

Tri-County Schools

Independent School District 2358

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December 15, 2020

Dear Tri-County School District families,

We have great news on the “free meal” front. The USDA and Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) have notified us that free meals for all students will be available **through the end of the 2020-21 school year.**

We continue to 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. Some benefits that Tri-County has received in received in recent years for having 50%+ of students qualify for free and/or reduced meals:

- Reduction in fees for the MSHSL and for field trip tickets
- Free ACT testing for our students.
- Waived college application fees.
- Additional Title & Compensatory funds (approximately \$50,000 a year)
- Food service equipment grants (\$18,000 for range oven and convection oven)
- Water Safety Grant (just received for Summer 2021 - \$9,000)

Filling out the application for educational benefits form and qualifying for free and/or reduced meals now will also carry you through the beginning of the next school year.

The State of Minnesota has extended the deadline to apply for benefits through **January 4, 2021**. Even if you feel you may not qualify, please consider applying if anyone in your household has had any change in income, even if for a short period of time. Once a family qualifies, they remain qualified for the entire school year. The additional federal funds the district receives allow us to improve the quality of education. Please contact Jen Johnston by email (johjen@tricounty.k12.mn.us) or by calling 218-436-2261 if you wish to receive an application.

Providing high quality meals in an effort to nourish your students continues to be one of our high priorities so that they are ready to learn and grow whether they are learning in school or at home.

Sincerely,



Amy Olson, Food Service Director