

# Community Eligibility:

Anderson 3 elementary schools are participating in “Community Eligibility” for the 2015-16 school year.

“Community eligibility” is a powerful new tool, included in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, which allows schools in high-poverty areas to offer nutritious meals through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs to **all students at no charge**.

The program was put into place in 2010 in several states, with additional states added each year. Community eligibility was first introduced in South Carolina at the beginning the 2014-15 school year.

The program has tremendous benefits, which include:

- ▶ Access to free nutritious meals for all students!
  
- ▶ Completely eliminates the need for meal applications, which means less paperwork and no worries about breakfast or lunch accounts;
  
- ▶ Parents can count on their children eating two healthy meals each day at school, helping to stretch families’ limited food budgets;
  
- ▶ Full tummies mean children are more attentive and ready to learn.

Participation in Community Eligibility is determined by the number of students in each particular school who are considered **automatically eligible** for free school meals, **without** a paper application. This includes children who are in foster care or Head Start, are homeless, migrant or living in households that receive SNAP/Food Stamps, TANF cash assistance, or the Food Distribution on Indian Reservation Benefits.

Unfortunately, not all schools are eligible for participation in the Community Eligibility program. Families may have children who attend multiple schools in the same school district, yet the number of students at one particular school who are considered automatically eligible for free or reduced meals may not be high enough to cover the costs associated with providing free meals to all students. In these schools, families will be required to complete meal applications for free or reduced meal benefits. Remember, meal applications may be picked up at the school office or at the Anderson School District Three District office.

Students of ALL ages need breakfast and lunch each day for proper growth, development and energy to concentrate and learn. Unfortunately, as some of our students get older, their families no longer apply for meal benefits, which eliminates the students ability to eat a healthy breakfast and lunch. It is the goal of Anderson School District Three to someday eliminate childhood hunger for all of our students, regardless of their ability to afford meals or their grade level.