



**Maryland Hunger Solutions**

*Ending hunger and promoting well-being*



## **Maryland School Districts Should Follow Washington County's Lead and Use a Successful Tool to Combat Child Hunger**

**For Immediate Release**

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**Contact:** Sean Miskell, 410-412-9105 x705 or [smiskell@mdeconomy.org](mailto:smiskell@mdeconomy.org)

**BALTIMORE, MD --** Twelve Washington County Public Schools were recognized today for participating in a new federal program that lets all students eat breakfast and lunch at no charge. The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a new tool created in the *Healthy, Hunger-Free Schools Act of 2010* that is now available to hundreds of Maryland schools.

Maryland Hunger Solutions and the Maryland Center on Economic Policy presented the Principal of Salem Avenue Elementary School with a “Hunger-Free School” award this morning in recognition of Washington County’s leadership in electing CEP and to call attention to the need for more school districts to participate.

Hundreds of high-poverty schools in Maryland are eligible to use this powerful new tool to reduce both childhood hunger and administrative paperwork by providing school meals to all students free of charge. This option helps ensure that low-income children, whose families often struggle to put food on the table, can eat healthy meals at school. So far, 13 schools in Maryland (12 in Washington County and the SEED School of Maryland) have elected community eligibility for the coming school year. The deadline for school districts to indicate their participation is June 30, 2014.

Washington County is leading the effort to implement Community Eligibility in Maryland. This year, five schools elected Community Eligibility, and it was announced today that seven more the county will do so in the 2014-2015 school year. As a result, hundreds more students in Washington County will have access to healthy meals in school – crucial to maximize health and learning potential.

The new CEP sites in Washington County that were announced today include:

- Eastern Elementary
- Funkstown School for Early Elementary Education
- Hickory Elementary
- Lincolnshire Elementary
- Ruth Ann Monroe Primary
- Marshall Street School
- The Job Development Program

“Community eligibility helps make sure that youngsters have the good meals they need to make the most of every school day,” said Sean Miskell of the Maryland Center on Economic Policy. “It is

exciting that more schools in Washington County will participate this coming year, and important that more schools across Maryland follow their lead. These kids are Maryland's future and we need to prepare them.”

CEP also helps schools and school districts streamline their operations and reduce paperwork. When more children eat, the per-meal cost decreases. Less paperwork frees up resources to invest in improving meal quality and increases staff time available for other educational priorities. School districts across the country have implemented CEP without losing federal funding or operating in a deficit.

“Over 14 percent of Maryland households have children who don't always know where their next meal will come from” said Michael J. Wilson, Director of Maryland Hunger Solutions. “Making sure that our kids have enough to eat is one of the most basic things we can do to improve both overall health and academic success.”

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**Maryland Hunger Solutions** works to fight hunger and improve the nutrition, health, and well-being of children and families in Maryland.

For more information, please visit our website: [www.mdhungersolutions.org](http://www.mdhungersolutions.org) and follow us on Twitter [@marylandhunger](https://twitter.com/marylandhunger) [#HungerFreeSchool](https://twitter.com/HungerFreeSchool)

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