STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

TO: Selected Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education

DATE: April 1, 2016

SUBJECT: The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (also known as the 2008 Farm Bill) amended the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA) by adding section 19, the *Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program* (FFVP). Under section 19 of the NSLA, the FFVP became a nationwide program, starting July 1, 2008, that operates in selected schools across the country. The Act provides an estimated $177 million nationwide in funding available as of July 1, 2015. Connecticut receives approximately $2.7 million in FFVP funding annually.

The FFVP provides funding directly to schools for use in purchasing a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables to serve students during the school day. Participating schools can distribute fruits and vegetables in a variety of ways including kiosks throughout the school, in the classroom and free vending machines. With the distribution of fresh fruits and vegetables, nutrition education activities are highly encouraged to support the program's goals.

The goals of the FFVP are to: 1) create healthier school environments by providing nutritious food choices; 2) expand the variety of fruits and vegetables children experience; 3) increase children's fruit and vegetable consumption; and 4) make a difference in children's diets to impact their present and future health. The level of funds provided to any one school depends on the demographics of the schools that choose to participate in the program. Selected schools are required to be **elementary** schools that have **50 percent or more** of the children eligible for free and reduced price meals.

Currently, Connecticut's free and reduced eligibility data indicate that the schools listed in the attachments meet this 50 percent or more criteria. Therefore, these schools are encouraged to apply for the FFVP during 2016-17. Selection of the schools will be based on the completed application (including all required signatures) and the level of eligibility for the schools. To be selected to participate in the FFVP, the school must be chosen based on the percentage of children eligible for free and reduced price meals with the highest priority given to schools with the highest percentages of low-income students, *to the maximum extent practicable.* It is important to note that the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is required by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to allot $50 – $75 in FFVP funding per pupil for the year. Therefore, the final selection of the participating schools will be based on the number of schools and student population that apply for the FFVP funds. Additionally, funding will be adjusted based on the number of planned serving days per week.

P.O. Box 2219 ● Hartford, Connecticut 06145
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If the eligible schools in your district are willing to participate in the FFVP, please complete and submit the attached application form (one per school) by close of business on May 6, 2016, to Andrew Paul, CSDE, Child Nutrition Programs, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457.

For more information regarding the FFVP, refer to the ***USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Handbook*** at http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/ffvp/FFVP_Handbook.pdf. If you have any questions or need additional assistance, please contact Andrew Paul at 860-807-2048 or andrew.paul@ct.gov. A copy of the application form may also be obtained online by going to Connecticut's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Web site: http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/FFVP.

DW:app
cc: Charlene Russell-Tucker, Chief Operating Officer
John Frassinelli, Bureau Chief
Andrew Paul, Education Service Specialist
School Food Service Directors

Attachments: (3)