Dear Families,

Welcome to a new school year! We're looking forward to working together to make this a wonderful and successful year for your child.

We know that good nutrition helps students learn and thrive. That's why both of our schools provide breakfast and lunch each day—and **families who qualify can receive these meals at free or reduced prices**.

This year, we especially encourage you to review the **New Jersey Expanded Income Eligibility (NJEIE) guidelines**, which have broadened the requirements for free school meals as part of the "Working Class Families Anti-Hunger Act." Even if your family did not qualify under federal guidelines in the past, you may now be eligible under the new state program. **Please take a moment to review the attached income guidelines chart to see if your family qualifies. Many families are surprised to find they are now eligible**.

We encourage every family to apply for the **Free and Reduced Price Meal Program**. When more students qualify, our school receives extra funding for programs and support services that benefit everyone.

Applying is simple and confidential—no Social Security number or citizenship requirements. You can apply any time during the year, especially if your circumstances change, such as job loss, reduced work hours, or a change in household size.

We've attached the **application form** and the **income guidelines** to this letter. Even if you're not sure you qualify, we encourage you to fill it out and return it. **The process is completely confidential**, and participating in the program can help both your family and our school community. ***If applying for school lunch, please send the application in a sealed envelope to:*** **Hardyston BOE – Attn: Sue Verso.**

If you have any questions or need help completing the form, please contact Susan Verso at sverso@htps.org or 973-823-7000, ext 1120. We want every family to feel welcome and supported, and we're always here if you need anything. Thank you for being part of our school family.

Warm regards,

Susan Verso

Business Administrator

DIVISION OF FOOD AND NUTRITION

Federal & New Jersey Expanded Income Eligibility Guidelines

Effective School Year 2026-2027: July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027

Federal Free Meals

Participants qualify for free meals if the household income falls at or below the limits on this chart.

Household Size	Annual	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
- 1 -	20,748	1,729	865	798	399
- 2 -	28,132	2,345	1,173	1,082	541
- 3 -	35,516	2,960	1,480	1,366	683
- 4 -	42,900	3,575	1,788	1,650	825
- 5 -	50,284	4,191	2,096	1,934	967
- 6 -	57,668	4,806	2,403	2,218	1,109
- 7 -	65,052	5,421	2,711	2,502	1,251
- 8 -	72,436	6,037	3,019	2,786	1,393
Each add'l household member add	7,384	616	308	284	142

Federal Reduced Price Meals

Participants qualify for reduced price meals if the household income falls at or below the limits on this chart and above the limits on the Federal Free Meals chart.

Household Size	Annual	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
- 1 -	29,526	2,461	1,231	1,136	568
- 2 -	40,034	3,337	1,669	1,540	770
- 3 -	50,542	4,212	2,106	1,944	972
- 4 -	61,050	5,088	2,544	2,349	1,175
- 5 -	71,558	5,964	2,982	2,753	1,377
- 6 -	82,066	6,839	3,420	3,157	1,579
- 7 -	92,574	7,715	3,858	3,561	1,781
- 8 -	103,082	8,591	4,296	3,965	1,983
Each add'l household member add	10,508	876	438	405	203

New Jersey Expanded Income Guidelines (NJEIE)

New Jersey participants qualify for meals at no charge if the household income falls at or below the limits on this chart and above the limits on the Federal Reduced Price Meal chart.

NJEIE does not apply to schools/sites participating in CEP.

Household Size	Annual	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
- 1 -	35,751	2,980	1,490	1,376	688
- 2 -	48,474	4,040	2,020	1,865	933
- 3 -	61,197	5,100	2,550	2,354	1,177
- 4 -	73,920	6,160	3,080	2,844	1,422
- 5 -	86,644	7,221	3,611	3,333	1,667
- 6 -	99,367	8,281	4,141	3,822	1,911
- 7 -	112,090	9,341	4,671	4,312	2,156
- 8 -	124,813	10,402	5,201	4,801	2,401
Each add'l household member	12,724	1,061	531	490	245

~When all income is reported with the same frequency (i.e., all reported as weekly, every 2 weeks, monthly, or twice a month), total the income and the number of household members and compare it to this chart. Do not annualize if all income reported is the same frequency.

~When income is reported with different frequencies, annualize the number, total income and the number of household members and compare it to the annual income column on this chart.

Annual Income Conversion: Weekly x 52, Every 2 weeks x 26, Twice a month x 24, and Monthly x 12