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Michelle Dutrow, Superintendent

August 16, 2022

Greetings WB Families:

It's hard to believe that it is time to get another school year underway. The administration, faculty and staff have been hard at work preparing our facility and planning for the return of our students. We are cautiously hopeful that the 2022-2023 school year will see us moving past the COVID-19 pandemic, in great part, and back to normal operations.

I am reaching out today with some exciting news for our WB families. **Last evening, the Board of Directors approved the Administration's recommendation to pay for all student breakfasts and lunches for the 2022-2023 school year.** The district is keenly aware of the financial impact facing many of our families as the result of the pandemic and more recently inflation and its impact on gas and food prices. Issues around food security are still present in our area and the district's effort is to ease this burden for the present time.

With this board action, the district will be assuming the cost of student meals beyond reimbursement. The district will be using COVID funds to provide the free meals, but we will need our families' assistance if we want to possibly continue this offering for the 2023-2024 school year. **It is imperative that any family who might qualify for a free or reduced lunch complete the application process even though you will not be charged for meals.** This status will dictate how much reimbursement the district will receive for each meal served with a higher reimbursement assigned for the free and reduced meals. This in turn will determine how much the district will need to pay for the free meals. If we find it costs too much due to families not completing the free or reduced lunch application process, we will not be able to offer the free meals after this school year. Additionally, completing the application process will put you in good standing for any future P-EBT benefits that many families have been receiving up to this point.

We hope this meal offering will be of benefit to your family. If you have any questions about or need any assistance submitting the free and reduced lunch application, please contact our Cafeteria Office at (814) 345-5616, ext. 1030.

We hope to see everyone here at school next week for our Meet the Teacher event on Tuesday, August 23, 2022, at 5:00 p.m.

Micki Dutrow

It is the policy of the West Branch Area School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin or handicap/disability in its educational programs, activities, or employment. Services and facilities are accessible to and usable by disabled persons as required by Title IX, Section 504 and Title VI.