



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** June 30, 2022

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### **CCS Encourages Families to Complete A Free and Reduced School Meal Application**

Completing the application will help preserve funding for the district

With the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announcement that school meals will not be free for all students nationwide during the upcoming school year, Caledonia Community Schools (CCS) is encouraging qualifying families to complete a Free and Reduced Price Meal Application. Annually, CCS receives approximately \$920,000 of federal and state funding based on the percentage of its families that qualify for free and reduced-price school meals. This funding allows the district to provide at-risk positions (Counselors, Reading Interventionists, Title I paraprofessionals, etc.) throughout the district. Additionally, CCS families who qualify for free and reduced-price school meals also qualify for free SAT fee waivers and free test reports among other possible benefits.

In order to alleviate the burden parents face as we transition back to paying for school meals, CCS in cooperation with Aramark Foods has decided to not raise school meal costs for all students for the 2022 - 2023 school year. "These provisions have a tremendous impact on both making sure that kids are in the classroom and nourished, but also preparing them to be ready to learn. We want to help families whose income may have shifted suddenly during the pandemic," said Finance Director Sara DeVries.

"At CCS, we receive Title I and 31A At-Risk funding which is determined by the percentage of our families that qualify for free or reduced-price meals. This is an important funding source for our district, which could be greatly decreased if families do not complete a free or reduced school meal application," said Dr. Dedrick Martin, superintendent of CCS. "While the funding level is determined by the percentage of our families that qualify, **the funds we receive benefit all students across the district.** The funding is meant to help students who are at risk of falling behind academically and provides supplemental instruction."

Completing a free and reduced school meal application is completely confidential. Students who qualify are not identified in any way at school. Applications will be available starting July 1 and can be completed online at <https://caledonia.familyportal.cloud/>. Please contact Mimi Mahaney-Stalzer (mahaneym@calschools.org) in our food service department with any questions, or if you need a paper application mailed out to you.

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