

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
FOR THE WEST ALLIS-WEST MILWAUKEE SCHOOL DISTRICT
AGENDA**

Topic: 2026-2027 District-Wide Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

Prepared by: Aaron Norris, Assistant Superintendent

Date: May 18, 2026

Agenda Reference # 11.5

Recommended Action:

- Discussion/Action**
- Presentation/Discussion**
- Information Only**
- Presentation/Action Next Meeting**

Recommendation(s):

Administration recommends that the Board of Education approve the District’s application to continue participation in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for the 2026–2027 school year. Approval would allow all schools within the WAWM District to qualify as CEP schools, ensuring that all students have access to free breakfast and lunch regardless of Free or Reduced eligibility status.

Purpose:

The purpose of this summary is to provide an administrative recommendation to continue district-wide participation in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). This program allows all students to receive breakfast and lunch at no cost, regardless of Free or Reduced eligibility status. Approval of this recommendation would continue CEP implementation across all schools for the 2026–2027 school year and beyond.

Background:

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a federal program that allows school districts to offer free breakfast and lunch to all students if a qualifying percentage of students are identified as eligible for free meals through direct certification. Historically, several schools within the District operated as CEP sites through the 2022–2023 school year. Beginning in 2022–2023, the District transitioned to a district-wide CEP model.

Over the past four years, all students in the District have had access to free breakfast and lunch through CEP. Because the District continues to meet the eligibility requirements for district-wide participation, approval of this item would allow the District to continue offering free meals to all students for the 2025–2026 school year.

The level of Fund 50 (Food Service Fund) revenue has supported the ability to provide free meals to all students while also maintaining a moderate and stable fund balance. However, the District is currently carrying an excess cash balance in Fund 50, which is not permitted by DPI. An excess cash balance is defined as any amount above six months of average operating expenditures. As of the end of the 2024–2025 school year, the District’s Fund 50 balance is approximately \$2.7 million.

In recent years, revenues have consistently met or slightly exceeded expenditures. Based on this trend, along with the current fund balance, it is reasonable to conclude that continuing CEP remains financially sustainable.

Currently, the District is reimbursed at a rate of 80.83% of all meals served under CEP. Based on preliminary projections, this reimbursement rate is expected to decrease to approximately 78.2% in the upcoming cycle.

While this represents a modest reduction in reimbursement, the financial impact is not expected to jeopardize the sustainability of the program. Given the District’s consistent financial performance in Fund 50 and the presence of an excess fund balance year over year, the program remains financially viable. The District is well-positioned to continue offering free meals to all students while maintaining a compliant and stable Fund 50 balance.

As a note, it will be vital for school funding that we continue to collect information from all of our families via the Free and Reduced Lunch Application and the Sharing Form. Families must still complete both to be eligible for free or reduced priced school fee(s).