



Feeding Bodies. Fueling Minds.™

2019 Position Paper

Talking Points

SNA urges Congress and the Administration to strengthen the federal government's commitment to historically under-funded child nutrition programs and minimize unnecessary regulatory burdens.

Continue and increase USDA Foods (commodities) support for the School Breakfast Program (SBP)

- Research shows school breakfast consumption improves student behavior, attendance and performance on standardized tests.

- Expanding USDA Foods will support America's students and farmers and help schools reduce food costs.

Share examples of how USDA Foods at breakfast would help you improve menus and allow more students to benefit from nutritious school breakfast, e.g.

- We can invest in/expand our breakfast in the classroom or grab-and-go programs to serve more students a healthy school breakfast.
- We can offer a wider variety of American grown foods as part of a healthy school breakfast (commodity support is only provided for school lunch)

Share examples of healthy commodity foods you would like to serve at breakfast.

- USDA estimated that meeting updated nutrition standards for school breakfast would increase expenses by **27 cents per breakfast**, yet schools received no additional funding.

Provide examples of breakfast costs from your program.

Refer to [USDA Foods fact sheet](#) for more information.

Support USDA's ongoing effort to simplify child nutrition programs:

Encourage USDA to return to the five-year Administrative Review (AR) Cycle for School Food Authorities (SFAs) that consistently operate in compliance.

- SFAs are overwhelmed by excessive paperwork and reporting requirements, which take time away from the mission of serving students.

SFAs: Share examples of AR requirements, monthly & annual reporting mandates/audits/inspections and the impact they have on your program/staff.

- State agencies have also struggled to manage the increased workload under the shorter review cycle, which has diverted time and resources away from providing SFAs support and training.

SAs: Share examples of how the three-year cycle has stretched resources.

- A five-year cycle for SFAs consistently in compliance will maintain accountability by focusing on the *quality* of reviews over the *quantity*. State agencies will be able to conduct more thorough reviews, and SFAs can focus on serving students.
- "High-risk" SFAs that do not comply with the regulations should undergo ARs on a more frequent basis to help bring them into compliance with federal mandates.

Refer to AR fact sheet for more information.

Encourage USDA to modify the *Smart Snacks in School* rule to allow all menu items that are permitted to be served as part of a reimbursable meal to be sold at any time a la carte.

- SNA supports ensuring "competitive foods," sold a la carte and in vending machines, meet school nutrition standards, so *all* foods sold in school are healthy choices.
- However, the *Smart Snacks in School* rule:
 - forced schools to take healthy school meal options off a la carte menus.
 - created inconsistent rules that unnecessarily limit student choice and reduce revenue for school meal programs.
- School nutrition professionals struggle to make sense of two sets of complicated, sometimes conflicting, standards for the same foods.
- School *meal* standards limit unhealthy, saturated fat, but Smart Snacks limits *total* fat, pushing foods rich in heart-healthy fats off a la carte menus. Meanwhile, Smart Snacks sodium limits are excessively low.

Share examples of healthy school meal options that don't meet Smart Snacks, e.g.

 - Hummus, guacamole and vegetables tossed in olive oil exceed fat limits
 - Low sodium deli sandwiches, egg salad and tuna salad, even green salads or vegetables paired with low fat dressing or dip, fail to make the cut.

- Allowing foods that meet school meal standards to be sold as daily a la carte choices ensures students can choose from a variety of healthy options and relieves unnecessary administrative burdens for school nutrition professionals.

Refer to Smart Snacks fact sheet for more information.

Urge USDA and the US Department of Education, in collaboration with SFAs, to develop best practices and guidance to ensure school schedules provide students adequate time to eat healthy school meals.

- School breakfast and lunch programs support obesity prevention, student health and academic achievement. Students must have adequate time to consume these meals.
- School meals include more fresh fruits and vegetables, and these high-fiber, crunchy foods take more time to eat.
- Research shows students with shorter lunch periods ate fewer fruits, vegetables, milk and entrees.
Share examples of increased waste/decreased consumption in your cafeterias due to short lunch periods.
- To promote healthy eating, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends ensuring students have at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and 20 minutes to eat lunch after being seated.
Discuss how your program minimizes long lines for students and the challenge of rapidly serving large numbers of students, e.g.
 - *We offer grab-and-go options/hallway kiosks/multiple points of sale so we can quickly serve our students. However, in overcrowded schools where hundreds of students arrive in the cafeteria at once, it can be a challenge to serve students in a timely fashion.*
 - *We do all we can to minimize the time students spend in line for their meals, our cashiers are trained to serve x students each minute.*

Refer to Time to Eat fact sheet for more information.

Oppose any effort to block grant school meal programs.

- The success and sustainability of school meal programs depend on continued federal involvement, including federal reimbursements for each school meal served.

- Under fixed-sum block grants, when the number of children eligible for free or reduced price meals increases, states receive no additional funding to feed these students. ***Hungry students could go without:***
Cite examples relevant to your program, i.e.
 - Natural disaster
 - Local economic recession
 - Rising enrollment

- Block grants would dismantle an effective federal program and put students at risk by cutting funds and abolishing federal nutrition standards.
Cite examples of potential impact to your program
 - Meal program losses covered at the expense of academics
 - Reduce the variety and quality of school menu options

Refer to *Block Grant fact sheet* for more information.