

P-EBT SY21-22 Upload Training Q&As

Campus Eligibility:

1. The school was not tracking COVID absences. If the school was never closed due to COVID and never offered virtual instruction, would the first time a student had five consecutive excused absences make the campus eligible?

Yes, a student being absent for five (5) consecutive excused school days would make the campus eligible for P-EBT.

2. For campus eligibility, if a student was sent home for a portion or half of the day due to COVID, does this partial day count towards the five days for campus eligibility?

Yes, partial days count towards the five days for campus eligibility.

3. For campus school closures, does it also have to meet five consecutive closed days? Or, any number of days?

Each campus has to meet the five-day eligibility first. After that, any number of days related to COVID school closure would be included.

4. Does the school closure have to be related to COVID-19?

Correct, school closures included as part of the number of eligible days for P-EBT must be related to COVID-19.

5. Would it be easier to create an attendance code for COVID-related absences? Our district has been keeping track using excel and other additional forms.

Some districts have created specific COVID attendance codes, but it is up to each district on how those are defined.

6. For NSLP campuses are only economic disadvantage PEIMS codes of 01 or 02 eligible? For CEP and P2 campuses, are any economic disadvantage codes eligible?

All students enrolled in CEP or P2 campus are eligible regardless of their economic disadvantage status. For all other NSLP campuses, only codes 01 and 02 are eligible.

7. If an LEA is not participating in the NSLP program but they did have parents complete a lunch application, are they eligible?

The campus must be approved to operate NSLP in SY21-22 in order for students to be eligible for P-EBT.

8. Once a school qualifies with 5 consecutive days, when reporting student days eligible, do we report any and all days during the year, or only the student days that occur on or after the school's eligibility? Scenario: School has 5 consecutive days beginning Sept. 15. Student has COVID 2 COVID absences prior to this in August. Are those August absences reported?

Absences that occurred prior to the campus meeting the 5 consecutive-day requirement should not be reported.

9. Do the five (5) days for campus eligibility start over for Semester 2 since this is submitted at a later time?

No, once campus eligibility is met for the school year, it applies all year.

10. What if the district was closed for four (4) days due to COVID, do those four (4) days count toward the five (5) days for campus eligibility?

If the district was closed for four (4) consecutive days due to COVID-19, and on the 5th day had students absent due to COVID-19 or attending virtually due to COVID-19, that would meet the 5 consecutive day requirement. The requirement for campus eligibility is as follows:

- a. *Must be approved to operate the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)*

- *NSLP-approved campuses also include those operating the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) and those NSLP campuses electing the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) or Provision 2 (P2)*

- b. *Must have a school closure OR reduced attendance or hours for at least five (5) consecutive days due to the COVID emergency in the current school year*

- *Reduced attendance refers to **at least one single student** at the school with five consecutive days of COVID-19-related absences or virtual attendance*
- *This requirement must be met at the individual campus level, not the district level*

11. Our district did not do applications this year. We only did the economic survey. Can you clarify if the surveys are acceptable or do we need to send out applications?

The economic survey is not acceptable for SY21-22 P-EBT. If a district is operating SSO, the NSLP household meal application must be accessible to families in order to establish eligibility. We understand that there are several factors that go into a district's decision to collect applications from the full student body, so we are not recommending that solely for the purpose of P-EBT.

12. If the school does not close, but has one student who has been absent for five (5) days due to COVID, then the campus meets eligibility?

Correct

13. How are the agencies checking the eligibility for these campuses?

There is no verification of eligibility. We are trusting the school districts to upload correct information. Certification language in the upload portal was added that asks the school districts to confirm that what they are submitting is accurate.

14. I thought campuses participating in SSO just had to have the NSLP Application available. Was this communicated as mandatory?

The NSLP meal application should be available to families. It is not mandatory to distribute it to the full student body. That is a district-level decision, and we know multiple factors go into that decision. But, in August of 2020, TEA and TDA presented in a [webinar](#) discussing the impact that the data from the NSLP Application has on other district funding. A [TAA](#) was also distributed in November requesting that districts try to obtain the NSLP Application from parents for the other funding impacts.

15. What qualifies as "Reduced Attendance" for Campus Eligibility? Is it below a certain threshold?

Reduced attendance refers to include virtual instruction for at least one student being absent due to a COVID-related reason.

Student Eligibility:

16. Are students enrolled in CEP or P2 campuses with an economic disadvantage code of 99 eligible?

Yes, all students enrolled in CEP or P2 campus are eligible regardless of their economic disadvantage status.

17. For student eligibility, districts can only report whole numbers. Would districts include partial days as a full day?

Yes, districts should include a partial day as a full day.

18. What is the maximum number of days a student can be reported for P-EBT absences and remote?

There is no maximum number of days. The actual number of days of closure, absences, and/or virtual attendance should be reported.

19. Is there a deadline for families to submit a meal application to determine eligibility for this school year and receive P-EBT benefits?

We recommend that parents submit the meal application as soon as possible. However, if a student is certified eligible through the NSLP household application, the eligibility will be considered retroactive to the beginning of the school year for the purposes of P-EBT.

20. If a student is sick on Thurs/Fri, through the weekend and is also out Mon/Tues, does that technically count as five consecutive days? Would I report that student?

Only instructional days should be considered. It should not include holidays or weekends.

21. By "eligible virtual attendance" does eligible relate to ADA, meaning ADA-9 students do not count?

Eligible virtual attendance is not necessarily related to ADA for P-EBT purposes. If a district funded virtual learning because of COVID-19, those days are eligible for P-EBT if a student received virtual instruction.

22. If a district is not tracking COVID absences, then the five days or more of excused absences can be applied.

Correct, this was received from USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) provided ONLY if a district is not tracking COVID-related absences. It must be five or more consecutive excused absences.

23. A student is participating in virtual learning due to a COVID-related reason (parent's fear of getting sick). However, the student is absent from virtual learning (not because of a COVID-related reason). Should the campus count this day as part of the P-EBT eligible days?

The total number of days the student received virtual instruction needs to be reported. If the student was absent, they still would have received virtual instruction, so those days can be included.

24. If we are a CEP campus, are we only uploading scholars who have been absent for five (5) or more days?

This model would only be used if COVID-related absences are not being tracked by the district.

25. If the student was 01 or 02 at the beginning of the school year and lost eligibility would they still be reported

Once a student becomes eligible for free or reduced-price meals (code 01 or 02) under NSLP, they maintain that eligibility for the whole school year.

26. For the purposes of P-EBT, if a child becomes eligible for free or reduced-price meals (code 01 or 02) at any time during SY21-22, the meal eligibility is considered retroactive to the beginning of the school year. If a campus was closed Sept 1, 2, 3, 4 but opened on the 5th then closed again on Oct 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, the LEA's eligibility would begin on Oct 1 not Sept 1 correct?

Correct, unless virtual instruction was offered and/or a student was absent due to COVID.

27. Once the school is eligible, then the student's COVID-related absences/virtual instructional days are eligible (report any number of days for them). But can you please review again the 'new' eligibility for students that are absent due to a non-COVID reason?

When a district is not tracking COVID-related absences, a student is eligible for P-EBT if they have five (5) or more consecutive excused absences. A combination of the two models cannot be used.

28. Anyone living with a direct certified (DC) student we code as 99, so should we be coding these students 01?

All children in a household with someone on the direct certification list are eligible for free or reduced-price meals through NSLP. PEIMS coding should be applied accordingly. Please refer to the TSDS data standards as nothing for P-EBT changes how to code the students.

29. Is it correct that all absences have to be excused in order to be reported?

The number of days a student is reported as being eligible for P-EBT must either be due to COVID absences, virtual instruction or school closure. But, if COVID absences are not being tracked, then students with five or more consecutive excused absences will be reported.

30. It was stated earlier that the economic survey is not acceptable. Would we not report a student coded eco dis based on the survey?

That is correct - only students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals through the NSLP household meal application or through direct certification. The exception to this is CEP or P2 campuses, where all students are considered eligible regardless of form.

Upload Process:

31. Just to clarify non-CEP/P2 campuses they cannot upload Eco Dis 99 students.

CEP/P2 campuses can upload all students as long as they meet the absence criteria. For non-CEP/P2 campuses, 99s cannot be included.

32. What will happen if the district chooses not to upload any students?

We highly recommend that districts upload their eligible students. If an appeal is filed by the parent with HHS, then all of those requests for review (RFRs) will be sent to the district individually for verification. This will be a significant burden to handle the RFRs on an individual basis.

33. The Student ID in the file example is currently blank. If a district provides that data in the file, would that be the local Student ID number from their SIS?

Yes, the Local ID is what will be reported in the Student ID column. Please reference the upload guide for the file layout requirements.

34. Instead of the U indicator, when there is a match to an existing student record, why can't the system simply overwrite the data for that record

instead of requiring the manual process to add the U indicator? This could be very time-consuming especially for larger districts.

The system is not designed to determine if the record being upload is meant to be a new upload or an update to an existing upload. School districts would need to indicate that information in the file uploads.

35. Will some step-by-step information be shared?

The Help Guide contains step-by-step information. The webinar recording, training slides and upload slides have been shared with ESCs and vendors.

36. What if a district was not tracking COVID-related absences in first semester, but then tracked them 2nd semester? Can a district report excused absences from 1st semester, then report covid absences from 2nd semester?

Yes. A combination of the two models is not allowed within the same semester.

37. If we have some students who were sick in August and then again in January, do they qualify for both months? Is the student reported twice?

All days the student was out due to COVID should be reported, provided the campus had met the 5-day closure or reduced attendance requirement at the time of the absence. Please see campus eligibility requirements. The August absence would be reported in the first semester upload and the January absence would be reported in the second semester upload.

38. If the campus was not closed due to COVID for five (5) days but DID have students out for five (5) consecutive days because of COVID, do they submit a file?

Yes, a file would be submitted.

39. The economic disadvantage code 99 students are eligible to be turned in. This code is determined by filling out local income survey form. Yet, TDA responded to an ESC that locally developed forms are not considered. Please clarify.

For CEP/P2 schools, the economic disadvantage code does not need to be considered. We understand some of these students may be coded 99. However, for the purposes of P-EBT, all of the students attending CEP/P2 campuses are considered income eligible.

40. Once a school qualifies with 5 consecutive days, when reporting student days eligible, do we report any and all days during the year, or only the

student days that occur on or after the school's eligibility? Scenario: School has 5 consecutive days beginning Sept. 15. Student has COVID 2 COVID absences prior to this in August. Are those August absences reported?

Absences that occurred prior to the campus meeting the 5 consecutive-day requirement should not be reported.

Miscellaneous:

- Is the locally developed form not being considered for school year 2021-2022?

That is correct. Only direct certification, the NSLP household application, or CEP/P2 campus enrollment are considered for eligibility.

- If a student submits the NSLP survey now and qualifies, is that student eligible?

Yes, if a student is certified eligible through the NSLP household application, the eligibility will be considered retroactive to the beginning of the school year for the purposes of P-EBT.

- What role do you recommend the Child Nutrition Department have in this collection?

We recommend that the Child Nutrition (CN) Department and PEIMS coordinator work closely to ensure all students eligible for free or reduced-price meals are coded correctly in the PEIMS system. This requires timely notification from CN in the case of any status changes. CN must conduct matching to the direct certification list after the 5th day of each month and notify PEIMS if a student has become eligible for free or reduced-price meals. If CN receives an NSLP household meal application from a family, they must process it within 10 days and notify PEIMS if the student is eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

- Once a student qualifies for free/reduced you can retroactively report the absences that qualify but if the reverse happens (where they lose free/reduced eligibility), you can't count the student's absences?

Once a student becomes eligible for free or reduced-price meals under NSLP, they maintain that eligibility for the whole school year.

- How much money will a day be worth? Or will there be a minimum and maximum a parent will receive? Does each student that qualifies get \$7.10 per day they claim? So, if they are out 10 days, they get \$71?

A day is worth \$7.10 and there's no minimum or maximum the parent will receive. All benefits will be issued based on how many days the student was not physically present on campus due to a COVID-related reason. That's correct, a child who is out for 10 days will receive \$71.

- If a CEP campus is automatically eligible for P-EBT how will the daily rate of \$7.10 for each student be calculated?

The way we calculate is through upload submission indicating # of days the student was absent, attending virtually or the campus was closed. The CEP/P2 automatic eligibility refers specifically to eligibility for free or reduced-price meals through NSLP.

- What is the maximum number of records in file?

10,000 records per file

- When ESCs are training districts, is it a correct statement that they should not include any students that have 0 absences?

Correct

- It is my understanding there are no state waivers for closures due to COVID. Wouldn't those days be considered non-instructional days per the LEA's calendar? The students would not have an attendance record if the school was closed. How should LEAS handle those instances?

This has been a topic of conversation among all three agencies. We cannot state how to handle those as every vendor and/or district tracks differently, but COVID-related school closure days are eligible. We do realize that those closures are considered non-instructional days in an LEA's school calendar.

- Will we need to continue this process next year? Will this eventually become a PEIMS collection?

Currently, TEA does not have the authority to collect parent information, so we do not anticipate this being folded into TSDS or PEIMS at this time. We do not know at this time how long P-EBT will continue. All three agencies depend on FNS for guidance for future years.

- There may be a concern from LEAs that parents will request a review and request funds, even though they were truant and not out due to COVID. What guidance can you provide on that?

Districts need to use their best judgment based on their specific policies and the requirements provided in this training. We are not able to provide guidance other than that.

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