



COLORADO
Department of Education

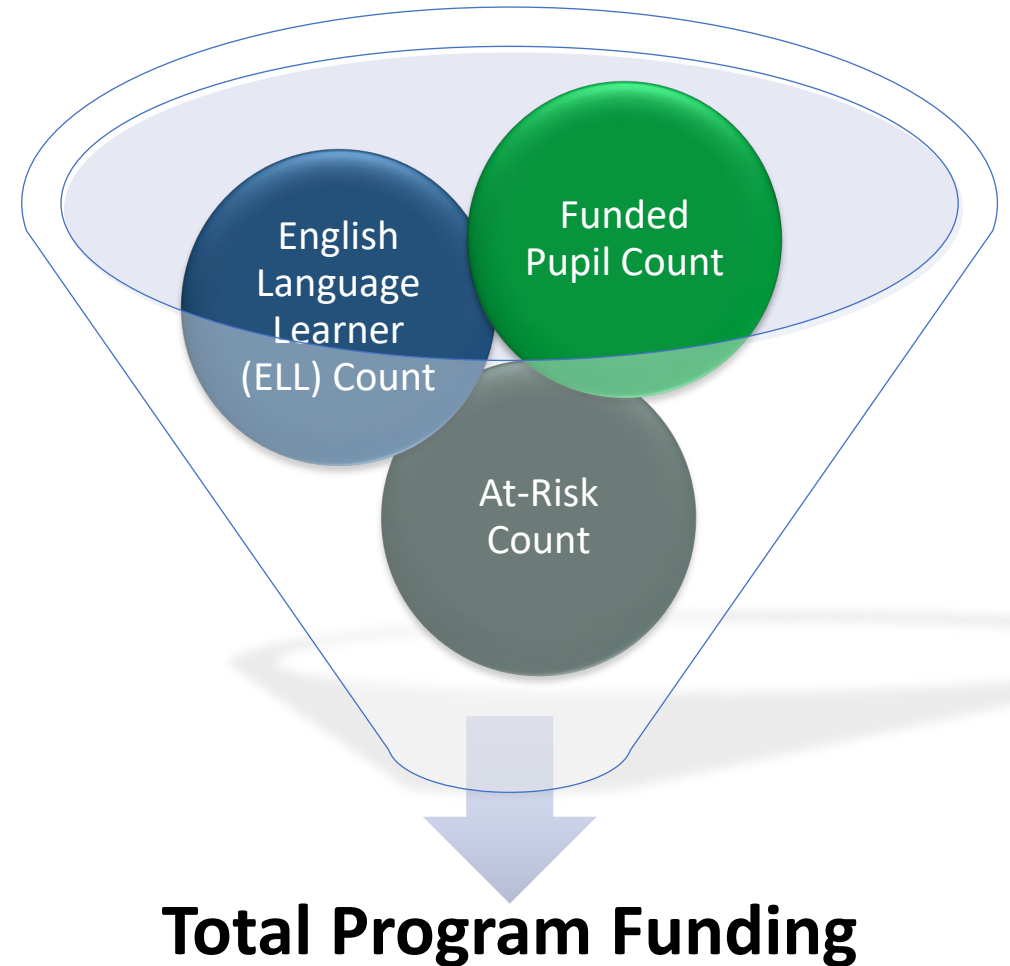
At-Risk Funding & CEP for Business Officials

May 21, 2024

Introduction

Counts From Student October Data Collection Determine Total Program Funding

- School districts in Colorado are funded by a variety of sources
- The biggest source of funding comes from the School Finance Act
- The amount a district receives according to the School Finance Act is called **Total Program**
- Counts from the Student October Count Data Collection are used to calculate Total Program Funding



Student October Count Day 2024

The one-day pupil enrollment membership count for 2024 will be:

Tuesday, October 1, 2024

September							October							November						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7			1	2	3	4	5						1	2
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
29	30						27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30

- The 11-day count period includes the following (based on the district's adopted calendar):
 - The 5 student contact days before the pupil enrollment count date
 - The pupil enrollment count date
 - The 5 student contact days following the pupil enrollment count date
- Districts can request an alternative count date or 11-day count period on behalf of an individual school, if applicable

At-Risk Count (for 2024-2025)

- The At-Risk count includes students reported in Student October who meet all of the following criteria:
 - Grades K-12
 - Eligible for per pupil funding (i.e., submitted for full- or part-time funding)
 - Free or reduced-price lunch eligible
- Valid lunch eligibility codes for the data submission include:
 - 00 = Not eligible/ Paid
 - **01 = Free lunch eligible**
 - **02 = Reduced-priced lunch eligible**



- Acceptable documentation includes:
 - Evidence of Direct Certification (list dates)
 - Categorical Eligibility Determinations (lists maintained by applicable eligibility liaisons)
 - Application for Free and Reduced-Priced Meals
 - Family Economic Data Survey (FEDS) form
 - ‘Combo’ forms
 - Used by districts that have both CEP and non-CEP sites/schools; allows them to use one form that meets the USDA requirements/restrictions for documentation collection)
- Regardless of how a district or school determines student meal eligibility, the documentation must be retained and available until audited by the Department or until five years from the certification due date, whichever comes first.

- Pursuant to HB22-1414 and beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, districts may opt-in to participate in the Healthy School Meals for All program (HSMA) which allows districts and schools participating in the National School Lunch Program to provide free meals to all students.
- Districts that choose to opt-in to HSMA **will still need to provide student eligibility documentation for Student October/funding purposes**. Districts must continue to keep records of eligibility and continue to conduct direct certification per existing guidance.
- While all students attending an opt-in district are eligible to eat meals for free, **only students with qualifying eligibility documentation on file may be reported as free or reduced-price lunch eligible** in the Student October Count data submission.

- In order to participate in Healthy Meals for All, all qualifying sites may need to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).
 - For the 2024/2025 school year, approximately 170 districts will likely have at least one site/school participating in CEP.
- If participating in CEP, sites cannot collect Applications for Free and Reduced-Priced Meals; however, they can and should distribute/collect FEDs and Combo forms.
 - This provides districts/schools the ability to identify free and reduced-price lunch eligible students using income as a basis for eligibility.
 - When processing FEDs and Combo forms for CEP sites, or for schools that do not participate in the National School Lunch Program, the district/school must reimburse the nutrition fund if using district/school nutrition staff to process these forms.

For reporting purposes within Student October:

- For non-CEP sites, current year or prior year documentation may be used to determine lunch eligibility status:
 - Current year documentation must be dated on or between July 1 and the pupil enrollment count date; if any acceptable documentation is received, current year documentation must be used
 - In the **absence of current year documentation** to evidence any lunch eligibility status (including paid), a district/school **may use prior year documentation** to determine lunch eligibility status
- **For CEP sites**, districts/schools can use documentation dated on or between July 1 (of the base year of the CEP cycle) through the pupil enrollment count date of the current school year.
 - During the base year (i.e., Year 1) of the cycle, in the absence of any current year documentation, the district/school can use prior year documentation to determine lunch status; however, starting in years 2-4, documentation must be dated within the cycle.

- Determine which sites in your district are in CEP this year.
 - What is their year in cycle? Are they resetting?
- Have the district at-risk audit contact and Student October data respondent(s) attend the “At-Risk Count Audit Overview” on August 8, 2024 at 1pm.
 - To access this training, click on the link found in the green box located on the [Training and Office Hours](https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/auditunit_trainings) website (https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/auditunit_trainings)
- Make sure that your SFA is running direct certification lists regularly between the July 1 and October 1 to ensure all students who qualify for free (or reduced if Medicaid-Reduced) through this process are identified and reported accurately in Student October.
 - Reminder: Per School Nutrition, SFAs are required to complete at least two direct certification uploads by October 1.
- Distribute, collect, and process FEDs and Combo forms.

At-Risk Count (starting in 2025-2026)

Notice: Changes to At-risk Funding Calculations Beginning in 2025-2026

- HB22-1202 created a **new at-risk measure** in the public school finance funding formula.
- Pursuant to SB24-188, this new measure will be implemented starting with the **2025-2026** school year.
- The new measure will take into consideration:
 - Percentage of students certified as eligible for free lunch based on receipt of SNAP, TANF, FDPIR benefits or participating in Medicaid (i.e., directly certified) OR based on categorical eligibility (foster, homeless, migrant, etc.); AND
 - A neighborhood socioeconomic status index that is linked to each student's census block group.
- Although implementation is delayed, beginning with **2024-2025**, districts will be required to submit all necessary data fields for future implementation.

Free Lunch Eligibility Identification

- “Free Lunch Eligibility Identification” field
 - Any student reported with a “Free/Reduced Lunch Price Eligible” value of “01” (free lunch eligible) must have a value other than “0” in this field
- Applicable values are:

Value	Definition
0	Not identified as Free Lunch Eligible
1	Direct Certification (Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, FDPIR) – including extension to other household members
2	Other Source Categorical (Migrant, Homeless, Runway, Foster, Head Start documented participation) – LEA lists, student-specific eligibility
3	Application (Application for Free and Reduced-Price Meals, Family Economic Data Survey Form, or Combination form)

- Beginning in 2024-2025, there will be a new Data Pipeline interchange file (“At-Risk”) which will collect all students’ census block data necessary to determine neighborhood socioeconomic status index
 - State, County, Track, and Block codes
- CDE is developing guidance and instructions on how to obtain and report this data. Refer to the [Data Pipeline Interchanges – At-Risk](https://www.cde.state.co.us/datapipeline/inter_atrisk) webpage
 - (https://www.cde.state.co.us/datapipeline/inter_atrisk)
- Upcoming At-Risk Measure Webinars
 - **Introduction to Census Block Geocode Tool**
 - June 11, 2024 (1PM) & August 13, 2024 (10AM)
 - **Overview of the Data Pipeline At-Risk Interchange File**
 - August 20, 2024 (1PM)

Next Steps to Prepare for Changes in 2025/2026

- Verify that your district has a process in place for identifying and reporting in Student October why a student is free lunch eligible starting in 2024/2025
- Verify that your district has a process in place to obtain and report each student's census block data starting in 2024/2025
- Verify that your district has a process in place to identify which status can be reported in Student October for at-risk funding purposes in CEP years 2-4.



Contacts

Contact Information & Resources

School Auditing Office

Website: https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/auditunit_atrisk_freeandreduced

Email: audit@cde.state.co.us

School Finance Unit

Website: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/atriskmeasureforschoolfinanceworkinggroup>

For School Finance formula questions, contact Tim Kahle: kahle_t@cde.state.co.us

School Nutrition Unit

Website: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/schoolmealeligibility>

For eligibility questions, contact Nell Dochez: dochez_n@cde.state.co.us

Data Pipeline Interchanges- At-Risk

Website: https://www.cde.state.co.us/datapipeline/inter_atrisk

Email: ARMeasure@cde.state.co.us



Questions?