TO: Sponsors of School Nutrition Programs

FROM: Becky Leschner, Director, Food and Nutrition Service; Barry Shaffer, Supervisor, Adult Basic Education

DATE: February 28, 2007

SUBJECT: Eligibility of Participants in Specified Programs to Receive School Meal Benefits

This is to clarify the *specific conditions* under which participants in the following programs are eligible to receive School Nutrition Programs (SNP) meal benefits:

- General Educational Development (GED)
- Adult Diploma Program (ADP)
- Adult Basic Education (ABE)
- English as a Second Language (ESL)
- Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)
- English Language / Civics (EL/Civics)
- Even Start

According to U.S. Department of Agriculture Instruction 776-7, rev. 1, "Eligibility of Schools and Institutions to Participate in School Nutrition Programs":

> GED programs or regular high school completion programs which operate during regular school hours in an eligible school may participate in the meal service. Reimbursement may be claimed for meals served to the students attending such programs in accordance with program regulations.

In order to be considered "attending" a GED program or a high school completion program (Adult Diploma Program), a portion of the participant's school day must be devoted to one of the GED test areas or to classes receiving high school diploma credit. The program must be operating during some portion of the regular K-12 school day. The age of a participant is not a factor in eligibility for school meal benefits as long as the participant is currently attending a GED or high school completion program.

Therefore meals served to participants in alternative programs such as those listed above may be claimed for SNP reimbursement *only if*:

1. The student is either: (a) enrolled in a GED program and devoting some portion of the school day to one or more GED test areas, or (b) enrolled in a high school completion program and devoting some portion of the school day to one or more classes for high school credit, and
2. The GED or high school completion program, or at least some portion of it, operates during the regular school day.

The school food authority must maintain documentation that participants receiving SNP meal benefits have met these eligibility standards.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) ABE Office has further clarified this eligibility in terms of the national ABE system for student classification – the ABE National Reporting System (NRS). ABE students meet the eligibility qualification for SNP benefits if they (1) are enrolled in the NRS system as “Low Intermediate”, “High Intermediate”, “Low Adult Secondary”, or “High Adult Secondary” students, *and* (2) are actively working toward completion of a GED or diploma program. All six levels of ESL adult students and the lowest two levels of ABE students are *not* eligible for SNP meal benefits.

With regard to ABE Family Literacy adult participants, the same interpretation given above applies. That is, the adult ABE student in a Family Literacy program is eligible only if they are enrolled as “Low Intermediate”, “High Intermediate”, “Low Adult Secondary”, or “High Adult Secondary” level.

If you have any questions about this information, please contact MDE Food and Nutrition Service at 651-582-8526, 800-366-8922, or e-mail to fns@state.mn.us.