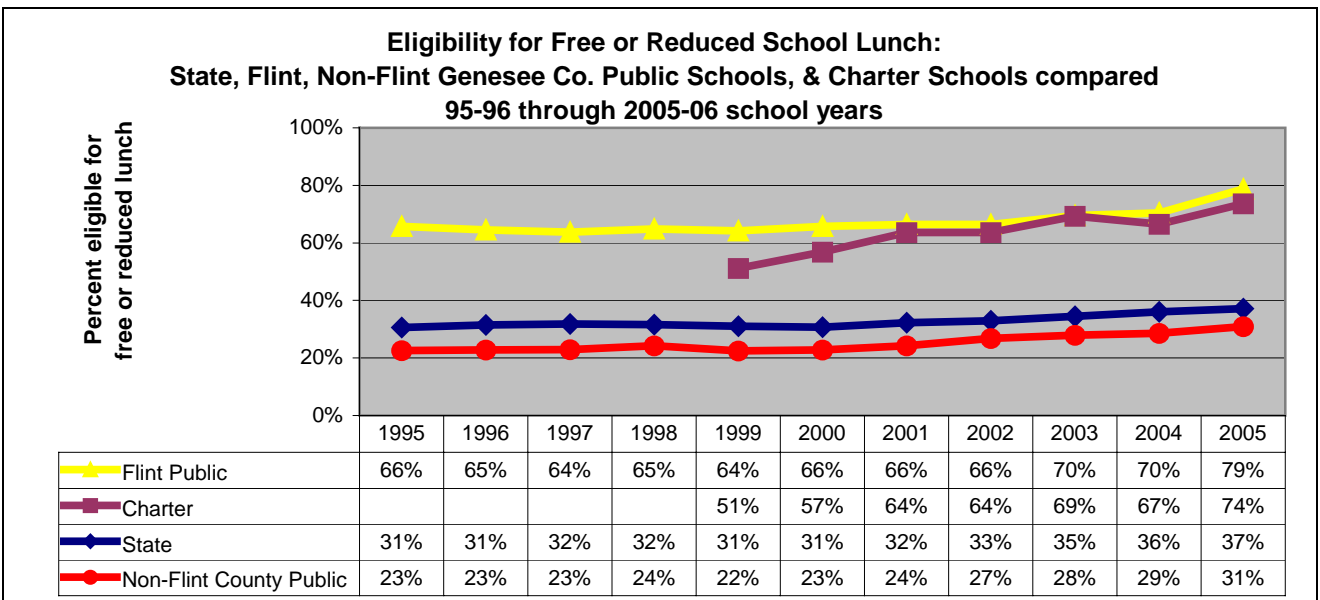




Mission: To improve the quality of life for children and families in Genesee County through assessment, awareness, advocacy and action.

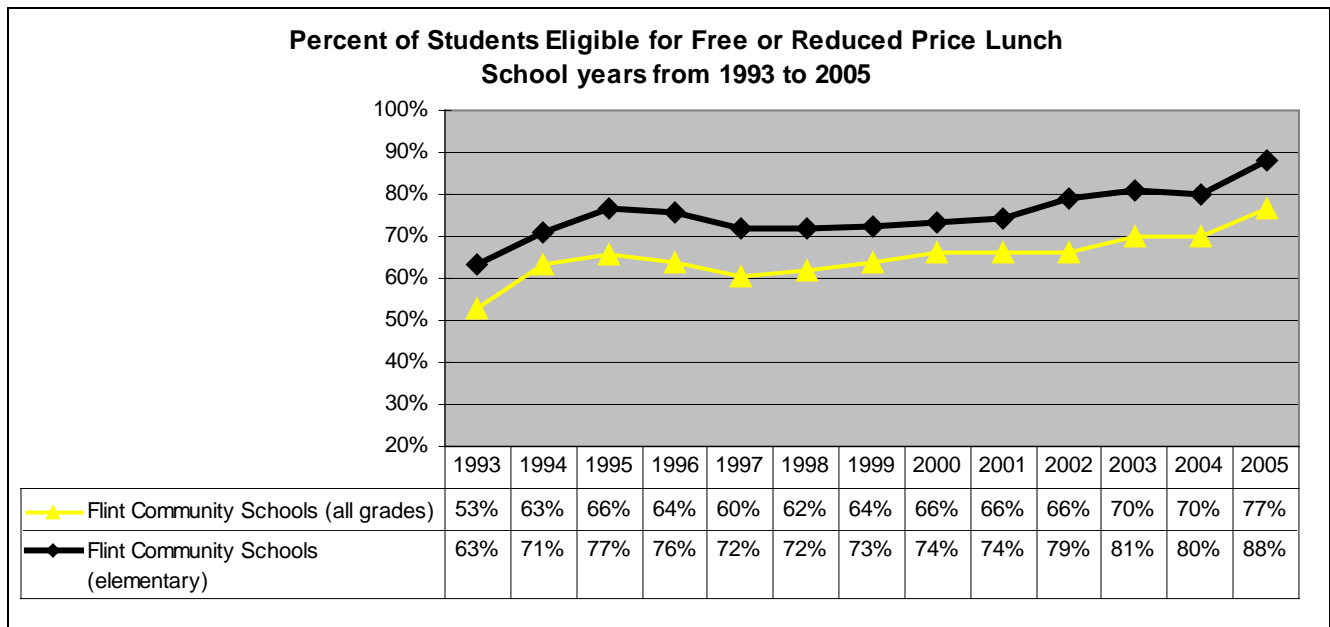
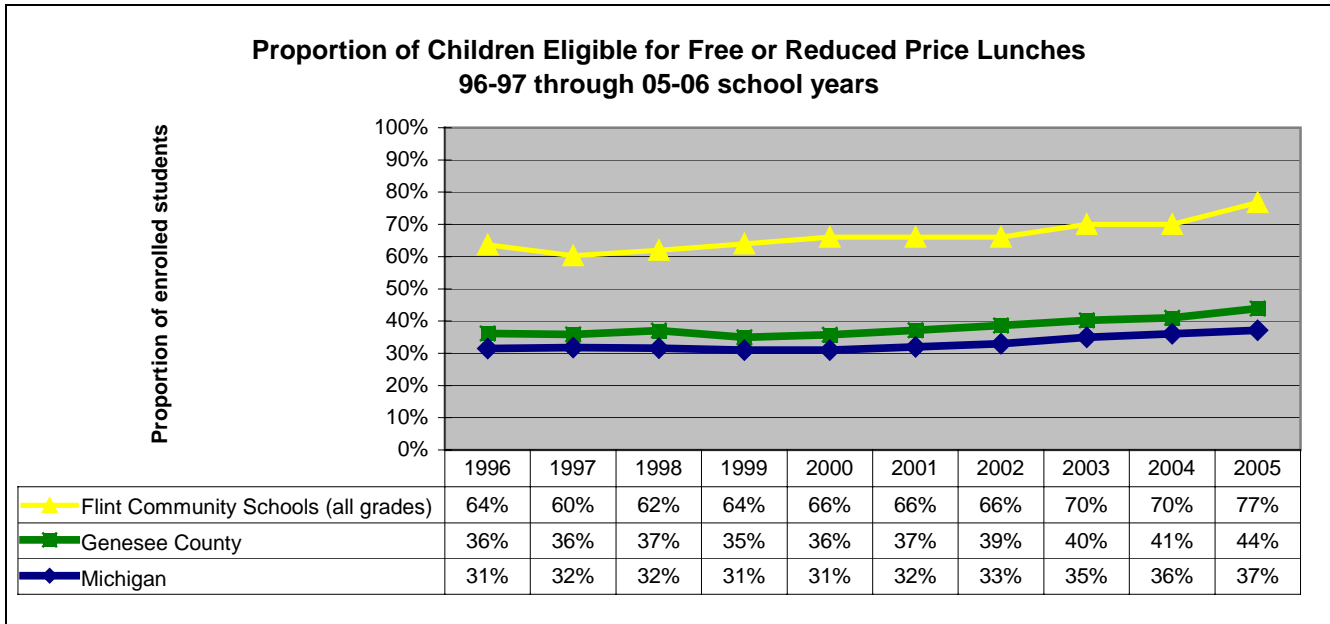
Fact Sheet 4.3 Free or Reduced Lunch

The percentage of students who are eligible to participate in the free and reduced price school lunch program is determined by federal income guidelines according to family size. Eligibility for free or reduced lunch is therefore one indicator of poverty status. When rates among younger and older students are compared, it is usual for eligibility rates to be much lower among older (i.e., high school) students than among younger students. It is likely that the major reason for this is not that the families of older students are less poor, but rather that older students are less likely to affirm their poverty status. The proportion of students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch should therefore be viewed as a lower estimate of poverty within a school community.

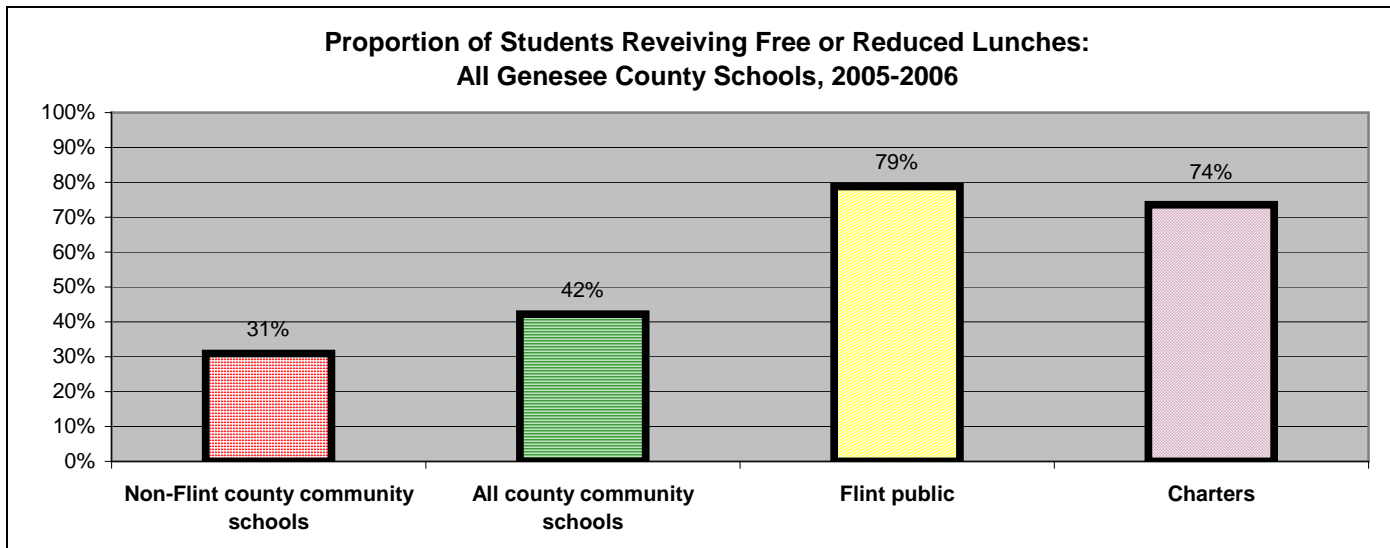
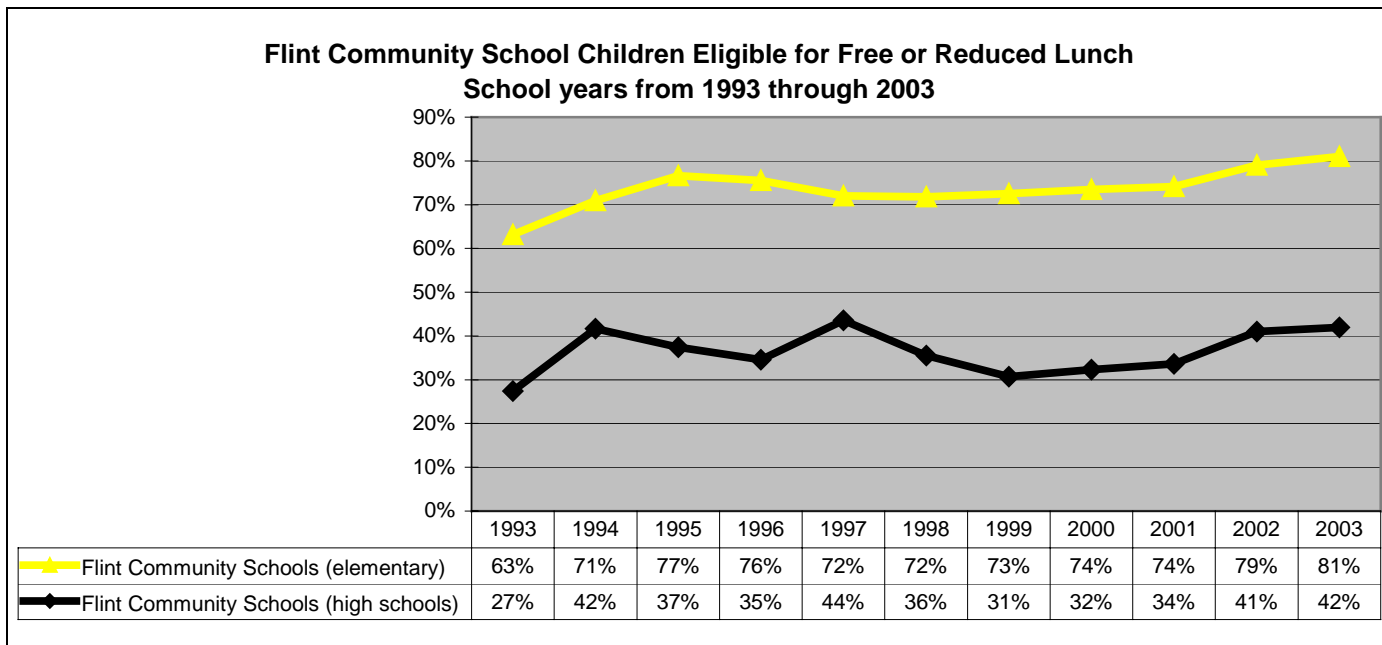


- The proportion of students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch has increased in the last year for students in Michigan as a whole and Genesee County community school students outside Flint, but most dramatically for Flint Community Schools and charter schools students.
- When all Genesee County schools are compared to statewide averages, Genesee County is higher.
- Eligibility rates for students in county community schools outside Flint are slightly lower than those in Michigan as a whole, and about two and a half times lower than students in the Flint Community Schools.

Fact Sheet 4.3: Free or Reduced Lunch continued...



- When students of all ages are compared, students in the Flint Community Schools are over twice as likely as students in Michigan in general to be eligible for free or reduced lunch in school.



- Rates of eligibility of students in charter schools are about as high as those in the Flint community schools.

BEYOND THE NUMBERS

In this area, the numbers speak for themselves. The numbers of children applying for free/reduced lunch are indicators for child poverty and the economic status of the geographic area. The importance of the accuracy of this data lies in its use for qualifying for grant monies, especially federal, that can have an impact on many of the negative conditions that affect families and children. Though this is not a statistic that we would want to see increase, it should be fully and accurately reported in order to access services for those who need them.

Fact Sheet 4.3: Free or Reduced Lunch continued...

EXAMPLES OF INTERVENTION EFFORTS

For some children, free and/or reduced lunches might be the healthiest or most regular meal served, for a variety of reasons. The lunches themselves are an intervention that impacts health and ability to learn.

- **Child and Adult Care Food Program** - Public and private organizations may receive reimbursement for providing nutritious snacks and suppers (new) to children up to age 18 in after school care programs in low-income areas. While many organizations provide lunch and/or snacks, we know that some children do not get healthy dinners. This opportunity is a new one, and of course organizations must consider their capacity to handle the responsibility. The suppers would include milk, meat or alternative, two servings vegetables/fruit, and whole-grain bread or cereal. This is part of the Child Nutrition Application Program (CNAP) and details are available at 517-373-7391 or by email to MDE-CNAP-CACFP@michigan.gov.

Source: "School Breakfast and Lunch Information by District and Building --School year 2004-2005 (October 2004 data)", and "School Breakfast and Lunch Information by District and Building --School year 2005-2006 (October 2005 data)" MDoE via GISD; and from Michigan Department of Education in response to a personal request for information.

Note: The term "community school" is used to refer to traditional publicly-funded public schools, while "charter school" is used to refer to public school academies.

Revised: 5/29/2007