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Dartmouth Public School Families,

While the return to school this fall is not what any of us envisioned, I want to assure you that Schools Nutrition Services is working hard to create a welcoming and safe environment to provide healthy meals for all Dartmouth Public Schools students. We are so excited to provide our students with nourishing and nutritious meals that will support them, both in school and at home.

There will be some significant changes to the School Nutrition program this fall. The USDA (the federal agency that oversees the nation's school lunch and school breakfast program) allowed all schools in the US to provide meals at no cost to all students through December 31<sup>st</sup> or when funds run out. What this means is ALL students will eat for free through this USDA extension period. All students, regardless of eligibility are able to receive one free breakfast and one free lunch every academic day until December 31<sup>st</sup>. We understand the vital importance of providing meals at no cost for all students across our community during this unprecedented time. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has requested that the USDA extend free meals for all students for the entire school year. However, no decision has been made by the USDA.

Families should still submit a household application to determine eligibility for free and reduced price school meals in order to qualify for any additional benefits as well as have a seamless transition when school meals transition to a paid school meal program. Therefore, we strongly encourage families to complete an application for free and reduced priced meals as soon as possible. A paper application is available to download [here](#) or for quicker results may be submitted online at <https://www.myschoolapps.com/>

In addition, we also encourage families to apply for SNAP benefits. SNAP provides monthly cash benefits (on an EBT card) to purchase groceries for eligible families. To apply for SNAP, visit DTA Connect at <https://dtaconnect.eohhs.mass.gov/> or call the Project Bread Food Source Hotline at 1-800-645-8333. Families approved for SNAP are directly eligible to receive free meals at school.

We are finalizing our plans for how, when and where meals for in-school and remote learners will be provided and we will be sharing those plans with families as soon as possible. Visit the district website or follow us on social media for the latest news and updates. Please reach out with any questions you might have. Your children are the reason we love our jobs and we are here to make sure that they are fueled with good food and ready to learn!

Best,

Jeanne Sheridan