

Martensdale-St.Marys CSD

390 Burlington
Martensdale, Iowa 50160

When the 2021-2022 school year ends, so do free meals for every student. While the federal government funded a program that allowed all students access to free meals during the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress recently declined to continue funding this program in 2022-2023.

We understand this change may cause you to worry. However, there are important steps you can take today to make sure your child(ren) receives access to benefits for their meals at the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year. What does this mean for you? Your family will be incurring daily expenses for meals this coming year unless you qualify for the Free or Reduced program.

Complete a 2021-2022 Application Now for Free and Reduced Meals.

1. If your student qualifies for the 2021-2022 free or reduced meal program, they can still receive benefits for the first 30 days until the new 2022-2023 application is approved, but we strongly encourage you to apply now.
 - a. Complete the 2021-2022 application by the end of this school year. If you are unsure if you have already completed the 2021-2022 application or if your family is Direct Certified through the State of Iowa, you can call 641-764-2466 and speak with Mrs. Tomlinson to verify. After you fill out the 2021-2022 application and it is approved, you will have a 30-day grace period at the start of the 2022-2023 school year. At the beginning of 2022-2023 you will need to complete the new application to maintain your free or reduced status.
 - b. After July 1, 2022, you can fill out the 2022-2023 online application which will be available on the district's website located at www.mstm.us. Even if you complete the 2021-2022 application, you will still need to complete the 2022-2023 application as this is an annual application. Please note that the income guidelines have increased for 2022-2023 to allow for more families to qualify on applications. Please do not hesitate to apply for this meal assistance program.
2. It is important to budget for the cost of school lunches for next year (if you do not qualify for free and reduced meals). You may also need to discuss with your child(ren) about setting spending limits and expectations to avoid unexpected costs. We do have the option to block extra purchases if the parent requests it by notifying Mrs. Tomlinson at 641-764-2466. This way you will not incur additional costs for extra food items on top of their meal purchase costs.

Families that do not qualify for free or reduced meals can start depositing money into their student(s) account to prepare for the cost of school lunches next year. Information on new meal prices for the 2022-2023 school year will be available soon. It will be posted on the website in late July 2022 along with the new 2022-2023 Free and Reduced meal application.

3. Pay Off Negative School Lunch Balances. If your student has a negative lunch account balance, we encourage you to pay that off as soon as possible and then begin depositing money into your lunch account to prepare for the 2022-2023 school year. All funds that are deposited now will carry forward into the 2022-2023 school year.

To apply for free or reduced meals, please complete an online application through our website www.mstm.us. Just a reminder that this process is completely confidential. For assistance completing the application or for questions, please contact Ms. Tomlinson @ 641-764-2466 or email karen_tomlinson@mstm.us