

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has recently announced an extension of the summer meal program to be extended through December 31, 2020 or until available funding runs out. This extension will allow schools to serve **free** meals to **all** students in the school district. Rittman schools will begin offering free breakfast and lunch to all students beginning Tuesday, September 15, 2020. Students will still be responsible for any meal charge balance that they currently owe through September 11, 2020.

If funding becomes inadequate the USDA reserves the right to end the program extension at a date earlier than December 31st. If this should happen the Ohio Department of Education Office of Integrated Student Support will notify local school districts as soon as possible. A new date for the end of the program will be given to school districts so that we can notify parents and students.

On January 1, 2021 or possibly an earlier date, school food authorities will resume our normal meal service. Students will revert back to full pay, reduced or free meal status. Rittman schools will continue to collect and process free/reduced meal applications for the 2020-2021 school year. Families that qualified for free/reduced meal status last year are required to submit a new application each school year. Free/reduced meal applications from last school year carryover for 30 days into a new school year. If a new application has not been turned in by (this year's date is October 1st) and processed the students on that application will become full pay.

I would encourage parents who feel that they may qualify for free/reduced meals to turn in an application to be processed. Besides helping families with school meal costs, the increased number of qualified free/reduced meal applications helps the district qualify for additional Federal dollars for district programs.

We also plan to offer meals to students who are taking part in the remote learning program. We will offer meals on Thursday of each week. Students will be given 5 days of breakfast, lunches and milk similar to what was offered to students this past summer. Parents/guardians may pick up meals from 11:00 am to 11:30 am at the following school location:

Rittman Elementary School main entrance. Pull into the bus loop at the front of the building.

Parents should contact the secretary at the school their child attends, to sign up for the remote learner program by Wednesday, September 16th. Meals will be available beginning Thursday, September 24th.