

Dear Blackduck School District Parents & Students,

We have good news on the “free meal” front. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has provided Minnesota school districts with guidance on how to access free meals for all students. We are in the process of updating our Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) application. Once this application is updated and submitted, we can begin serving free meals to all students of the Blackduck School District.

We will begin free meal service on **Tuesday, September 15th**. If you are a hybrid or distance learner and now want to pick up meals, please fill out the form on our school’s website. Any additional questions, please feel free to contact Heidi Landis in the high school office.

At this time the USDA has notified us that free meals will be available until the end of December 2020 or **until funding runs out**. It is important to keep this fact in mind, since we may have to return to charging for meals with little notice. We will update you as quickly as possible when this change takes place.

Once funding runs out or when school starts in January after the winter break, we will need to return to operating under the NSLP (National School Lunch Program)/SBP (School Breakfast Program) programs. These are the food distribution programs we would normally follow during a school year. **The greatest change for our families in moving from SFSP to NSLP/SBP is that meals will no longer be free for every student.** Only those families who fill out the “application for educational benefits” form and are income eligible, will receive free and/or reduced meals once funding runs out or when school starts again in January 2021.

We understand that many of our families continue to find themselves in precarious financial conditions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. For this reason, **we strongly encourage everyone to fill out the application for educational benefits.** The higher the number of qualified recipients of free and/or reduced meals a school district has, the more federal and state monies become available to our district in other areas as well as in our food service department.

Thank you for patience with this process. Providing high quality meals in an effort to nourish your students continues to be our highest priority so that they are ready to learn and grow whether they are learning in school or at home.

Sincerely,

Mark Lundin

Superintendent  
Blackduck Public Schools