

**All HISD students to receive three free meals a day this school year**

*Decision will allow 218,000 students to eat all school meals for free this school year*

*Aug. 30, 2017* – The Houston Independent School District has received approval from the United States Department of Agriculture and the Texas Department of Agriculture to waive the required application process for the National School Lunch/Breakfast Program. This decision means all HISD students will eat all school meals for free during the 2017-2018 school year.

The decision comes in the wake of the devastation created by Hurricane Harvey and its aftermath. The waiver will allow all HISD students to receive free lunch for the school year.  Despite the federal waiver, HISD is still asking parents and guardians to complete and return the application. The National School Lunch/School Breakfast Program applications and surveys are available at [https://mealapps.houstonisd.org](https://mealapps.houstonisd.org/). They can also be accessed by visiting the [HISD Nutrition Services website](http://www.houstonisd.org/nutritionservices) and clicking on the “One Form Means So Much” button on the right side of the page. The information received in the forms helps the district to secure funding and track student data.

“The flooding that is affecting the city of Houston has been devastating to so many. Some of the areas that are the hardest hit are filled with working parents whose limited funds will need to go toward recovery efforts,” said Houston ISD Superintendent Richard Carranza. “This waiver will give our families one less concern as they begin the process of restoring their lives. It will also provide a sense of normalcy by allowing students to have access to up to three nutritious meals each and every school day.”

Earlier this year, HISD certified 191 schools to participate in the Community Eligibility Program -- giving nearly 123,955 students access to free lunch and breakfast. Just last week, the Texas Department of Agriculture approved the district's application to offer free supper to all of the district's students. This latest announcement supports the district’s goals of reducing food insecurity and providing food to as many students as possible.

“It will take months, possibly years for the city to recover. We expect families to be displaced, students to attend new schools, and many of them possibly using alternative ways to travel to and from school,” said Nutrition Services Officer Betti Wiggins. “We want to reduce any stress connected to food while families work toward getting their personal affairs in order. All HISD students will have access to good food, made with as many local and fresh ingredients as possible and served with love and a smile.”

The waiver will take effect immediately, allowing students to take advantage of free meals when school resumes