



January 10, 2020

Mr. Jerry Keane, Superintendent
Post Falls School District
206 W. Mullan
Post Falls, ID 83854

Dear Superintendent Keane,

On November 14-15, 2019, State Department of Education (SDE) Coordinators Lynda Westphal, Jennifer Butler, Teresa Goodsell, and Jessica Spoja, along with USDA Sr. Program Specialist John Kirwin conducted an Administrative Review of Post Falls School District for the following United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs:

- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- Afterschool Snack Program (ASSP)
- USDA Foods

The SA reviewed the following sites:

- Greensferry Elementary School
- Seltice Elementary School
- New Visions Alternative High School

The State agency would like to thank Becky Elmore and the staff of Post Falls School District for their hard work operating the school nutrition programs.

Overview

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, amended by the addition of Section 201 to the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010, requires a unified accountability system designed to ensure that participating school food authorities (SFA) comply with USDA requirements. The objectives of the Administrative Review are to:

- Determine whether the SFA meets program requirements
- Provide technical assistance
- Secure any needed corrective action
- Assess fiscal action and, when applicable, recover improperly paid funds

Review Frequency and Scope of Review

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act mandates state agencies conduct an Administrative Review a minimum of one time during a three-year cycle, however Idaho has received a waiver to conduct reviews on a five-year schedule to evaluate Critical and General Areas of Review, including:

- Performance Standard 1: Meal Access and Reimbursement
- Performance Standard 2: Meal Pattern and Nutritional Quality
- General Areas of Review: Resource Management, Food Safety, Local School Wellness Policy, Smart Snacks, Civil Rights, Buy American, Professional Standards, and other areas of general program compliance.

These were the SA determined findings and the SFA response to the findings:

Finding and Corrective Action Plan (CAP)

Finding 1 - Certification and Benefit Issuance

Nine miscategorized and incomplete applications were discovered. Some applications with unrelated families were given the same application number. One application with the same address was discovered, however different housing numbers were indicated as being one economic unit, which may not be correct. This resulted in a 1.90% application error rate.

Required Corrective Action: Upload copies of the notification letters sent to the families changing determination into MyIdahoCNP. Adverse action requires allowing 10 calendar days prior to making the change on the benefit issuance list. Upload the new benefit issuance list once all changes have been made.

Due Date for CAP Completion: December 6, 2019

Corrective Action Response: Letters to the families were sent and corrections were made on the Benefit Issuance list which was uploaded in MyIdahoCNP on December 2, 2019.

Finding 2 - Verification

In reviewing a sample of verified applications, one application was found to be verified incorrectly due to a math error. This error was corrected during the review, resulting in three students changing from reduced to free benefits. Other issues with the verification process were discovered, including: a confirmation review did not take place, no notice of adverse action existed, and adverse benefits were changed the day the adverse benefit was determined rather than allowing 10 calendar days as required. The "Official Use Only" box on the free and reduced application was not completed to demonstrate the process and results of verification.

Required Corrective Action: Upload a plan into MyIdahoCNP that outlines the steps the SFA will take to ensure following an accurate process when conducting verification beginning with a confirmation review and ending with sending a notice with the results of verification. Additionally, upload a template notice of adverse action into MyIdahoCNP that includes all the required elements to be used going forward.

Due Date for CAP Completion: December 6, 2019

Corrective Action Response: On November 19, 2019 a nine-step process for Verification was uploaded with a sample letter to be sent to families.

Finding 3 – Smart Snacks in Schools (repeat finding)

Schools must meet the minimum requirement in 7 CFR 210.11, for all foods and beverages sold in school (also known as Smart Snacks in School) to increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day and support a healthy school environment. Vending, school stores, and fundraising need to comply with specific nutrition standards. The student store at New Visions Alternate School was selling non-compliant items. The SA spoke with the school principal about the requirements, including using the Smart Snacks Calculator to identify and retain documentation of product compliance. A copy of [A Guide to Smart Snacks School](#) was provided.

Required Corrective Action: Devise a plan and timeframe for making the school store (coffee shop in the morning and snack shop in the afternoon) come into compliance with Smart Snacks regulations. Upload the plan and timeframe into MyIdahoCNP.

Due Date for CAP Completion: December 6, 2019

Corrective Action Response: A seven-step plan was uploaded on November 25, 2019, with steps to bring the New Vision school store into compliance with the Smart Snacks regulations January 6, 2020 (the first day back to school after winter break).

Finding 4 – Afterschool Snacks

Schools may claim reimbursement for one full snack, per child, per day. Seconds and adult snacks cannot be claimed. Only a full snack (one serving from two different components) qualifies as reimbursable. For the month of review, the total children in attendance and the production records did not match. The production records recorded more reimbursable snacks being provided than children in attendance.

Required Corrective Action: Devise a plan to validate the claim for snacks. Attendance should be equal to or greater than the number of snacks served.

Due Date for CAP Completion: December 6, 2019

Corrective Action Response: An eight-step process to ensure claims submitted do not exceed daily enrollment nor documented numbers served on the daily production sheet was uploaded into MyIdahoCNP on November 19, 2019.

Finding 5 – Wellness Policy

The Local School Wellness Policy must be in compliance with the USDA Final Rule established in July 2016, including the requirement that report(s) on the progress towards goals stated in the wellness policy be publicly available. The final rule requires LEAs to fully comply with the requirements of the final rule by June 30, 2017. Ensure the wellness assessment (e.g., Idaho Wellness Policy Progress Report) is available to the public; posting to the school /district website and/or in a school newsletter would support this requirement. TA given on the Wellness Policy and the Progress Report. A copy of the newly adopted policy was given with some suggestions. ISBA Policies 8200, 8210, **8230**, 8235, 8240, 8250, **2310**, 2305, **2315**, and 7310 encompass a compliant wellness policy if all are adopted. Only three of the policies were adopted October 14, 2019.

Required Corrective Action: Devise a plan to bring the entire wellness policy into compliance. Per the review documentation, “The policy has now set goals for the seven areas required in a school wellness policy (Public Involvement, Nutrition Education, Nutrition

Promotion, Policy for Food and Beverage Marketing, Physical Activity, Other School Based Wellness Activities). The committee will also be meeting to continue to shape and monitor these goals.”

Due Date for CAP Completion: December 6, 2019

Corrective Action Response: The Nutrition Services Director compiled the areas that will need to be addressed by the committee in the district’s wellness policy by pulling the necessary ISBA policies noted to be absent in the findings. A plan for addressing the implementation and monitoring of these areas will be addressed in the next wellness committee meeting. The finding was closed while SA was onsite.

Finding 6 – Benefit Issuance

The application determination software system, is determining student applications correctly. However, in the point of service system, some students’ benefits are being qualified at a different benefit level (a student’s eligibility was denied by application, however when entered into the system, the student’s eligibility was converted to receive reduced benefits). This is a systemic error and needs to be addressed immediately.

Required Corrective Action: Call the software company to receive instructions for resolving the systemic software problem. Additionally, all children affected by the systemic issue must be identified and corrected. Provide a report of all affected students to the State agency.

Due Date for CAP Completion: December 6, 2019

Corrective Action Response: Per response uploaded December 2, 2019; “The Nutrition Services Director called and spoke with our technical assistance representative regarding the issue. He helped to decipher that there was an error at the point where the application data was entered into the system. This error led to the discrepancy of benefits issued to the student between the payor level and the customer level within the program. We now know how to look for this and avoid similar situations. Additionally, he taught us how to run a report within the program which lists the students with similar discrepancies in their benefit issuance codes in order to correct them. The report was run, and the three students listed were corrected. The two reports were uploaded into MyIdahoCNP.”

Commendations

- Excellent work meeting all meal pattern requirements for the week of menu review!
- Greensferry Elementary had a large variety of fruits and vegetables that are displayed in a very attractive manner. The students all chose their fruits and veggies with a smile on their faces!
- Good job thinking on your feet in regards to the refrigerator going down at Greensferry Elementary. Both staff members were very gracious with USDA, the SA and Becky watching them for both breakfast and lunch.
- The staff at Seltice Elementary exemplifies professionalism in child nutrition. Every single child was joyfully greeted by name and with a warm smile. The children enthusiastically returned happy greetings and showed genuine appreciation for their lunch ladies. It was a lovely experience to witness!

Technical Assistance (TA)

Certification and Benefit Issuance

- Ensure the applications have the notes written on them when you are contacting the families on the applications for ease of review.
- The software does not autogenerate a number for the applications. This is manually tracked, and two applications with the identical number were identified. Please find out from the software if this can be accomplished.

Verification

- If eligibility benefits are decreased, a notice of adverse action must be sent with the full non-discrimination statement included. LEAs must provide ten calendar days advance notification to households that are to receive a reduction or termination of benefits, prior to the actual reduction or termination [7 CFR 245.6a(j)]. This notice must include the household's right to file an appeal. During the review, it was discovered that the SFA did not utilize an adverse action letter and decreased benefits the day the need for reduction was determined. Per the Eligibility Manual for School Meals "All verified applications must be readily retrievable on an individual school basis. All documents submitted by the household for the purpose of confirming eligibility, reproductions of those documents, or annotations made by the determining official indicating which documents were submitted by the household, and the date of submission also must be retained, along with all relevant correspondence between the households selected for verification and the school or LEA [7 CFR 245.6a(h)]. This documentation, including documentation concerning any appeals, must be kept by the LEA to demonstrate compliance with the verification requirements when LEAs are reviewed by State or Federal officials".
- Hard copies of all notification letters sent to households as part of the verification process must be kept with the application and supporting verification documentation for a complete record. Copies of the original notification of verification were on file, notes indicating follow-up attempts were documented, but no written notice indicating the results of verification, including adverse action were sent.
- Be sure to use the "Official Use Only" section of the application for the Verification process. This box was not being utilized nor was a confirmation review taking place. The confirming official, who must be a different individual than the determining official, must review an application prior to beginning the Verification process. This ensures the application eligibility was determined correctly. Both officials complete the "Official Use Only" box on the free and reduced meal application that has been selected for verification. Once the verification process has been completed and results determined, the verifying official, who can be either the confirming or determining official, must complete the "Official Use Only" box on the meal application. The hearing official is a separate individual with supervisory authority over the other officials that would oversee the hearing process and settle the eligibility if the confirmed original determination is disputed.

Meal Counting and Claiming

- Afterschool Snacks should only claim one meal per student per day. The discrepancy resulted in an overclaim of 57 snacks (\$53.58 excess reimbursement) in the October 2019 claim.

Civil Rights

- The majority of the *Requests for Meal Accommodations* are signed by a RN who does not have prescriptive authority in the State of Idaho; nor does a DC. The only professionals authorized to sign a form diagnosing a food allergy would be a MD, DO, DDS, NP, PA. Since the food service director is new to the school district, this is a great opportunity to cleanup and organize the food allergies forms on file to ensure correct form is being used and has proper signatures.

Smart Snacks

- Per 7CFR210.11, the school should have knowledge of and keep a written record of (track) food sales that occur within the school day, but outside of food service. Only foods sold in school and intended for consumption during the school day (from midnight until 30 minutes after the end of school) fall under Smart Snacks regulations. [Smart Snacks information and resources](#), including a sample site tracking form, can be found on the State webpage
- Per Public Law 111-296 as clarified in 7 CFR 210.11, "All Foods Sold in School," vending, school stores, and fundraising need to comply with specific nutrition standards. These Smart Snacks standards can be found at the State Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs, School Meal Programs, Smart Snacks website.
- The selling of non-compliant snacks during the lunch meal time puts reimbursement in jeopardy.
- The [Smart Snacks Product Calculator](#) is a useful tool that produces a report that can be used to confirm and document compliance.

Resource Management – Nonprofit Food Service Account

- The previous supervisor was given \$2,000 for Senior Checkout reimbursement of paid meals, however there was only \$1,653.86 paid out. There is no corresponding deposit of \$346.14 to zero out the allocation of money. It appears that the money was just rolled over into Summer Meals Start Up fund. There should be a clear accounting of these funds as these two programs are separate.

Procurement

- A procurement review was completed on November 11, 2019. Please follow the guidance provided in a separate closure letter.

Your review is now closed.

Fiscal action in the amount of \$139.70 is to be assessed from this review, however it is below the \$600 threshold set by USDA so will be disregarded. If you wish to discuss any of these findings, please contact me at (208) 332-6820.

Thank you for your continued support of the Child Nutrition Programs!

Sincerely,



Lynda Westphal, MHS, SNS
NSLP Coordinator

cc: Colleen Fillmore, PhD, RDN, LD, SNS, Director, Child Nutrition Programs
Rebecca Elmore, Food Service Supervisor, Post Falls School District

Civil Rights

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- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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