

## **Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) Webinar Questions and Answers**

**December 14, 2022**

Thank you for your participation in the webinar. Below are the questions and answers captured during the webinar. Please also reference the school [P-EBT questions and answers](#) published by the Ohio Department of Education and the household P-EBT questions and answers on the Job and Family Services [webpage](#). The questions are arranged under the following categories:

**Schools Qualifying to Submit P-EBT Data Questions**  
**Community Eligibility Provision/ Provision 2 Questions**  
**Students Qualifying for Free or Reduced Meals Questions**  
**Quarantine Days/ Absences for Other Reasons Questions**  
**Online Learning Academy/ Virtual School Questions**  
**Preschool Qualification Questions**  
**Data Reporting and PEBT Card Questions**  
**Snow Day Questions**

### **Schools Qualifying to Submit P-EBT Data Questions**

- 1. We are currently in session 5 days....no remote or hybrid at all. So, that stops ALL P-EBT...even though we have students out to covid or quarantine?** No, free or reduced eligible students that quarantined or sick with COVID are able to receive P-EBT for absence days once a school qualifies to submit data, even if the school itself is 5 days in session.
- 2. To clarify only students that have COVID or quarantined due to COVID are able to get the P-EBT card?** There are many reasons why a student might qualify for P-EBT. If a school is 5 days in person with no remote education, quarantining or illness due to COVID would be the only qualifying reason for P-EBT. If a school building is offering remote learning due to COVID or has reduced hours or attendance due to COVID, the student could qualify for P-EBT as well. For a full list of reasons why a school would qualify to submit student data for P-EBT, reference question 1 of the Ohio Department of Education's [P-EBT school year 2022-2023 Question and Answer](#) guidance.
- 3. A child being out for 5 consecutive days with Covid can trump the building needing to be closed for 5 consecutive days to make the building eligible?** Both situations can make a building eligible For a full list of reasons why a school would qualify to submit student data for P-EBT, reference question 1 of the Ohio Department of Education's [P-EBT school year 2022-2023 Question and Answer](#) guidance.
- 4. What if the student that is out the 5 consecutive days is eligible for Free and Reduced meals? Does this initial five days out qualify or does the eligibility begin after the quarantine is completed?** This initial 5 days would count for P-EBT submission since the student is free or reduced eligible.

- 5. I know some districts are closing right now due to flu. Is this only for COVID? Yes, P-EBT is only for absences confirmed to be COVID related.**
- 6. If our school does not have a quarantine policy in place and no longer keeps track of covid, then we would not submit PEbt? If a school is not tracking absences related to COVID and is fully in person with no remote option then that school would not submit data for P-EBT. The method of tracking COVID absences or not tracking absences is up to the school or district in school year 2022-2023.**
- 7. If a student/school becomes eligible based on the 5-days but the school is not participating in NSLP this year because they couldn't secure a vendor, are they eligible for P-EBT benefits? No, if the school is not participating in NSLP in school year 2022-2023 then the school would not be eligible to submit student data for P-EBT.**
- 8. We offered Blended Learning at our district. We originally offered this due to covid but this year we offer it more of a convenience to families. Some families may still be using it due to covid - but mostly it is a scheduling convenience for the family. Do the days that they are remote count for PEbt if they are on free/reduced lunch? Yes, because the blended learning option started due to COVID, free or reduced approved students would qualify for PEbt on days they are not offered a meal in school.**
- 9. When you say that one student quarantining for 5 consecutive days qualifies the whole school, does it qualify just their one school building or the entire district? Just that school building from which the student attends. It does not translate to all schools in the district.**
- 10. If two "school IRNs" are in the same physical building... Since it's one building does one student qualify both IRNs? Each IRN participating in the school meal program must meet the 5 consecutive days, even if multiple IRN's are occupying the same building space.**
- 11. What is the logic behind qualifying buildings instead of districts? I'm anticipating many questions from parents for why only one of their children received benefits. This is how the P-EBT statute was written into federal law. Ohio does not have discretion to amend this requirement.**
- 12. If a school has a student out for 5 consecutive days with COVID beginning 8/31, anyone could get benefits from that building for absences 8/31 or later, correct? Yes, if the absences are COVID related, and the student has qualified for free or reduced meals. If a student has P-EBT eligible days on or after 8/31 but they aren't yet approved for free or reduced meals, the student cannot receive P-EBT for those days.**
- 13. It is just the student who receives benefits or the whole building? The benefit is based on each individual student. Let's say Johnny is free meal eligible and Tommy is not. Both Johnny and Tommy are in close contact to Sara who becomes ill with COVID. Both Tommy and Johnny stay home to quarantine for 5 school days. Johnny may receive P-EBT for those 5 school days because he is**

free meal eligible. Tommy is not free or reduced meal eligible and thus is not eligible to receive P-EBT for those 5 school days.

- 14. Does the school District have to be closed, remote or hybrid in order to qualify to submit student data for P-EBT?** No, a school could be 5 days in person with no remote learning and still qualify for P-EBT based on students sick with COVID or quarantining due to COVID. For a full list of reasons how a school would qualify to submit student data for P-EBT, reference question 1 of the Ohio Department of Education's [P-EBT school year 2022-2023 Question and Answer](#) guidance.
- 15. The school has qualified to submit for PEBT after a student stayed home for 5 consecutive days due to COVID. Another student than misses 3 days, do we report the 3 days for the other child?** Yes, in this case the school has already qualified to submit student data for P-EBT and the 5 consecutive days is no longer required. The other student may receive P-EBT for the 3 days missed if they qualify for free or reduced price meals.
- 16. Does each qualified student need to be out 5 consecutive days to be eligible or just one student?** Just one student. The school would then qualify to submit eligible students from that point forward or may have already qualified to submit student data for other reasons. After a school becomes eligible to submit student data for P-EBT, the 5 consecutive days is no longer important. For a full list of reasons how a school would qualify to submit students for P-EBT, reference question 1 of the Ohio Department of Education's [P-EBT school year 2022-2023 Question and Answer](#) guidance.
- 17. Should we report all numbers of days for qualifying students even if they have missed less than 5 days, ex. only missed 4 days and it runs into the weekend?** Once a school has met the criteria for submitting student data for P-EBT, any count of days may be submitted for a qualifying student for qualifying days. For a full list of reasons how a school would qualify to submit students for P-EBT, reference question 1 of the Ohio Department of Education's [P-EBT school year 2022-2023 Question and Answer](#) guidance.

### Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)/ Provision 2 Questions

- 18. This would be our 2nd year on Provision 2. I was told that I did not have to collect meal applications. Do my students qualify?** Yes, students attending schools that are on CEP or Provision 2 this school year qualify for P-EBT if that student has P-EBT eligible days after the school becomes eligible to submit data for P-EBT.
- 19. What about a CEP school?** Students attending a CEP or Provision 2 school automatically qualify students for free or reduced meals. A student(s) can then receive P-EBT if that individual student(s) has P-EBT qualifying days after the school becomes eligible to submit data for P-EBT.

## **Students Qualifying for Free or Reduced Meals Questions**

- 20. Are these cards only for students that are free or reduced eligible that miss due to Covid?** Yes, the student must be free or reduced-price meal eligible based on school year 2022-2023 eligibility documentation or in a building participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) or Provision 2 and have qualifying P-EBT days for the school to submit the student information for P-EBT.
- 21. If a school qualifies for P-EBT, and a F/R student has Covid days during the 30 day carry over period in the beginning of the school year, would they qualify for the P-EBT benefits? Or only when a new application is submitted for 22-23?** Only when a new school year 2022-2023 application is submitted or the student qualifies based on 2022-2023 direct certification or categorical eligibility and the student qualifies for free or reduced meals. Students cannot qualify for P-EBT based on carried over free or reduced eligibility from the previous school year.
- 22. If we have a student absent for five consecutive days at the end of August, but we do not receive their free and reduced application until the end of September, they would not be eligible for benefits? Only after the application has been received and approved?** This is correct. While the 5 consecutive days in August scenario qualifies the school to submit for P-EBT, the student would not be eligible for P-EBT until after their application was received and they are approved for free or reduced benefits. In this case, any P-EBT days end of September forward would qualify.
- 23. What about student who qualify for free meals through direct certification in school year 2022-2023? What if they have other students in the household who do not appear on the direct certification list?** If a student appears on a 2022-2023 direct certification match list, that student qualifies for free meals and thus P-EBT if the student has qualifying P-EBT days. The school may still extend direct certification benefits to other students in the household as usual practice, and thus those students are also free meal eligible and P-EBT eligible if they have qualifying days. The school must maintain documentation of extending the benefits to the other students.
- 24. If a student was free or reduced from an application or direct cert from 2020/2021 they would have to submit a new application or show up on direct cert for 2022/23 to be eligible for PEBT correct? They don't just automatically carry over?** This is correct. The student must qualify for free or reduced meals based on school year 2022-2023 documentation to be eligible for P-EBT if they have qualifying days. If the only documentation received is from school year 2020-2021, that student is not eligible for free or reduced meals and is not eligible for P-EBT.

Please reference question 2 and 3 of the Ohio Department of Education [2022-2023 P-EBT Question and Answer](#) guide for information regarding free or

reduced meal eligibility qualifying a student for P-EBT submission. As a reminder, schools are required to complete a Direct Certification match process at least three times a school year.

- 25. Verifying that first and foremost, student has to qualify for free/reduced lunch or in direct cert, in order to even be considered for any P-EBT benefits, correct?** Yes, the student has to qualify for free or reduced meals or currently be enrolled in a school building that would be participating in CEP or Provision 2. For a full list of reasons how a student would qualify for P-EBT, reference question 2 and 3 of the Ohio Department of Education's [P-EBT school year 2022-2023 Question and Answer](#) guidance
- 26. Does a family need to fill out a school lunch app to qualify for P-EBT or can you base it on the fee waiver form parents submitted?** In order to qualify for P-EBT, the household must have a valid school year 2022-2023 USDA free or reduced-price meal application on file, direct certification match or be categorically eligible due to Homeless, Migrant or runaway or Headstart participation. For a full list of reasons how a student would qualify for P-EBT, reference question 2 and 3 of the Ohio Department of Education's [P-EBT school year 2022-2023 Question and Answer](#) guidance.

The Ohio Household application or the fee waiver form does not qualify a student for the USDA free or reduced-price meal program and thus is not acceptable documentation for the P-EBT program.

- 27. What is the start date for P-EBT eligibility for a Free or Reduced Price Eligible Student?** P-EBT benefits start for each qualifying day from the day the student's application was submitted to the school moving forward. For example, if a student is approved for free meals and their application was submitted to the school on October 1, 2022, the student may receive P-EBT on qualifying days starting October 1. For more information, reference question 6 of the Ohio Department of Education's [P-EBT school year 2022-2023 Question and Answer](#) guidance.
- 28. What if a parent declines the free meals when you send the direct cert letter home as being eligible for free meals?** If a household declines the free meal benefit, then students in that household do not qualify for free or reduced meals and thus do not qualify for P-EBT. Schools are encouraged to let households know that if they decline the free meal benefit, they are not eligible for P-EBT.

### **Quarantine Days/ Absences for Other Reasons Questions**

- 29. We don't offer remote learning, but I was initially told students at home due to quarantine would qualify for these benefits if they also are free/reduced and quarantined 5+ days. Want to clarify if this is correct?** Yes, this is correct. Once a school qualifies to submit data for P-EBT, a free or reduced meal

eligible student can receive P-EBT for any count of quarantine days, even for one day.

- 30. If the student is out 5 consecutive days, return for 3 days, and then be out 4 more days... Is this student eligible for 9 total days?** Yes, in this case the school has qualified to submit student data for P-EBT (and may already have qualified based on other circumstances) so all 9 school days that this student was out qualifies for P-EBT as long as the student was free or reduced meal eligible and the absences were specifically due to COVID.
- 31. Once the school is eligible, if a child is sick for a day or two, can we submit?** Yes, once a school is eligible to submit P-EBT data then the 5 consecutive days is no longer a requirement. Qualifying students may receive P-EBT even for a day or two if the absence is specifically COVID related. If the absence is due to any other illness or reason, the day(s) do not qualify for P-EBT.
- 32. Do we need proof of a quarantine from a health department? doctor? or is a phone call/note from mom or dad sufficient?** The school can use its own method for documenting COVID related quarantining. The Department is not requiring any particular type of documentation.
- 33. What if a student is just out sick and not technically quarantined for 5 consecutive days?** Only COVID related absences qualify for P-EBT. If a student is absent for any other reason (other type of illness, injury, vacation, unexcused absence), those days do not qualify for P-EBT.
- 34. So for clarification, if our schools are 5 days in with no remote learning options, does this mean that the only students who qualify are those who are quarantined that are free/reduced?** Yes, unless the school building is a CEP or Provision 2 building of which all students would be eligible for P-EBT and could receive P-EBT if the individual student had qualifying days.
- 35. If quarantine students aren't remote learning those 5 days, they do not qualify, correct?** Incorrect, the student may receive P-EBT for school days if they are free or reduced eligible and have quarantined for COVID reasons, even if official remote learning is not occurring.
- 36. By "quarantine" does the student themselves have to test positive, or do they also qualify if they are quarantined due to a family member testing positive?** For P-EBT purposes, school absences must be COVID -19 related. This can be any absence where the school directs students to stay home for a COVID-related reason. As long as students are home at the school's direction, and the school is acting out of "concern" about COVID then these are P-EBT-eligible days. It can also be an absence initiated by the parent that is *recognized and accepted by school officials as COVID-related*. At the discretion of the school, this could include a parent's decision to keep their child home after a positive test or possible exposure to COVID

- 37. Does the quarantine clock restart each month?** No. Once a school qualifies to submit student data for P-EBT, any qualifying days for a qualifying student may be submitted for that point forward, even if for 1 or 2 days.
- 38. How are you supposed to track the quarantine when the health department is technically not allowed to notify you?** Schools may use their own discretion or guidance made available to them on how to track quarantine days.
- 39. If a school has a student that is quarantined for 5 consecutive days a couple months after school starts, and this initially qualifies the school. Does this qualification allow eligible students to be included for PEbt from the first day of school?** The school would qualify to submit P-EBT days from this point forward, for this student all 5 days can be submitted for P-EBT if the student qualifies for free or reduced meals. It would not be retroactive to the beginning of the school year.
- 40. Schools would have non excused school days, can you please clarify if the students miss the 5 days that are unexcused are or are not eligible?** Only students that qualify for free or reduced meals (or attend a CEP or Provision 2 building) qualify for P-EBT, and if the P-EBT is based on absence days, the absence must be due to a COVID related absence or quarantine. Absences for any other illness, reason or unexcused absences do not qualify for P-EBT.
- 41. Can the 5 consecutive quarantine days include weekends even though they do not get benefits for those days?** No, only school days count. Weekends and holidays do not count toward the 5 consecutive days.

#### Online Learning Academy/ Virtual School Questions

- 42. We also have a large number of students that do online schooling we have never counted those in the past. I hear you say that we will be processing those now. You're working on the process? How do we handle those phone calls/emails?** New to this school year students that are homeschooled and fully virtual will have a household application process to potentially qualify for P-EBT. The application is being built and will be available in calendar 2023. Refer to question 7 and 8 of the Ohio Department of Education's [P-EBT school year 2022-2023 Question and Answer](#) guidance for additional information. As the application is built, these questions will be updated with further instruction.
- 43. What is the timeline for students who have moved to virtual schools because of Covid? 2020?** Students who moved to homeschool or fully virtual after January 2020 are potentially eligible for P-EBT under this new application process.
- 44. We have an IRN that is defined as a Remote Building. These students physically come to the building but do computer instructing classes. This IRN did not qualify in the past for P-EBT funds. Would it qualify this time do to the changes?** A school must be housed in a physical school building and offer students meals under the NSLP to potentially qualify to submit students for P-EBT. If a school does not meet this criterion of a physical building and NSLP

participation, the students attending the school would be considered fully virtual and could potentially meet the criteria for P-EBT under the new homeschool and fully virtual student application process. The school would not submit P-EBT data, but the households could apply for the benefit using the application process currently being built.

### **Preschool Qualification Questions**

- 45. We also have a pre-school. Do these students qualify?** Possibly. If in school year 2022-2023 the school is offering meals to the Preschool students through the School Breakfast Program and/or the National School Lunch Program, preschool students would qualify for P-EBT if they are free or reduced meal eligible and have qualifying P-EBT days. If the school is not offering school breakfast and/or school lunch to the preschool students, the preschool students do not qualify for the school to submit their information for P-EBT. In this case, the children could potentially receive P-EBT under the childcare P-EBT program of which is handled by a separate agency. No action is required by the school for the childcare P-EBT program.
- 46. PEBT for Preschool - they have to attend 5 days a week – correct?** No, their count of consecutive days can be based on the official instruction days for the preschool. If the school of which the preschool is housed has qualified to submit student data for PEBT and the preschool qualifies for P-EBT because the school offers school breakfast and/or school lunch to the preschool students, qualifying preschool students can receive P-EBT for any qualifying P-EBT days.

### **Data Reporting and PEBT Card Questions**

- 47. I missed the December reporting period. What happens now for the August – November data?** During each monthly data collection this school year, schools may submit P-EBT data for the current collected month and for any previous months where student data was missed or needs corrected.
- 48. What do I do if I need to modify data already submitted?** Contact the P-EBT support at [pebt-support@ohio-k12.org](mailto:pebt-support@ohio-k12.org) for assistance.
- 49. Will new cards be issued to students this school year?** No, the benefits will be added to the cards issued after February 2021. Only new students eligible for P-EBT and have not yet received a card will be issued a P-EBT card if the benefits are not loaded to a family SNAP card.
- 50. Will P-EBT cards go to P.O. boxes?** Yes, the cards may be delivered to a PO Box.
- 51. What if a family threw out the card?** Households who threw out the card must request a replacement card. Ohio Job and Family Services has detailed directions that can be shared with households in this situation in their [P-EBT question and answer](#) guide, scroll 3/4ths the way down the guide.
- 52. Shared Parenting - Challenging Situations Is there guidance for which parent to submit?** Generally speaking, the schools would submit the data for the

primary parent in the school's system. It is up to the discretion of the school for making the decision who is the primary parent. Due to unknown custody situations, the P-EBT support customer service line can only talk to the person who is on file from the school's submission.

- 53. Our EMIS director always did this she says she can't anymore. So I am very new to this. I am going to need a lot of help, who can help me?** The P-EBT support email can help with file formatting and upload. You are encouraged to reach out to fellow EMIS coordinators in the area who may help with process as well. Be sure to review this Q and A and the Ohio Department of Education, [2022-2023 P-EBT question and answer](#) guidance for additional assistance.
- 54. Who is sending us the file? is it emailed from META or pulled from the district EMIS?** Schools are responsible for generating the file, declaring the students that qualify for free or reduced meals and deciding which days for any given student qualify for P-EBT. Multiple school officials may have to work together to compile this information. Schools may reach out to their Information Technology Center or the P-EBT support email [pebt-support@ohio-k12.org](mailto:pebt-support@ohio-k12.org) if they need additional assistance preparing their file.

### **Snow Day Questions**

- 55. If we are 100% in school learning. Do the students that are free and reduced go on PEBT for a snow day if they do online learning for that day?**  
No, snow days do not count this year even if there is remote instruction.
- 56. If a student is quarantined for the 5 consecutive days and a Snow Day is declared in the middle of those days would they qualify for P-EBT if there is no remote learning for that Snow Day?** No, this day would not qualify for P-EBT.