

MdSNA Is On The Web



Home About News Members Industry Convention Education Legislation Resources

Calling All Interested Historians: CNP Through the Decades - Part 4

This is the fourth in a series of articles concerning the history and origin of the Child Nutrition Programs. The last article described the National School Lunch Act and its major components. This time we are moving on to the amendments headed toward current events. There is a lot to cover until we get to the program of today. Here we go. Read on. The legislation was identified as the "National School Lunch Act". Section 2 defines its purposes: "It is hereby declared to be the policy of Congress, as a measure of national security to safeguard the health and well being of the Nation's children and to encourage the domestic consumption of nutritious commodities and other food by assisting the states, through grants in-aid and other means, in providing an adequate supply of food and other facilities for the establishment, maintenance, operation and expansion of non-profit school lunch programs".

1946 was the biggest year in the life of the National School Lunch Act signed by President Harry S. Truman with the enactment of permanent authorization

and appropriations for the National School Lunch Program that is now almost 74 years old. We need a big celebration and recognition by Congress for this accomplishment for our diamond jubilee of 75 years of operation in 2021. Section 5 provided \$10 million of the total appropriation for equipment assistance to be appropriated on the same basis.

In 1962 National School Lunch Week was established by PL 87-823 which granted special assistance under Section 11 of the National School Lunch Act **permanently authorizing additional funds to states for free and reduced price lunches in low income areas.**

It took until **1966 for the passage of the Child Nutrition Act** adding a new dimension to school food service. Congress stated in the Declaration of Purpose in Section 2 of the Act, "In recognition of the demonstrated relationship between food and good nutrition and the capacity of children to develop and

Article continued on page 34.

learn, based on the years of cumulative successful experience under the National School Lunch Program, with its significant contributions in the field of applied nutrition research, it is hereby declared to be the policy of Congress that these efforts shall be extended, expanded and strengthened under the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture as a measure to safeguard the health and well being of the Nation's children, and to encourage the domestic consumption of agricultural and other foods, by assisting States, through grants-in-aid and other means, to meet more effectively the nutritional needs of our children.”

Under the provisions of the Act, the **Special Milk Program** that had been functioning since 1954 was extended to 1970 as part of the new Act. Special Milk was authorized in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

A pilot **Breakfast Program** with specific appropriations was authorized for 3 years beginning in fiscal 1966-67 and ending June 30, 1968. States were required to select schools which drew students from poor economic areas and those where students must travel long distances. In cases of extreme need, USDA was allowed to reimburse for 80% of the cost. The breakfasts were required to meet standards established by USDA based on tested nutritional research. Breakfast was to be served free or at a reduced price or full cost and there could be no segregation or discrimination based on inability to pay.

Section 5 of the Child Nutrition Act provided federal funding for **Equipment Assistance**. At least 25% of the equipment cost had to be paid for by the state or local agency in order to receive the other 75% of the cost. An application for federal funds had to include a detailed explanation of how the equipment would assist in providing lunch and breakfast service for additional students.

Section 7 of the Act provided for **State Administrative Funds** to be used to employ additional personnel. In most states, staffing was inadequate even for existing programs so additional federal funds were necessary to

provide increased staff to expand the programs. State agencies would be required to use additional funding to assist local schools in planning for remodeling of buildings, planning efficient kitchen equipment and layouts and determining what additional personnel would be required for breakfast and expanded lunch time services.

Section 13 of the Child Nutrition Act provided the authority to place all school food services under one agency, **which Authorized the Centralization of School Food Programs**. Before that several agencies were involved to some degree such as Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Economic Opportunity and Bureau of Indian Affairs. Congress decided that the “conduct and supervision of Federal programs to assist schools in providing food service for school children should be assigned to the Department of Agriculture”. **This was accomplished by a transfer of all school food service funds to the United States Department of Agriculture.**

There were some **Miscellaneous Provisions** authorized by the Act such as **breakfast programs were allowed to use donated commodities except Section 6 items purchased specifically for school lunch programs**. All programs were extended to add **Pre-School Programs**. The Act prohibited Federal and State Laws from decreeing that the value of **meal benefits to any child under the Child Nutrition Act were to be considered as income for taxation, welfare or public assistance programs**.

In 1968 the National School Lunch Act was again amended. The new amendment added to Section 9 concerned wording about nutritional requirements. It stated “except that such minimal nutritional requirements shall not be construed to prohibit substitution of foods to accommodate the medical or other special dietary needs of individual students”. This is obviously the start of our obligation to accommodate special nutritional needs of students and is still in effect to the present.

A new section, number 1 was added extending eligibility for participation in the program to include **Child Care Centers**, residential or non residential areas with high concentration of working mothers in **poor economic areas**, facilities for **handicapped children** and **special summer programs** providing food service similar to that provided during the school year which became known as the **Special Food Service Program for Children**. In section 13 the Secretary of Agriculture could authorize payment of up to 80% of the cost of operating the program including food and labor. The state could choose to use up to 26% of the funds for rental or purchasing of **equipment** while the local community had to commit to pay 25% of the cost of the equipment. **Funds could be carried over into the next year for use in the first 3 months.** All service institutions were obligated to **take and use commodities** donated by USDA.

Section 4 of the Child Nutrition Act was amended to **extend the breakfast program until 1971** and authority was given to use State Administration Funds for program supervision of special assistance and service institutions where applicable.

The next article will look into changes that happened in the 1970's. It looks like there are lots of them as the program grows older and becomes more in demand with extensive publicity.

Again, I wish to give credit and thank Gordon W. Gunderson for his extensive study and documentation of the Child Nutrition Programs history and Robert Hunter who wrote the book entitled "Poverty" as well as the federal register which I used in developing these articles.

Happy holidays! Relax and enjoy family and friends. And Happy New Year 2020.

Mary Klatko, MdSNA Webmaster