



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release:
June 14, 2022

Cumberland County Board of Education Approves New Meal Prices for 2022-2023 School Year

Fayetteville, NC – During the Cumberland County Board of Education’s (Board) regular June 2022 meeting, the Board considered and approved the first meal price increase for students at non-Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools since 2017.

Cumberland County Schools (CCS) Child Nutrition has and continues to experience substantial increases in the cost of operating expenses, including food, supplies and labor. The average cost of preparing each meal has already increased by \$0.73 since last year and is anticipated to continue increasing. For this reason, Child Nutrition submitted to the Board a meal price increase of \$0.50 for full-pay students at non-CEP schools.

Approved 2022-2023 School Year Prices (includes \$0.50 increase):
Students in all grades with free lunch

- Free

Students in all grades with reduced-price lunch

- \$0.40

Non-CEP Elementary School Students — Full-Pay

- \$ 2.65

Non-CEP Middle and High School Students — Full Pay

- \$ 2.75

Despite this increase, CCS’ 2022-2023 full-pay meal cost remains \$0.25 to \$1.00 lower than meal costs in comparable N.C. school districts.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offered multiple approvals and waivers that allowed school districts to provide free meals to all students without requiring families to qualify or submit school meal applications. The last of these USDA approvals and waivers will expire before the start of the 2022-2023 school year.

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), as defined by the USDA, is a non-pricing meal service option for schools and school districts in low-income areas. CEP allows the nation's highest poverty schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications. Approximately 73% of the district’s schools are CEP schools.

The memorandum that was presented to the Board may be viewed [here](#) through the BoardDocs portal. For more information about CCS' Child Nutrition Services and to find the free/reduced lunch application, please visit the [Child Nutrition webpage](#).

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