

# EQUITY = FAIRNESS

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Hampton City Schools publishes a section on their website dedicated to – **NEWS • PRESS RELEASES • IMPORTANT INFORMATION • STORIES • BRIEFS**. One such “press release” elaborated on **Students at 10 Hampton Schools to receive free breakfast and lunch**. In this bit of “important information”, Hampton City Schools states – “The division *qualified* for six schools in 2014-15, an additional three in 2015-2016 and one more for 2016-2017.” Six schools + three + one more is 10. So, if we were to believe Hampton City Schools, only 10 of our schools were eligible or qualified to participate in the federal free breakfast and lunch program Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) this school year. To be eligible, a simple explanation would be – a minimum of 40% of the student body at these 10 schools must be participating in various assistance programs, such as SNAP or are homeless in order for a school to be deemed qualified to participate in CEP. No school free or reduced meal application is factored into a school’s 40% or more eligibility rate. In fact, no application is filled out by parents to make this determination. Though you may have heard otherwise from the Hampton City Schools’ leadership, it is not a parent’s unwillingness to complete a form that prevents a school from being able to participate in the free breakfast and lunch program.

In reality, Hampton had 16 schools that qualified outright to participate. Not only were Aberdeen, Andrews, Bassette, Bryan, Cary, Lindsay, Machen, Syms, Smith and Tyler eligible, as the “press release” indicates, but Booker, Davis, Forrest, Lee, Moton, and Phoebus were as well. In reality, way more than the reported 10! Also, schools can be grouped together to reach the minimum 40%. An example of this would be Hampton High (35.44%) and Davis Middle (44.65%). Their combined average would be 40.04%. Another example would be combining Kraft Elementary (33.33%) and Andrews Elementary (49.02%). Their combined average would be 40.17%. Schools can be group together in any number...2,3,4,5 or more...or the whole district can be grouped to reach the magical 40% required by this program, but Hampton City Schools avoids full participation.

So I have just told you about 8 additional schools whose students did not reap the benefits of this programs but that **DEFINITELY** qualified for the program. Why...why does Hampton refuse to participate...though Hampton insinuates otherwise? In the fall of this school year, Hampton reported 45% of the students as economically disadvantaged. According to the Hampton City Schools budget, the number of students participating in free and reduced meals is climbing. Last year (FY16), according to this year’s budget (FY17), 64% of the students were participating in free and reduced lunches.

In February, VDOE paid tribute to Hampton and 16 other districts for participating in CEP. Hampton’s half-hearted attempt to alleviate childhood hunger shouldn’t be met with recognition. Hampton, if it had any humility would have refused the recognition. After all, Hampton is about every child, every day, whatever it takes. Or is that just a motto? As schools that participate in CEP have indicated across the United States, more students are eating thanks to the CEP. No more stigma of being an economically disadvantaged student. As Hampton’s Title 1 presentation indicated last night...

“EQUITY = FAIRNESS  
ACCESS TO SAME OPPORTUNITIES  
We must first ensure equity before we can enjoy equality”

The deadline is fast-approaching...what are you going to do 1 Franklin Street?

### Students at 10 Hampton Schools to receive free breakfast and lunch

The Virginia Department of Education, Office of School Nutrition Programs, notified Hampton City Schools that Smith Elementary School has now qualified to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP).

Smith joins nine other schools that have already qualified. They are: Aberdeen Elementary, Andrews PreK-8, Bassette Elementary, Bryan Elementary, Cary Elementary, Machen Elementary, Tyler Elementary, Lindsay Middle, and Syms Middle.

HCS is one of the first school divisions in Virginia to implement the CEP with the first applications being submitted and implemented for the 2014-2015 school year. The division qualified for six schools in 2014-15, an additional three in 2015-2016 and one more for 2016-2017.

The CEP is a provision from the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 that allows schools and local agencies with high poverty rates to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students. CEP eliminates the burden of collecting household applications to determine eligibility for school meals, relying instead on information from other means-tested programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Hampton City Schools' website