

Re-1J schools' free and reduced price meal eligibility announced

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Holyoke School District Re-1J recently announced its policy for children who may receive free and reduced price meals served under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Local school officials will use the following size and income criteria for determining eligibility:

Family Size, 1, free meals, yearly income, \$14,079, reduced meals, yearly income, \$20,036; 2, \$18,941, \$26,955; 3, \$23,803, \$33,874; 4, \$28,665, \$40,793; 5, \$33,527, \$47,712; 6, \$54,631; 7, \$43,251, \$61,550; 8, \$48,113, \$68,469.

For each additional family member, add \$4,862 to yearly income for free meals and \$6,919 to yearly income for reduced meal price eligibility.

Children from families whose income is at or below the levels shown are eligible for free or reduced price meals.

Application forms are being sent to all homes with a letter to parents. Additional copies are available at the principal's office in each school. The information provided on the application is confidential and will be used only for the purpose of determining eligibility and verifying data. Applications from families receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (formerly the Food Stamp Program) need only to list the children's names, respective SNAP case number and the signature of an adult household member.

All other households that would qualify based upon income must show the names of all household members related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives or friends), the amount of gross income each person received last month and source and the signature of an adult household member and that adult's social security number, or check the box if the adult does not have a social security number. The information on the application may be verified by the school or other program officials at any time during the school year.

In certain cases, foster children are also eligible for these benefits. If a family has foster children living with them and wishes to apply for meals, they should contact the school.

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Under the provision of the policy, Tammy Kroeger, Holyoke Elementary School, will review applications and determine eligibility. If a parent is dissatisfied with the decision, a request may be made to discuss it with the determining official. A formal appeal may be made either orally or in writing to Sharon Thompson, Director of Budget and Finance, Administration Office, for a hearing to appeal the decision. The policy contains an outline of the hearing procedure.

Applications may be submitted any time during the school year. Those who are not eligible now but have a decrease in income, become unemployed, have an increase in family size, or become eligible for SNAP benefits, may fill out an application at that time.

Each school has a copy of the complete policy which may be reviewed by any interested party.