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CLAY COUNTY SCHOOLS PROVIDE MEALS TO STUDENTS AT NO COST

Clay, W.Va. - Students in Clay County will have the opportunity to eat a no-cost breakfast and lunch at school through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program. The CEP was enacted as a result of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act and provides universal meal service to children in high-poverty areas.

The CEP serves as an alternative to collecting, approving and verifying household eligibility applications for free- and reduced-price eligible students in high-poverty Local Education Agencies (LEAs). If at least 40 percent of a school's student population is directly certified for free meal benefits, the entire school qualifies for the option.

"I am proud that Clay County Schools will be participating in the CEP program to help meet a crucial need for many students in our county," said Joe Paxton, Superintendent of Clay County Schools. "We know academic achievement increases when our students are well-fed and ready to learn, and we must provide secure and reliable access to nutritious meals so all students have a chance to achieve at the highest level possible."

Clay County expects to have all six schools participate in the CEP. The program allows the school system to feed nearly 1,700 students each day.

The 2017 *Feeding America: Map the Meal Gap* data reports high levels of food insecurity and hunger across the country. In West Virginia, more than 14 percent of residents, and over 79,000 children, live in food insecure households.

For more information, contact Jared Fitzwater, Director of Student Services, at (304) 587-4266.

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U.S. Department of Agriculture
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(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

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