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## Regional School Unit 57

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*RSU 57 prepares respectful, responsible and creative thinkers for success in the global community.*

March 29, 2020

Dear RSU #57 Community,

First, I'd like to apologize for the mixed messages you may be receiving regarding the current structure of our School Nutrition Program. As we strive to support our students during this unprecedented time, we have been making decisions and operating in a mode of constant change with guidance from state and federal departments. As a result, information has sometimes been shared in a disjointed manner, often with orders/directives being presented and being modified soon after.

There are two nutrition programs that we participate in annually, and both programs are directed by the USDA. During the regular school year, the National School Lunch Program (in a physical school building with school in session) is for students whose family qualifies (based on a financial application). The second program is our Summer Food Service Program (at sites determined to have 50% or more of students qualifying for free or reduced meals) and is for children who are 18 years of age and under. Both programs require the Nutrition Department to submit information to the USDA based on use.

The program being offered at this time (open meal sites & designated delivery sites), is considered a Summer Food Service Program model and **ALL CHILDREN WHO ARE 18 YEARS OF AGE AND UNDER QUALIFY TO ACCESS THE MEALS**. Currently, the USDA guidelines require a child to be present when accessing the meals. This is not a RSU #57 guideline. If this requirement changes we will let you know, as we recognize that this may be difficult at times.

We would like to clarify that food is not being wasted; if it is not distributed one day it is properly stored and is being distributed on the next day.

We shared the following adjustments to the program in my recent update:

- Beginning Monday, March 30th the two open meal sites located at LINE School and Massabesic Middle School will be open for pick up on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays only. Children 18 and under that are in need of food will have the option to receive up to two days worth of meals, free of charge. Children must be present at the time of pick up.
- The meal delivery bus routes will continue to run Monday through Friday. Children 18 and under that are in need of food will have the option to receive breakfast and lunch each day, free of charge. Children must be present at the time of pick up. Meal delivery bus routes are being updated frequently so please refer to the RSU 57 website or App for the most up to date routes and times.

My reference to “**in need**” in these updates is not based on a financial need because all children under 18 are eligible. We offer two days of meals to be given at open meal sites (LINE & MMS), thereby reducing the need for daily student pickup.

During this time of remote schooling, messages have not been clear in the public and we too have inadvertently confused both programs in our messaging. As a result, we have been made aware that individuals who do not meet these qualifications are accessing this program and some people are accessing multiple sites. This may be an honest mistake due to the confusing information; however, when this happens, we are unable to plan, prepare, and distribute on a regular and reliable basis to our students.

We have also been made aware that some talking points for departmental use had been posted to the public. This was done with good intentions in an attempt to share information in support of the program; however, this information had not been reviewed with updated guidelines. We will do a better job at monitoring our own messaging.

We thank you for the support. We ask that you only seek information from the district website or by contacting the Nutrition Department at (207) 247-3221 x2257.

Again, my sincere apologies for any information that has caused confusion.

Stay safe and well in these unsettling times.

Larry Malone  
Superintendent of Schools