

**REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO USE  
DIRECT CERTIFICATION  
FOR FREE STUDENT MEALS PROCEDURES**

**Direct Certification - A description of the procedures used in direct certification must be provided for approval.** Guidance for direct certification is located in the "Eligibility Guidance for Free and Reduced Price Meals" to certify children as eligible for free meals, free milk, or free afterschool snacks as applicable. The procedure description must include:

- A minimum of three personal data identifiers from the school division student database and Department of Social Services database that will be used for matching to ensure that only eligible children receive the benefits to which they are entitled. Only the names obtained from the Department of Social Services list can be used for eligibility determination.
- How households will be notified of their eligibility. A statement must be included in the letter to households that the household must notify the school when they are no longer certified to receive food stamps/Virginia Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and that they may decline free meal/milk/afterschool snack benefits (Attachment E2).
- The procedures used for distributing applications to all other children to prevent the overt identification of children approved under the direct certification procedures.
- How the master list of students eligible for free meals is maintained in the central office and/or school, will indicate those approved by direct certification and status as to enrolled, withdrawn, or transferred.

**If the local Department of Social Services data list will be used for direct certification, the personal data identifiers utilized to ensure only eligible children receive their benefits must be listed.** The signature of a responsible official of the Department of Social Services certifying that the children listed are members of households currently certified to receive food stamps or VA TANF and the date must be a part of the documentation kept on file.

Documentation for children certified under the direct certification procedures must be readily retrievable by school and be maintained for three years after the end of the Federal fiscal year to which they pertain or until any outstanding audit is closed.

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(Fill in Name) School Division requests permission to directly certify children for free meals based on food stamp or VA TANF eligibility. We understand that the data may be used solely for determining eligibility and will not be used for any other purpose.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature - Division Superintendent

Data and format requested from state Department of Social Services via Department of Education:

- Computer disk
- Paper print-out