

September 16, 2019

Dear Vermont Parent, Grandparent or Guardian:

At the beginning of this school year you were told that children in your household were eligible for free school meals. Your school district notified you based on data provided to them by the Vermont Agency of Education. Unfortunately, the data we provided to your school were outdated. Children in your household were directly certified last year based on your family's participation in the 3SquaresVT and/or Reach Up programs. Because your family is not participating this year, children in your household cannot be directly certified for free meals.

Please note: Children in your household may still be eligible for free school meals. However, you must complete an application. Your school district has provided the enclosed information on how to complete the application.

This situation resulted from a bug within the agency's data management system. Fortunately, it was detected and quickly corrected, and we are confident that this will not happen again. However, the problem was not discovered until several districts had accessed the outdated data, which is why you received the notification that children in your household were eligible.

Again, this does not necessarily mean that children in your household are not eligible for free meals, but it does mean that you will need to complete an application to determine their eligibility for this school year.

On behalf of the Vermont Agency of Education, I am writing to offer my sincerest apologies to you and your family for this error. We recognize that many families rely on these programs, and we know that this may cause confusion and hardship for you and your family.

At the Agency of Education, we believe school nutrition programs that provide free school meals to our young Vermonters are an essential part of helping all kids succeed. We apologize that this happened and are committed to making sure this kind of error does not happen again.

If you have questions or concerns that you would like to share with us, please contact us at (802) 479-1030 or aoe.infoED@vermont.gov.



Daniel M. French, Ed.D.
Secretary of Education

