their previous year's lunch status for the first 30 days of school to allow them time to complete a new application. They will be notified directly by School Food Service, through letters and ParentLink telephone calls, of the deadlines for submitting applications without an interruption of lunch status. The temporary approval cutoff date for school year 2013-14 will be Monday, September 30, 2013.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in implementing this new procedure.

EWG/MJB/SB/AOM/MP:ch /ac

Approved:



E. Wayne Gent, Superintendent