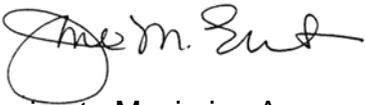




TO: P-12 Education Committee

FROM: Jhone M. Ebert 

SUBJECT: Innovative Strategies to Maximize Access to the Federal Child Nutrition Programs

DATE: January 11, 2018

AUTHORIZATION(S): 

SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

This item will provide the Board of Regents with an update regarding the New York State Education Department's (SED) efforts to expand access to all federal child nutrition programs and to optimize technology to improve program integrity, efficiency, transparency, and the availability of services.

Reason(s) for Consideration

For information and discussion.

Proposed Handling

This will come before the P-12 Education Committee for discussion at the January 2018 meeting of the Board of Regents.

Background Information

Of the approximately three million children growing up and attending schools in New York State, sixty-two percent reside in food insecure households and are eligible for free or reduced priced school meals.

SED is responsible for administering one of the largest National School Lunch Programs and the largest Summer Food Service Program in the country. New York State schools and summer sponsors annually receive more than \$1 billion in federal reimbursements for meals prepared and served to children. These funds not only support

the local economy but provide New York State children access to quality nutritious foods that promote normal growth, development, and readiness to learn.

SED's Child Nutrition Program Administration (CNPA) staff work closely with school administrators, business officials, and foodservice personnel to provide training, technical assistance, and guidance to assist schools in providing the highest level of services to their students.

Innovative Strategies to Improve Program Administration

CNPA is actively promoting farm to school initiatives, school breakfast and the Summer Food Service Program expansion and encouraging communities to develop robust local wellness policies to promote healthy school and community environments.

Several of New York's schools are successfully participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). This school year, over 1.5 million students are receiving breakfast and lunch at no charge every school day. School administrators are reporting positive benefits such as: all enrolled children having access to nutritious meals, healthy fund balances that reduce/omit the reliance on district subsidies and the elimination of unpaid meal debt and students being shamed or distressed from not having enough money to purchase meals.

As the federal oversight agency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) requires districts to utilize electronic means tested data to certify students as eligible for free meals. SED maintains memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-formerly Food Stamps) data and the New York State Department of Health for specific Medicaid eligibility data. CNPA is developing strategies to also improve access to foster care, homeless, migrant and runaway youth direct certification data systems. This initiative has increased the identification of eligible children, streamlined several reporting processes and has improved access to vital reports and data. USDA's headquarters has recognized the positive impact of SED's successful initiative and is sharing SED's efforts nationally as a best practice in their fall 2017 publication entitled Match to Meals.

CNPA is also in the process of implementing an automated review tool that will provide schools with a comprehensive evaluation of their programs and will identify areas of improvement to enhance and maintain fiscal and nutritional integrity.

Next Steps

SED will continue to maximize efforts to engage sustainable program partnerships, and expand community awareness to increase participation and access to these vital programs.