

A Changing Metric: Low Income vs. Economically Disadvantaged

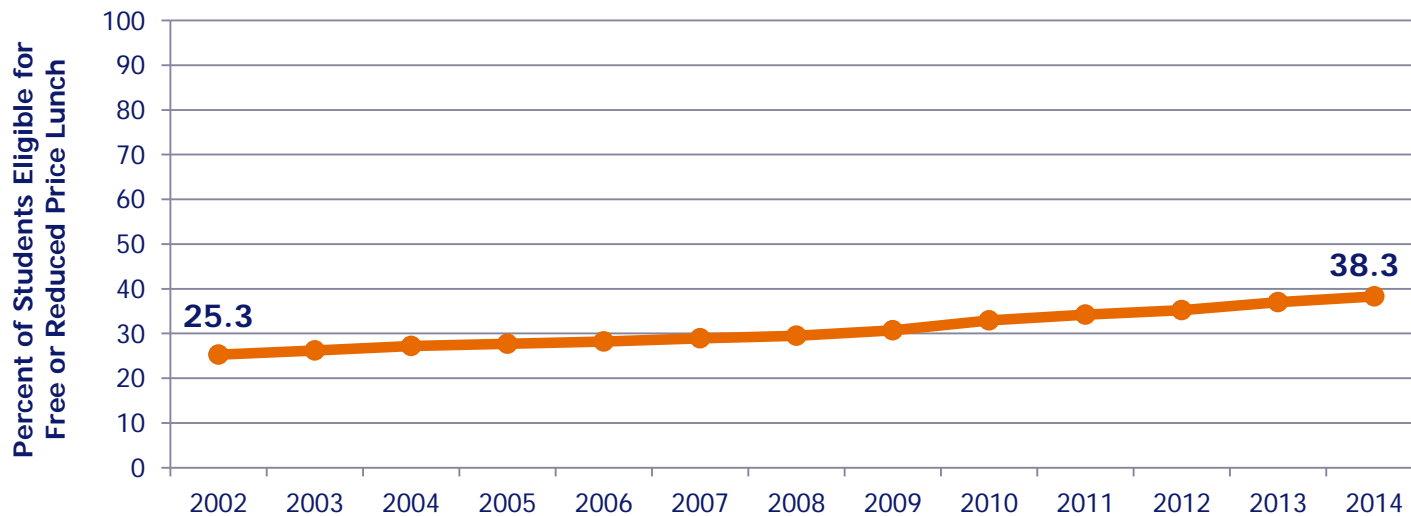
Revised July 6, 2015

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION



Historical Background

- ★ ESE has been collecting student demographic data for decades
- ★ Originally collected in the aggregate; since 2002, collected at the student level through the Student Information Management System (SIMS)
- ★ One variable collected has been “Low Income” – a student’s eligibility for free or reduced price lunch under the National School Lunch Act of 1945



Historical Background

- ★ “Low Income” data have been used for a wide range of purposes
 - ★ School nutrition
 - ★ Chapter 70
 - ★ Federal entitlement allocations (district and school)
 - ★ State grant awards
 - ★ Assessment reporting
 - ★ Accountability system
 - ★ School building reimbursement rates
 - ★ Research projects – consistent across states
- ★ Participation in NSLP high but not 100%



A Changing Landscape

- ★ In 2011-12 school year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture began a three year pilot of the **Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)**
- ★ Program allowed districts or schools that met a certain threshold of qualifying students (40%) to offer free breakfast and lunch to all students without collecting eligibility forms for all students
- ★ Students are qualified through means other than collecting eligibility forms such as Direct Certification (EOHHS maintained database tracking enrollment in SNAP, TAFDC, foster care and MassHealth)
- ★ USDA reimbursement for free meals based on 160% of the direct certification count



CEP Benefits

- ★ Higher participation in breakfast and lunch programs
 - ★ Reduced cost to families
 - ★ No stigma in program
- ★ Eliminates reporting burden for families and schools
- ★ Eliminates burden of collecting and accounting for lunch fees
- ★ Loss of lunch fees offset by higher USDA reimbursement and cost savings – many districts will come out ahead financially



Massachusetts Participation in CEP

- ★ Massachusetts joined USDA pilot in 2013-14 and Boston public schools served as the pilot district
- ★ Starting in 2014-15, the program was available to all districts

School Year	Number of Districts Participating	Number of Students	Percent of State Enrollment
2013-14	1	57,000	6%
2014-15	22	142,000	15%
2015-16	54*	390,000	41%

* Based on eligibility – actual number to be determined



Defining a New Metric -- Considerations

- ★ Consistent across all districts (CEP and non-CEP)
- ★ Accurate
- ★ Verifiable
- ★ Student-level
- ★ Minimize administrative burden



Defining a New Metric -- Options

Potential Option	Considerations
1. Require CEP districts to collect income data from all students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional burden on districts implementing CEP • No incentive for families to report
2. Use census poverty data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't provide student level data • Doesn't align with district boundaries
3. Use state revenue data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privacy issues • Not all low income families file
4. Match against the Direct Certification database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results in lower poverty numbers • Break in trend data
5. Multiply the Direct Certification count by a factor to approximate the low income count	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowable use by the USED and USDA (160%) • Doesn't provide a student by student accounting
6. Classify all students in CEP districts as low income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent with current definition • Windfall for CEP districts • Reduces usefulness of metric



What are Other States Doing?

★ Delaware

- ★ Implement Community Eligibility and move away from collecting income forms
- ★ Use Direct Certification percentage as a new metric

★ California

- ★ Continue requirement to collect income forms for all students
- ★ Allow one form to be active record for four years if no substantive change

★ Kentucky and Michigan

- ★ Require annual collection of income forms for all students

- ★ We expect that USED will eventually recommend a new standard after these and other options are studied over a period of years



How It Works

- ★ ESE collaborates with EOHHS to match **all enrolled students** against the Direct Certification database
- ★ Matches students that are participating in SNAP, TAFDC, foster care or MassHealth (up to 130% of poverty)
- ★ Match is run three times a year (October 1, March 1 and end of year)
- ★ Result is a student by student classification of **“economically disadvantaged”** status



How do the Results Compare?

Year	Measure	# of Students Enrolled	Number Classified	Percent Classified
2013-14	Low Income	955,739	365,885	38.3%
2014-15	Economically Disadvantaged	955,844	251,026	26.3%

- ★ Statewide percentage decreased by 12 percentage points
- ★ 31.4% reduction in the number of students
- ★ Differentiated impact across districts
- ★ Of the ten districts with the highest relative share of the low income population in 2014, nine of the ten are still in the top ten of relative share with the new metric



Specific District Impacts

2014 Top 10 Highest # of Low Income

District	2014 Low Income #	2015 Econ. Disadv. #	% Change
Springfield	22,556	17,330	-23.2%
New Bedford	9,635	6,984	-27.5%
Fall River	8,080	5,799	-28.2%
Worcester	17,923	12,478	-30.4%
Lawrence	12,474	8,572	-31.3%
State	365,885	251,026	-31.4%
Lowell	10,540	6,896	-34.6%
Boston	42,169	26,754	-36.6%
Lynn	11,933	6,870	-42.4%
Brockton	13,722	7,892	-42.5%
Everett	5,506	2,882	-47.7%



Specific Program Impacts

Use of Data	First Year of Impact	Current Solution
Chapter 70 Charter school tuition	FY17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using low income data for FY16 Recommend adjustments to low income increments in FY17 to offset changes Subject to legislative and governor approval
Federal entitlement grants	FY16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use economically disadvantaged data in FY16 calculations Community allocations are based on census data Hold harmless provisions (Title I)
Accountability system	FY16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use economically disadvantaged data in FY16 Developing strategy around longitudinal comparisons



Specific Program Impacts

Use of Data	First Year of Impact	Current Solution
Local use of data	FY16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">District choice – not required by ESE
Public reporting	FY16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Report economically disadvantaged data on ESE website (consistent across all districts)
School Building Authority	FY16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Providing technical assistance to the MSBA
Research projects	FY16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Working with researchers on how to use the data and identify ways to bridge the change in metrics

