eScholar Releases eScholar DirectMatch™, a New Solution that Uses Data Matching to Directly Certify Students Who Are Eligible for Free and Reduced-price School Meals
With eScholar DirectMatch, states can meet and exceed their 95% direct certification rate goals.

White Plains, NY, November 3, 2016 – eScholar, the leading provider of education data solutions, today announced the launch of a new solution for states seeking to directly certify eligible students for free or reduced-price school meals through the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). The new solution, eScholar DirectMatch™, enables users to match student data with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) files using the solution's combination of probabilistic and deterministic matching algorithms. This process allows states and their school food administrators to quickly and accurately identify students who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.

Historically, schools collected meal forms from students' parents to determine program eligibility. However, this method created a significant amount of paperwork and could also lead to errors. With direct certification, eligibility for school meals can be determined automatically based on SNAP data. However, without a strong data matching system, many states struggle to increase direct certification rates. As a result, eligible students may attend school hungry, which can have significant negative impact with students' engagement during school and their academic performance. Additionally, states may be missing out on funding from the USDA, which reimburses them for meal costs.

By deploying eScholar DirectMatch to directly certify students for free and reduced-price school meals, states can improve their direct certification rate and increase their reimbursement. Benefits from the solution include:

- **Accuracy**: eScholar DirectMatch uses sophisticated matching algorithms, which prevent certification errors so no child is denied the benefits they should receive.
- **Precision**: eScholar DirectMatch enables districts and school food administrators to resolve near matches using 15 different data elements, including name, address information, and gender.
- **Security and Privacy**: As a secure web-based application, the process of direct certification can be completed securely at the district or state levels through the centralized system, eliminating the need to email and extract files with personally identifiable information.
- **Verification**: eScholar DirectMatch allows the state and districts to audit and review all match decisions, including previous school years, within one application.

Overall, the culmination of these benefits is that more children are accurately identified as eligible for school meals without having to bring in a meal form; they don't have to be distracted by hunger while attending school. eScholar Product Manager, Juan Guerrero, recognizes the benefits of using data matching for direct certification.

"The 95% direct certification rate is an ambitious, yet achievable goal set by the Healthy, Hunger-free Kids Act, but getting to 95% can be a big challenge without a matching system," said Mr. Guerrero. "No child should have to learn on an empty stomach because they weren't correctly matched to the right

meal benefit. With eScholar DirectMatch's probabilistic and deterministic algorithms, states will see an immediate improvement on the direct certification rate and move closer to directly certifying and feeding 100% of eligible students."

eScholar DirectMatch is available to state agencies seeking a data matching solution for direct certification. Future enhancements to the solution already being planned for 2017 include matching against other types of data used for direct certification, including TANF and Medicaid. eScholar DirectMatch is available as an integrated module to eScholar Uniq-ID®, eScholar's unique identification product, or installed as a stand-alone solution.

As an introduction to the new solution, eScholar is inviting local, state, and federal agency staff members to attend a live webinar for an overview and demonstration of eScholar DirectMatch. Webinars will be held on Tuesday, November 15 at 2 PM EST, and Thursday, November 17 at 12 PM EST. For more information on the webinar and eScholar DirectMatch, please visit www.escholar.com.

About eScholar: From data warehousing to analytics, eScholar produces education software to meet all of your data needs. Since 1997, eScholar has revolutionized education through data. For more information, visit www.escholar.com.

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