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Subject: MSBA Urges Support for Extending FRPL Application Deadline

To our education leaders,

We are reaching out to all of you today to share our support for extending the deadline for free or reduced price lunch applications and income verification from December 15 to January 4th.

Districts and schools are struggling with getting free and reduced lunch forms returned by the December 15th deadline. The pandemic and distance learning has exacerbated an already difficult process. Families are very confused about filling out a form, as under the USDA Covid-19 waiver, schools have been providing critical nutritional services to families without income verification. Distance learning has made it even more difficult.

As you know, the free and reduced lunch counts are used for calculating compensatory revenue for public and charter schools and Title I allocations for all schools (public and non-public) as the distribution is based on poverty. These family and children are the most impacted by COVID-19 and schools serving these children will need to provide educational, social, and emotional supports to address the challenges they have encountered during this pandemic.

We believe an extension, if only two weeks, will allow districts to continue to contact families and increase the number of applicants.

MSBA urges you to support legislation seeking to extend the application for free or reduced price lunch for the fall 2020 count of eligible students.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Kim Lewis and Denise Dittrich

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