February 5, 2021

Charleston, W.Va. – West Virginia Governor Jim Justice announced today there will be a second round of the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer Program (P-EBT) allocated to eligible children who qualify for free or reduced-price school meals during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program will continue to be administered through the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) and the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR).

On February 4, 2021, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved issuance of a second round of P-EBT for children who would have received free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program if their schools were not closed or operating at reduced attendance hours due to COVID-19.

“We are incredibly grateful that another round of these benefits will be allocated in West Virginia, even as the challenges posed by the pandemic continue,” Gov. Justice said. “Our children are our greatest treasure in West Virginia and making sure our kids have enough to eat is absolutely the most important thing we can do – it’s why, the moment we closed our schools last year, we went right to work delivering millions of

meals all across the state. So, we appreciate the extra help this program will continue to provide."

P-EBT funding has resulted in more than $72.6 million in food assistance support for West Virginia children, and an estimated $200 million is expected as a part of the next round of benefits.

"West Virginia's commitment to consistent and high-quality meals for children during the pandemic remains a top priority," said State Superintendent of Schools W. Clayton Burch. "The P-EBT program has been important because of the flexibility it offers families. As the pandemic continues, children will benefit immensely from these extended benefits that will strengthen our efforts to ensure children have access to the nutrition they need."

Benefits will start to be released mid-March and will be applied retroactively to the beginning of the school year. The benefits will be issued to a special P-EBT card, not to the Mountain State EBT card, thus, families will receive a new electronic benefits card in the mail.

"It is necessary that children's nutritional needs are met to assure that they remain healthy and ready to learn," said Cabinet Secretary for the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Bill J. Crouch. "We know the pandemic has been an incredibly stressful time for West Virginia families and hope that P-EBT alleviates some challenges."

A public information hotline and website (www.wvpebt.org) will be available starting Monday, February 15, 2021, to explain the latest round of P-EBT. For questions about P-EBT benefits, please email **wvpebt@k12.wv.us**.

For more information, contact Christy Day at the West Virginia Department of Education Office of Communications at 304-558-2699 or Christy.Day@k12.wv.us.

For information about COVID-19, please visit www.coronavirus.wv.gov or wvde.us/COVID19.

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