



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | Mark Johnson, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*

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TO: School Nutrition Administrators

FROM: Lynn Harvey, Chief
School Nutrition Services

DATE: September 7, 2017

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Yesterday, Governor Cooper declared a State of Emergency in North Carolina that went into effect at 8:00 AM today. According to the Governor, Hurricane Irma is a powerful storm that may impact all 100 counties across the State. While the impact on each county may be different, we want to make you aware of the many possible options for providing meals to students who are evacuated from or reside in a disaster area.

The attached USDA Policy Memorandum (SP 46-2014) is the most recent Federal guidance pertaining to disaster responses. This document will be helpful in determining your LEA's options in providing school-based and community food assistance. Please refer to this guidance to assist you in the decision-making process.

Earlier today, a memorandum was issued to Superintendents and School Nutrition Administrators seeking support to notify Principals of the process of identifying students who have been evacuated from or residing in disaster areas. The process identified in the memorandum encourages Principals to provide the names of evacuated or otherwise affected students, in writing, each day to the School Nutrition Manager so students could receive meals at no cost "on the spot" and with no delays. Principals are also encouraged to work with their district and/or school level McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act designee to certify students as homeless as quickly as possible. A copy of the memorandum is attached for your review.

Students identified as homeless under these disaster conditions should be accounted for as "visiting students" since they are not enrolled in PowerSchool. At the Point of Sale/Service, these students' statuses should be keyed as "visiting students with free status" or as "generic students with free status." Please maintain on file the list of student evacuees provided by the Principal and subsequently certified as homeless by the designated Homeless Determining Official. This documentation may be used to resolve any questions pertaining potential overclaims in the School Nutrition Technology System. This documentation may also be required during the single audit. In the event the LEA chooses to enroll the students in PowerSchool, these students would be issued a Student Identification Number which would be used for capturing meal counts.

SCHOOL NUTRITION SERVICES SAFE AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS SUPPORT DIVISION

Lynn Harvey, *Ed.D., RDN, LDN, FAND, SNS Chief* | lynn.harvey@dpi.nc.gov

6324 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-6324 | Phone (919) 807-3506 | Fax (919) 807-3516

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In addition to meals served in the National School Lunch Program, the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) are available to ensure children continue to receive nutritious meals during a disaster that requires unanticipated school closure. To do this, SFSP sponsors should immediately check your site applications to ensure you have checked the box indicating that you are requesting Disaster Response approval for the sites to operate as an emergency meal site during unanticipated school closures. Submit the application to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction for approval. SSO sponsors should identify the sites and send an email message to Cynthia Ervin at Cynthia.ervin@dpi.nc.gov . A brochure explaining the Summer Nutrition Programs is provided for your convenience.

We have reached out to the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to begin the process of seeking disaster-related waivers as needed. We realize there is a high probability some LEAs may be challenged to meet the meal pattern requirements given potential shortages of certain foods and/or milk. At this time, State agencies are authorized to issue waivers from the requirement for fluid milk, but only when there is a documented situation where the SFA cannot obtain fluid milk. We have been advised that we must take each situation on a case-by-case basis and that any shortages must be documented prior to considering a waiver. It is also possible that various communities will be impacted such that many children/families become eligible for Disaster SNAP benefits. I urge you to communicate as quickly as possible with your Zone Consultant/Specialist should you experience conditions that cause shortages and we will lift those up to the SERO as soon as we receive them.

Should you discover the need for a waiver or other alternative condition for meal service, your first line of contact will be the Zone Consultant and/or Zone Specialist. These important points of contact will be on stand-by to receive your communications over the next few days/weeks. Should you need technical assistance, waivers or other support in order to provide meals to students, please direct these requests initially to the Zone staff who will extend them to the Raleigh office who will reach out to the SERO on your behalf. Please make sure your Zone Consultant/Specialist has your correct emergency contact information and that you have the current emergency contact information for the Zone Consultant/Specialist.

If you have not already done so, please begin making disaster preparations by ensuring your inventory of food and supplies is current. In the event the SFA's food and supplies are needed for shelters and other emergency food assistance purposes, a current inventory will enable you to be reimbursed by the FEMA or the Red Cross. We would also encourage you to consider options for storing chilled and frozen foods in the event of a power outage.

We will continue to be available to assist you through this process. We encourage you to take the appropriate measures to attend to your safety and well-being and that of your loved ones. We wish you safe passage through this storm.

LH/dm

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